

President Reagan once mentioned that we don't have to look in history books to find heroes; heroes are all around us, in every American city and town, as well as in the towns of our Allies. On Memorial Day, I pause to pay tribute to such heroes as the late Tom O'Connor of Quebec, Canada, who, as a young Canadian paratrooper, landed in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, fought in the dreadful Falaise Gap during the following Battle of Normandy, was severely wounded by machine gun fire, and spent the rest of the war in a German hospital.

I pay tribute to John J. McDonough who, as a reliable young sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Corps, served the Allies in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations. At the same time, his teenage brother, Thomas J. McDonough, was a faithful seaman in the U.S. Navy who saw action in the South Pacific in the Invasion of the Philippines and in the Battle of Okinawa, among other campaigns.

I pay tribute to Mr. James Clark, Sr., of Bowie, Maryland, who, as a teenager in the U.S. Navy before World War II, was on duty in Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941, and raced to his battle station during the surprise Japanese attack on the American fleet. Young Mr. Clark defended his nation that Sunday morning with the valor and spirit that we solemnly honor on Memorial Day and on June 6.

I pay tribute to Corporal Francis McDonough of Bowie, aged 20 in 1944, who, with 10,000 other young American soldiers, boarded the English liner, *Aquitania*, in New York Harbor on January 29, 1944. The ship had been refitted into a troop ship, was as swift as the German U-boats, and sailed unescorted without convoy protection on a risky voyage across the cold North Atlantic.

Once fully loaded with troops, *Aquitania* steamed out of New York Harbor. Corporal McDonough and other soldiers lined in the decks of the huge liner and stared at the Statue of Liberty until it disappeared from view. For much of the first three days of the journey, a Navy seaplane, the *PBY Catalina*, watched for enemy submarines as it accompanied *Aquitania* to the extent of the plane's range of fuel. The *PBY* signaled the ship with its findings, and finally had to turn back as the liner sailed beyond the perimeter of the plane's range. After a harrowing voyage, the U.S. troops disembarked safely in Scotland a week later.

Several months later, after hazardous amphibious training off of England's coast at Slapton Sands, the Allies launched the invasion of Europe against Nazi enslavement, on D-Day, June 6, 1944, landing on five code-named beaches in occupied Normandy, France: Gold, Sword, Juno, Utah, and Omaha.

Long before crossing the English Channel to Utah Beach in Normandy on D-Day, Corporal McDonough had been trained in the United States as an anti-aircraft gunner on a half-track vehicle equipped with four 50-calibre machine guns. A half-track had a truck cab and front wheels, and tank-like tracks in the rear.

On D-Day, while on the English Channel, the young corporal felt encouraged when the nearby battleship, *USS Nevada*, opened fire on the German batteries along the French coast ahead. The booming of the ship's huge guns sent flaming projectiles above in the dim light, yet the young soldier considered the ship's presence reassuring.

Previously, *USS Nevada* had been heavily damaged when attempting to proceed under way during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. But due to the innovation of her valiant crew, she was beached in shallow water there to avoid sinking. The *USS Nevada* was among the ships returned for later service.

On the early morning of June 6, 1944, Corporal McDonough's outfit saw that at Utah Beach in Normandy, many of the forward observers—radio men—were dead, and their radios were gone, lost underwater only three U.S. tanks out of about 30 made the shore (that they saw) during the morning landings. Thus, there was no one to coordinate the ships' firepower, no one to tell the ships' crews where to direct their powerful artillery. U.S. crews on the Navy destroyers, 1,000 yards offshore urgently wanted to help those Americans trapped under German fire on the Normandy beach, but didn't know where to direct their gunfire.

Then, suddenly, on Utah Beach, the outfit of a disabled American tank began firing at the Germans entrenched on a cliff above. The crew of a U.S. destroyer saw where the tank was firing, determined the coordinates, and directed its artillery towards the Nazi pillbox on the cliff. Then a second destroyer also aimed its guns on the same target, and that increased firepower helped the Americans on the beach to move inland.

The tide was coming in fast on Utah Beach; therefore, wounded men who were able to do so crawled inland to avoid drowning. But many young men who were able to do so crawled inland to avoid drowning. But many young Americans died on the beach, too injured to escape the tide. After serving in the U.S. First Army in the D-Day landings, in the Battle of Normandy, in the Battle of France, in the Battle of the Bulge, and in the battles in Germany, Corporal McDonough later recalled quietly how heartbreaking it had been at Utah Beach on D-Day to see the American bodies floating on the waves. Yet, years afterwards, we know that their ripples had built a current.

As Senator Robert Kennedy later noted, such an American current was capable of sweeping down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance. It is this spirit of Americans who love freedom that we honor on Memorial Day and on the 55th anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 1944. It is a privilege to pay tribute to American soldiers, sailors, and airmen of all wars who have given the noble example of handing over their country not less to even greater and better than they received it.

RAILWAY SAFETY AND FUNDING EQUITY ACT OF 1999

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my friend and colleague, Congressman BILL LIPINSKI to introduce the Railway Safety and Funding Equity Act of 1999, also known as RSAFE.

This legislation addresses the dangerous lack of adequate safety infrastructure, such as crossing gates, at highway and railroad grade crossing across the country. At many grade

crossings, the only safety infrastructure between motorists and oncoming trains is a stop sign or a crossbuck. In my state of Alabama, only about 30 percent of the grade crossings are signalized with gates, lights, or bells. All too often, the end result of this lack of adequate safety infrastructure is a tragic accident in which someone is horribly injured or killed. Last year alone, 428 people died in accidents at railroad grade crossings. Indeed, my home state of Alabama ranks ninth in the nation in terms of vehicle train crashes.

These statistics are appalling and unacceptable, especially when we have the resources and know how to greatly reduce them. That's why I've joined with my colleagues, BILL LIPINSKI, in introducing RSAFE. This legislation would almost double the current federal grade crossing improvement program, thereby allowing states to invest heavily in constructing adequate safety infrastructure at railroad crossings. RSAFE does this by setting aside the 4.3-cent per gallon diesel fuel tax that railroads currently pay toward deficit reduction and transfers it into the Federal Highway Administration's Section 130 grade crossing safety program. This will increase the monies available through this program by approximately \$125 million, raising the total level from \$150 million to approximately \$275 million for the next 5 years.

Dedicating the monies derived from this fuel tax toward railroad safety infrastructure will have a real and tangible impact on countless communities across the country. However, while installing new crossing gates and lights will help decrease the number of tragic accidents we've seen so many times in the news, this alone is not enough. In addition to putting up more physical barriers at railroad crossings, we also need to put more money toward educating motorists. That's why RSAFE sets aside five percent of this new funding for education and awareness campaigns, such as those conducted by Operation Lifesaver. Operation Lifesaver is a unique, non-profit organization that works with local law enforcement officials and others to make pedestrians and motorists aware of the dangers of railroad crossings. It is through these combined efforts that we will have the most impact on communities and save the most lives.

I know that my friends in the railroad industry will argue that even the imposition of the 4.3-cents tax is unfair and punitive. They will argue that they have already invested billions of dollars in maintaining and improving their infrastructure. Well, I applaud the investment the industry has put into improving grade crossing infrastructure. But, I say to my friends in the railroad industry, more needs to be done.

RSafe does more. Rather than using the revenue raised by this 4.3-cents tax on deficit reduction, RSAFE plows the money right back into railroads, making them safer for the public. Furthermore, after five years of increased investment in making our nation's railroad crossings safer, RSAFE repeals the 4.3-cents tax. Therefore, with this bill, my colleague and I are not trying to penalize or unfairly burden the railroad industry. On the contrary, through this bill we are simply trying to use the funds the railroad industry is already paying wiser. We believe it is far wiser and fairer to use these funds to improve railroad grade crossing safety over the next five years and then put in place a mechanism by which this tax is repealed, than to put it toward deficit reduction.

The Railroad Safety and Funding Equity Act of 1999 is a good bill which strikes a good balance between industry and public safety. I urge my colleagues and my friends in the railroad industry to join Representative LIPINSKI and I in moving this legislation forward. Each day we wait, is another day a life is needlessly put at risk.

COMMENDATION OF MR. H. BEECHER HICKS III, WHITE HOUSE FELLOW FROM CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. MELVIN L. WATT

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to commend H. Beecher Hicks, III of Charlotte, North Carolina for serving as a distinguished White House Fellow this year.

Mr. Hicks earned his BA in marketing from Morehouse College and MBA from the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler Business School. He is an investment banker with Bank of America Corporation (formerly NationsBank Corporation) where he serves as Vice President and provides mergers and acquisitions advice to middle-market companies. While serving as assistant to the chairman of NationsBank, Mr. Hicks led the formation of the bank's vendor development program and proposed a \$30 million equity-investment company focusing on urban communities. He also helped start The Investment Group of Charlotte, which invests in local firms and real estate projects and provides technical aid to entrepreneurs. Beyond his success in the private sector, Mr. Hicks serves on the Board of Directors of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Development Corporation and works with students at Johnson C. Smith University.

Mr. Hicks was selected as one of 17 individuals nationwide to receive the White House Fellowship for 1998–1999. The fellowship allows outstanding citizens to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experience by working hand-in-hand with leaders in government. Applications are chosen based on demonstration of excellence in community service, academic

achievement, leadership and professional experience. It is the nation's most prestigious fellowship for public service and leadership development.

As a White House fellow, Mr. Hicks has been assigned to the Corporation for National Service. In that capacity, he serves as Director of the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows Program, where he is responsible for implementing a partnership program between the AmeriCorps and America's Promise, which was founded by former White House Fellow General Colin Powell. Mr. Hicks also evaluates the effectiveness of the investment strategies for the \$400 million National Community Service Trust. His other responsibilities include developing an effort to better link the Corporation with AmeriCorps members, developing a clearer national identity for the program and working with senior management on organizational, management accountability and cultural issues.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to Mr. H. Beecher Hicks III for his service to the White House Fellows Program—a rare honor. I applaud his selection and wish him much continued success.

IN MEMORY OF BILL SCOTT

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep regret that I inform our colleagues of the passing of a remarkable resident of my 20th Congressional District in New York.

Bill Scott, a resident of Rockland County, NY, for over fifty years, passed away earlier this week at the age of 72. With his passing, New York State has lost one of its distinguished citizens.

Bill Scott helped found the N.A.A.C.P. chapter in Spring Valley, New York, back in 1951—nearly fifty years ago. It is an interesting fact that Bill felt compelled to do so because he believed that the existing N.A.A.C.P. chapter in Rockland County was not vigilant enough in pursuing discrimination and injustice against African Americans.

Ironically, years later, in the 1960's Bill broke away from the N.A.A.C.P. chapter that he had founded because he believed that more militant times demanded a more militant response. Accordingly, he founded the Rockland chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). But, he soon left that organization also, because he believed their national leadership had come to espouse Black separatism—a philosophy Bill could not abide. Bill devoted his life to equality between the races, but at no time did he condone separation of the races which he viewed as self-defeating.

Throughout the fifties and the sixties, Bill organized marches, sit ins, and demonstrations to integrate the police forces, the Y.M.C.A., and other institutions in Rockland County which, regrettably, were not color blind at that time. It is hard for our young people today to fully understand how ingrained racism was in our society just a few short decades ago. Nor are younger generations aware that by no means was racial segregation restricted to the south. I can recall from my own experiences as an N.A.A.C.P. member in the 1950's that quite often we were considered too "radical" for our times, even in New York State.

Thanks to people such as Bill Scott in Rockland, who were courageous enough to speak out and to act at a time when it was not popular, we are well on the road today to a society where all are truly equal, although we still have a long way to go.

Bill Scott hosted a popular television show on cable, "Black Perspectives," which made him a household word in Rockland during the last few decades of his life. I was honored to be his guest on several broadcasts and, like his viewership, I never ceased to marvel at his enthusiasm, his knowledge, and his commitment.

Bill Scott, a native of New Jersey, moved to Rockland County, NY, when he was stationed at Camp Shanks during World War II. In the over half century that he called Rockland home, he made a genuine impact upon his neighbors and his community. Bill will truly be missed, and we extend our sympathy and condolences to his widow Barbara, his three sons, two daughters, and ten grandchildren, and to his family, friends, loved ones and admirers who appreciated the gifts of this truly caring leader.