

TRIBUTE TO MORT PYE

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 23, 1995

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the career of the preeminent newsman in the State on New Jersey.

Mort Pye has recently retired after spending 32 years as editor of the Star-Ledger in Newark, building it into the largest and most-respected newspaper in our State. Thanks to Mr. Pye's work, the Star-Ledger is not only the largest circulation newspaper in New Jersey but the 14th-largest daily paper in the Nation. Its Sunday edition ranks as the 12th-largest newspaper in the Nation. That translates into nearly 1.3 million daily readers and 1.9 million on Sundays.

I have known Mr. Pye throughout my public life and have particularly fond memories from the many editorial board meetings I attended in Newark. Mr. Pye was always the most insightful questioner at these sessions, yet he also knew how to sit back and listen to the answers. Being a good listener is one of the hallmarks of a good journalist. I grew to have only the highest respect for his professionalism and the personal integrity he brought on the Star-Ledger. The preeminence the paper has achieved in journalistic circles is a direct reflection of his professionalism.

Mr. Pye holds an honorary doctorate degree from Rutgers University. But he is not one of the new-style reporters who emerge from lofty journalism programs in big-name universities with an advanced academic degree but no idea of which end of the pencil to use. Instead, he is a good, old-fashioned newsman, and proud of the well-earned title.

Mr. Pye began his newspaper career 54 years ago at the Long Island Press, where he started as a reporter and rose through the ranks to become assistant editor. He covered fires, accidents, courts, town councils, politics, features, and all the other bread-and-butter stories that make up daily newspaper work. By the time he came to the Star-Ledger in 1957 as managing editor he was a seasoned veteran. He was promoted to editor in 1963 as further recognition of his ability to impart his skills and love of journalism to younger reporters and editors.

Under Mr. Pye's direction, the Star-Ledger grew in circulation and news coverage, establishing 15 news bureaus across our State. Staff members from these bureaus and the main office in Newark cover virtually every story of any significance that takes place in New Jersey, from town council meetings to national headlines. The Star-Ledger has the largest bureau at our Statehouse in Trenton—11 full-time reporters—giving New Jerseyans the most-detailed account of their State government available anywhere. In addition, the Star-Ledger currently has the only Washington bureau operated by a New Jersey newspaper.

Donald Newhouse, president of the Star-Ledger, described Mr. Pye's dedication in a recent article, which I quote: "Mr. Pye has 'charted the paper's course, established the policies required to follow that course and directed the day-to-day activities that carry out those policies.' He has, in fact, created 'The Newspaper for New Jersey.'"

I agree. Mort Pye has truly made the Star-Ledger the "Newspaper for New Jersey." I join his countless admirers and friends throughout New Jersey in wishing him Godspeed and much-deserved enjoyment in retirement.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM HENRY HADDIX

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 23, 1995

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago a small group of marines raised a flag on a faraway island in the Pacific Ocean: Iwo Jima. The scene was immortalized for all Americans in the famous photo and memorial statue near Arlington Cemetery.

The battle for Iwo Jima paved the way to victory over Japan. It was not without cost; 6,000 Marines were killed. Pvt. William Henry Haddix was one of these who made the supreme sacrifice of his life. A lad of just 22 when he died, Bill left behind a young wife and two small children.

He also left behind a beautiful and precious legacy. Just days before he died he had written his wife and family. Private Haddix's daughter—Susan Haddix Harrison from Jackson, MI—has generously shared his deeply moving and meaningful letter with me. The letter includes a poem by Private Haddix about his experience on Iwo Jima. Interwoven in the fabric of the words are the golden threads of faith in God and duty to country.

IWO JIMA

I have landed on an island
In the Pacific salty air
where heat, rain, mud and bugs
are an everyday affair.

The nights are long and dreary
as the pale moon lights the sky,
and I lie awake a thinking
as the hours creep slowly by.

Where men must go on fighting
for land that must be won
In dirt, grit, slime and sweat
beneath the burning sun.

I can't help but dream of home
and the ones I love so dear,
It makes a man cuss the day
he ever landed here.

All luxuries are forgotten
In this land so far away
and it takes a lot of guts
for the guy who has to stay.

I pray for you my darling
every single night
and know God will care for you
because you're living right.

When we meet our enemy
be it day or night
It's do or die for that poor guy
for we fight with all our might.

Should I ever receive a call from God
I know darn good and well,
That I'm bound to go to heaven
for I've served my time in Hell.

William H. Haddix,
Private, 28th Re-
placement Draft,
Co. B, 3rd Marine
Division.

Private Haddix did not ask that he may live. He was prepared to die if need be. All he asked is that he may be ready if he was called. And he asked that his sacrifice may not be in vain.

Today, we salute Private Haddix and all the men of honor and courage who fought beside him five decades ago. We should always remember their bravery, their honor, and their dedication to our Nation. Our most precious inheritance is freedom, but we should remember that it was not free to those who earned it.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 22, 1995

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today, as we celebrate Black History Month, I would like to recognize 258 African-American World War II veterans who have wrongfully had to live with the shame of being mutineers. For over 50 years, some of these men have hidden their past, when it should be proudly and widely shared with the rest of our country.

In 1944, when our Nation was at war with one of the world's most infamous racists—Adolph Hitler—almost all the men assigned to load munitions onto Liberty ships in this country were black. Upon their enlistment, many of the black naval recruits expected to be trained as sailors and go to sea, but instead, were assigned without proper training to the menial and dangerous work at the Port Chicago Naval Weapons Station in the San Francisco Bay area. During their stint at Port Chicago black sailors were quickly introduced to the discriminatory attitude of the Navy.

Then on July 17, at 10:18 p.m., two explosions with a force equal to the bomb dropped on Hiroshima nearly leveled the area. Two military cargo ships loaded with ammunition and the entire Port Chicago waterfront were vaporized by the blast and literally disappeared from the face of the earth. The blast left 320 dead, of which 202 were black. After a relatively short investigation, the cause of the explosion was never identified.

Shortly afterward, another tragedy ensued. On August 9, after spending several weeks picking up the remains of their friends, the surviving black sailors were ordered to return to loading ammunition at Mare Island under the same unsafe conditions that sparked the explosion in July. Afraid, 258 of them refused to comply and were immediately imprisoned on a barge. Several days later, after being threatened with the death penalty, 208 of them agreed to return to work. The remaining 50 were charged—not with disobeying an order—but with mutiny, an act punishable by death.

The court-martial proceedings were "one of the worst frame-ups we have come across," wrote NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall in his appeal on behalf of the men. The shame of these mutiny trials also aroused the passion and activism of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt when she wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Navy asking for leniency in the sentencing of the men. Mrs. Roosevelt was one voice among many who joined in the campaign on behalf of the convicted Port Chicago sailors. Recent revelations discovered by Oakland, CA, author Robert Allen, Ph.D., fully exposed the racial segregation and bias in the Navy

and strongly support Justice Marshall's belief that the black sailors did not receive a fair trial because of their race.

The court-martial convictions of these African-American sailors was not only a great injustice, but also an event in our country's history that should be duly recognized. Historians believe that the Port Chicago explosion and the following events helped speed the desegregation of the military by President Truman. As we well know, this action earned him a place in our history books as a great advocate of civil rights. However, the men who valiantly protested the conditions in Port Chicago, have had to live with the shame of being mutineers.

In recent years, Congress initiated efforts to secure a review of these convictions based on new evidence that demonstrated significant racial prejudice in the trial proceedings. On January 7, 1994, the Navy refused to overturn the convictions following a review mandated by legislation approved by Congress. Although the Navy found that racial discrimination had existed, it decided there was no basis for overturning the convictions. More recently, Congressmen RONALD DELLUMS, GEORGE MILLER, and myself have urged President Clinton to consider expunging their records.

Many of these veterans and their families have lived with this unjust decision for many years. It is time for the United States to admit to this national disgrace and remove the stigma of dishonor from these brave men. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the contribution of these civil rights leaders to our country.

THE DANGERS OF PLUTONIUM

HON. RONALD V. DELLUMS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 23, 1995

Mr. DELLUMS. Mr. Speaker, today more than 300 people are gathered in Berkeley, CA, in the 9th California District, to mark the 54th anniversary of the discovery of plutonium on the University of California's Berkeley campus. They gather to express their concerns about the dangers associated with the continued trafficking in highly toxic radioactive plutonium and plutonium waste. The principle vehicle for this will be a public hearing on "The History and Consequences of Civilian Plutonium Use."

The event that has brought them together is the Pacific Plutonium Forum, sponsored by Plutonium Free Future, a United States-Japan citizens's organization and the Plutonium Free Future Women's Network, a women's international campaign for safe energy based in Berkeley. They are acting in cooperation with the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center of Tokyo; the Nuclear Control Institute of Washington, DC; the Plutonium Action Network of

Hiroshima and Kyoto; and, the World Information Service on Energy of Paris.

The forum has attracted a distinguished list of participants, including His Excellency Bernard Dowiyogo, President of the island nation of Nauru in the Pacific; Dr. Carlos Arellano Lennox, director of Environmental Research at the Panama Canal Institute of the University of Panama and the former president of Panama's National Assembly; as well as representatives from more than 20 countries, including leading scientists, scholars, experts on energy and the environment, and citizens activists.

The forum also will include a candlelight vigil: to heal the wounds of the nuclear age, fitting held on the campus at which Nobel Laureates Drs. Glenn Seaborg and Ed McMillan discovered plutonium 54 years ago today.

Participants are gathered to consider alternatives to plutonium energy production and to urge all nations involved to cease such programs and to seek safer, more ecologically sound energy alternatives. Ending civilian plutonium use by all nations will ease serious environmental threats and will reduce for all who inhabit the globe the national security risks posed by the potential for the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

I join with the forum participants in highlighting our deep concerns over this week's sea shipment of 1,200 tons of high-level plutonium waste from France to Japan, most likely via the Panama Canal. This toxic, radioactive waste is produced by extracting plutonium from the spent fuel of Japanese nuclear reactors—much of the original fuel for which was composed of U.S.-origin materials.

There is considerable scientific evidence suggesting that the containers in which this waste is to be shipped do not meet sufficient safety requirements, and that they may be susceptible to damage by fire, corrosion, or collision during transport at sea and by the additional dangers of these type posed by their ultimate placement in the highly active seismic zone of Japan Aomori prefecture.

A number of my colleagues have called on President Clinton, Energy Secretary O'Leary, and other senior administration officials to urge Japan, France, and Great Britain—the Governments most directly involved—to postpone the planned shipment until the critical environmental, health, and safety issues can be addressed and satisfactorily answered. Today, I join with these colleagues in calling for the shipment to be postponed until a definitive scientific assessment on the risks involved can be completed.

I also will ask the Departments of Energy, Defense, and State to review their approval of these sea shipments of plutonium and plutonium waste and to seek ways to assist Japan with finding alternatives for energy security that do not involve the use of plutonium.

Beyond raising our concerns regarding the transport of plutonium, I join the Forum's participants in calling for a critical reappraisal of the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategies and the efficacy of the continued civilian use of plutonium in energy production. As we approach the 50th anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is incumbent on the world community to assess the entire legacy of the nuclear age, both positive and negative, and to form new policies for the next 50 years that better serve the world's environmental and energy needs.

I proudly join the citizens of Berkeley who, 2 years ago, passed the first public resolution calling for a plutonium-free world, and who have this week reaffirmed that clear and courageous conviction by organizing this historic gathering.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reflect on the dangers that plutonium poses to our security and the world's environment and, I congratulate these citizens for taking the time to further explore this problem at today's Forum.

RECOGNITION OF REBEL ROY STEINER, JR.

HON. EARL F. HILLIARD

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 23, 1995

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding young jurist from my congressional district, Mr. Rebel Roy Steiner, Jr., of Birmingham.

Mr. Steiner has just been named a partner in the Los Angeles law firm of Loeb & Loeb, one of our Nation's largest law firms which specializes in the music and motion picture industry. Mr. Steiner was named a partner to the firm's entertainment law division.

I am especially proud of this young man because he is a shining example of how a good education can better your life. Mr. Steiner was educated in the public schools of Birmingham, the University of Alabama, where he received a B.A. degree in history, and was selected a member of Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society. He then attended the Yale Law School.

Many of our young people think it only a distant dream to be able to work on record and motion picture soundtracks with stars such as Vince Gill, Frank Sinatra, and Diana Ross. Rebel Steiner knows that these goals are more than mere dreams, they are all attainable with hard work, and a will to succeed. My heartfelt congratulations are extended to Mr. Steiner, and his family.