

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ANNIVERSARY OF THE NOAA CORPS

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 1997

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 80th anniversary of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps, one of the seven uniformed services of the United States. Under the auspices of the Department of Commerce, the officers of the NOAA Corps are an integral part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and serve with distinction throughout this multidisciplinary scientific organization.

Dating back to 1807, the heritage of the NOAA Corps began when President Thomas Jefferson created the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Directed by the Congress, the Department of War and the Department of the Navy provided commissioned officers to the survey to chart the U.S. coastlines and for shoreside mapping, thus opening the United States to expanded maritime commerce. Congress, by the act of May 22, 1917, formally established a separate uniformed service, patterned after the military, to meet the survey's growing responsibilities and unique needs. This commissioned service of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey [C&GS] served with distinction in the world wars of this century. Hydrographic and geodetic surveying operations transitioned to the Environmental Science Service Administration in 1965 and in 1970, these responsibilities were incorporated into the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The NOAA Corps was designed to allow for continued flexibility in the assignment of professionals to remote, hazardous, or otherwise arduous duties throughout the wide range of environmental measurement and stewardship activities encompassed by the new NOAA, and so vital to the Nation. Corps officers today combine unique qualifications as research ship and aircraft operators; as technical experts with advanced academic backgrounds in hydrography, geodesy, fisheries sciences, meteorology, and oceanography; and as leaders in technical program and data management contributing to the coherence, integrity, and effectiveness of the administrative structure of NOAA.

The NOAA Corps today continues to provide NOAA with a highly effective interface with counterparts in the Coast Guard, Navy, Air Force, and Army Corps of Engineers, military branches with which NOAA has a continuing need to interact in order to discharge its responsibilities. The Corps houses the Nation's expertise and capabilities in nautical charting, and performs a principal mission of hydrographic surveying vital to our national interest of ensuring the safe navigation of foreign trade, 98 percent of which travels in U.S. coastal waters. NOAA Corps pilots are unique in their ability to conduct low-altitude penetration of hurricanes in tropical storm research

missions and snow cover measurement flights for flood predictions in the upper mid-western United States. Corps officers provide the data collection and management that are requisite to ensuring accurate fisheries stock, turtle, and marine mammal assessments.

The Corps has contributed on many occasions over the recent decades in providing valuable scientific and engineering skills to the armed services and the Nation, especially in times of national emergencies. A very recent example is the NOAA ship *Rude*, which swiftly located the wreckage of TWA Flight 800. The *Rude* and a shore component composed of NOAA Corps officers also created highly detailed map products which greatly facilitated the retrieval of wreckage by Navy divers. Their effort was recently recognized by Secretary Peña of the Department of Transportation at the U.S. Coast Guard Awards Ceremony and by NOAA's parent bureau, the Department of Commerce, with the Department's highest award, the Commerce Gold Medal.

Iraq's destructive actions during the gulf war created one of the worst oil-based environmental catastrophes known to man. NOAA provided ship, aircraft, and technical expertise for environmental appraisal, and the first comprehensive study of the Persian Gulf. Shore personnel provided scientific expertise in hazardous materials management, while the NOAA Ship *Mt. Mitchell* carried a contingent of world-class scientists to the gulf to evaluate and determine the extent of the environmental damage. Sailing as a commissioned survey ship with warship status she easily bypassed many of the administrative restrictions placed upon commercial vessels by Iran and surrounding countries. In addition, *Mt. Mitchell* was able to work more closely with the other services to obtain necessary information and logistic support such as mine and weather reports, fuel and supplies. The NOAA Corps provided instant credibility not only to U.S. services, but to Saudi Arabian, Kuwait, and Iranian authorities and observers. Most important, the skills and knowledge of the NOAA Corps officers maximized the productivity of this scientific expedition by providing a safe, effective research platform. The captain and crew of this expedition received a Commerce Gold and Silver Medal respectively, for their service.

A similar response was made by the officers and crew of the NOAA Ship *Rainier* in 1989 to one of this Nation's largest environmental catastrophes, when the tanker *Exxon Valdez* spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil in Prince William Sound, Alaska. The vessel was on scene immediately in support of critical Federal spill management decisions and a wide variety of environmental studies, which allowed scientists to better understand the effects of a hazardous material spill of that magnitude in such a remote, environmentally sensitive area.

Today the NOAA Corps continues to perform its missions whether in charting our Nation's coastline, assessing its fisheries stocks, or flying into hurricanes for science and the

humanitarian need to produce better warnings for saving of life and property. Today's NOAA Corps officer might be found virtually anywhere on the surface of the Earth, in or on the sea, or in our atmosphere. These officers remain ready to apply their science and service skills to the many problems facing the United States in the management of its oceanic and atmospheric resources.

Most all of us have benefited from the dedicated service of these officers to our Nation, and I ask that you join me in a salute to the men and women of the Corps on this, their 80th anniversary.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ARIZONA RATTLERS

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 1997

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to congratulate the Arizona Rattlers who for the second time in 4 years are the Arena Football champions.

The Rattlers wrapped up the Arena Bowl XI last month with an unforgettable 55-33 victory over the Iowa Barnstormers.

The fans who have watched the Rattlers in the Snake Pit are especially proud because they are the only professional sports team in the Valley of the Sun with a league championship. And now they have two. All this despite a season-ending fractured leg suffered by quarterback Sherdrick Bonner during the semifinal against Tampa Bay that left the team going into the championship game as the underdog.

But those who doubted the Rattlers were proved wrong when, with the leadership of Coach Danny White and with touchdowns by Hunkie Cooper and rookie Donnie Davis, the Rattlers kept Iowa at bay and came through with its second championship crown.

I want to not only congratulate the team, but the coach, staff, and all the fans who have made this a memorable season.

As team president, Bryan Colangelo said the excitement levels that were displayed in the championship game were unprecedented in the league and unprecedented in local pro sports.

I think the Arizona Rattlers for their win, because as Colangelo also said, "It's such a great experience to win a championship." And the Rattlers have provided a great experience for fans in Arizona and the Valley of the Sun.

I also wish to draw attention to this win because, as true football fans will attest, this is a wonderful sport and victory. Some might say arena football is not the real thing, but I would have to disagree. This sport has come a long way in 11 years and I'm proud to say is gaining more attention from sports fans.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I hope you and my colleagues will join me in congratulating the Arizona Rattlers and extending the warmest of wishes for continued success.

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