

The almond industry also exemplifies environmental stewardship. Almond orchards play a significant role in carbon sequestration, storing an impressive 30 million metric tons of carbon annually. Over the past three decades, almond farmers have made tremendous strides in water conservation, reducing water usage by nearly 50 percent through advanced practices and precision irrigation technology. Furthermore, the industry is committed to sustainability, utilizing every part of the almond—from the nut to the shell and hull—in a zero-waste approach that benefits the environment and strengthens the industry's resilience.

California, my home state, is the proud heart of this industry. Home to 7,600 almond farms, most of which are family-owned and operated by multi-generational farmers, California leads the world in almond production. These dedicated farmers embody the values of hard work, innovation, and community, preserving farmland and fostering sustainable practices for future generations.

The almond industry's economic impact is profound. It supports 110,000 jobs in California and contributes \$9.2 billion annually to the state's economy. California's almond farmers supply 100 percent of the almonds in the United States and 80 percent of the world's almond supply, cementing our role as a global leader in almond production. That is why I proudly carried state legislation in 2017 to name almonds as California's official state nut.

On this National Almond Day, we honor the hardworking men and women whose efforts ensure that almonds remain a nutritious and sustainable staple on tables around the world. Their innovation and dedication inspire us all and remind us of the vital connection between agriculture and our shared prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in celebrating National Almond Day and in recognizing the profound contributions of almond farmers and all those who make this industry a shining example of American ingenuity and resilience.

May National Almond Day continue to inspire appreciation for the many ways the almond industry enriches our lives and strengthens our communities.

RECOGNIZING UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, WORLD WAR II VETERAN CHUCK KUNES'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional constituent from my district, Chuck Kunes. Throughout his life, Chuck has embodied a selfless and fearless spirit, resulting in a life rich in stories and memories. I commend Chuck for his service to our country and thank him for his great sacrifices and honorable legacy. As he celebrates his 100th birthday on February 27, 2025, I would like to recognize Chuck and wish happiness for him and his family.

Chuck was born in Trenton, New Jersey to Jewish immigrants Sam and Doris (Weinstock) Kunes on February 27, 1925. He attended schools in Trenton and the Bronx and worked shining shoes to help support his family when his father passed away suddenly in 1935, when Chuck was only ten years old. At age 18, before he could be drafted for World War II, Chuck enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, attended boot camp in North Carolina, and then went to flight school in Maine, where he was trained as a flight mechanic.

He was then sent to the South Pacific as part of VMF-214, most famously known as the "Black Sheep Squadron," where he spent four years in Okinawa and China, attaining the rank of Sergeant. Following the service, Chuck attended the University of Illinois on the G.I. Bill, then moved to Levittown, Pennsylvania and spent the remainder of his life in Bucks County. He worked as an executive for the 3-M Company in Bristol for over 40 years.

Chuck was an original owner in the Stony Brook section of Levittown, eventually moving to Quincy Hollow and then, finally, to Forsythia Gate, where he cared for his wife, Alma, and three children, Karen, Steven and Susan. To date, Chuck and Alma have been married for 71 years.

Chuck has spent a lifetime enjoying fishing, hunting, baking, and as a private pilot. Chuck also loves his visits to Parx Casino. His family is so very proud that Chuck has reached this milestone in his life. Our Nation owes Chuck a debt that can never be repaid. We wish Chuck countless blessings, and I remain deeply appreciative of Chuck Kunes for his life of service and sacrifice for our community, district, and country. His commitment to his fellow neighbors, veterans, and servicemembers

alike is a testament to his character and spirit. I am more than honored to recognize him today and wish him nothing but the best for his 100th birthday and the future beyond.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
RONNIE RASMUSSEN, U.S. ARMY
STAFF SEARGENT AND FEDERAL
AIR MARSHAL

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Staff Sergeant Ronnie Rasmussen, a resident of St. Cloud, Florida, graduated from Osceola High School in 1983 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy, completing Aviation Machinist Mate training and serving at NAS Miramar and NAS Oceana. He reached the rank of Petty Officer Third Class before completing his service in 1987.

In 2008, inspired by a conversation with a coworker, he joined the Army Reserve, training as a unit supply specialist and later as a cargo specialist. Over the years, he served in multiple roles, including Drill Sergeant Company Member, Military Police, and Operations NCO.

In 2014, he deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant, he took on leadership roles in supply, security, and training. In 2023, he transferred to the 76th Expeditionary Terminal Operations Element for a final deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield. In March 2025, he will retire from the U.S. Army Reserve after nearly 23 years of combined service.

Parallel to his military career, Rasmussen had a distinguished law enforcement career. He worked as a police officer in St. Cloud, Florida, and as a detective with the Osceola County Sheriff's Office, investigating crimes against tourists. In 1998, he joined the State Fire Marshal's Office, investigating over 100 fires annually.

Following the 9/11 attacks, he became a Federal Air Marshal in 2002, flying over five million miles and conducting international security operations. He also contributed to the VIPR program, enhancing security at transit locations nationwide.

After 23 years as a Federal Air Marshal and nearly 40 years in law enforcement, Rasmussen will retire on March 28, 2025, to spend well-earned time with his family, having sacrificed countless birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays in service of his country.