

championship, but the Big South Conference Tournament as well, and will go on to compete in the NCAA tournament.

The Eagles racked up 12 wins in a row—the longest winning streak in the history of the university and the conference. Nine were against Big South teams, the most Winthrop has ever had. It is no wonder the Eagles were the top seed in the Big South Conference Tournament, and no wonder that Coach Gregg Marshall, in his first year, was named the Big South Conference men's basketball coach of the year.

This is a sports success story I wanted to share with the House. Congratulations on a job well done are due all of the Eagles, Coach Gregg Marshall and his fine staff, and everyone who helped make this a real win for Winthrop.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SSI BENEFIT PROTECTION ACT

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the "SSI Benefit Protection Act."

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program serves some of our poorest and most vulnerable citizens. SSI recipients qualify because they are elderly, blind, or disabled, and have annual income of less than \$6,000 a year—a total income of less than \$500 a month. Qualified medical personnel have determined that their disabilities are so severe that they are incapable of gainful employment. Nationally, about 6.6 million people qualify for SSI.

SSI is a subsistence income that barely pays for life's basic necessities. The maximum federal payment is less than 75% of the poverty level. And the average federal SSI payment is about \$340 a month—over \$100 less than the maximum.

15 states and the District of Columbia offer additional help to their aged and disabled citizens by sending money to the Social Security Administration to supplement payments to their residents. The average state supplement is between \$50 and \$100 a month, which brings SSI recipients a little closer to the poverty line.

A little-noticed provision in the 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act began charging the states that supplemented SSI payments a small monthly "processing fee" for each check. The fee was not based on any assessment of SSA's costs and in fact, did not go to SSA. It was simply a revenue-raiser. The fee was increased substantially in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, and it is now scheduled to increase to \$8.50 per recipient, per month, in 2002. This year in my home state of Pennsylvania, the governor's office estimated that the fees paid for "processing" totaled about \$24 million. In Pennsylvania, if the whole fee was passed on to recipients it would reduce their state supplement by almost 25%.

Understandably, this rapidly increasing fee has had a chilling effect on state willingness to increase the supplement. State program costs have continued to increase because of the fee, but no state being charged the fee has increased its payment to beneficiaries since

1993, not even to keep up with inflation. Six states have reduced their supplement and one eliminated it.

The Congress should be encouraging states to maintain and increase the supplement so that our most vulnerable citizens can afford food and shelter, not punishing those states that have reached out to help. Even a small increase in benefits can markedly improve life for SSI recipients, and even a small cut has devastating consequences.

That is why I have introduced the "SSI Benefit Protection Act." It would repeal this unfair fee, which is not justified by any analysis of SSAs costs. I hope removing this burden from states will encourage them to reassess their current SSI supplementation levels and increase them to a reasonable level. I hope the Congress and the states can work together to provide for our aged and disabled citizens.

HAPPY 30TH BIRTHDAY, WTOP

HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today I want to wish WTOP, 1500 AM, 107.7 FM, a happy 30th birthday. From the Apollo XI mission to put a man on the moon to home rule for the District of Columbia, from the Reagan Revolution to the first Republican Congress in 40 years, this top-flight radio station has established a tradition of excellence for delivering comprehensive, up-to-the-minute coverage of news, traffic, weather, and sports.

WTOP Congressional correspondent Dave McConnell's informative "Today on the Hill" broadcasts are a prime source of the latest developments on Capitol Hill and an integral part of WTOP's thorough news coverage. I truly hope Dave stays on the Congressional beat another 30 years.

So on behalf of all House Republicans, happy birthday, WTOP. May you have many more.

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT JAMES T. TAYLOR

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, one of the most solemn duties an Army Soldier can perform is to protect the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. Those soldiers fortunate enough to serve as honor guards at the Tomb of the Unknowns refer to their watch simply as "the walk."

Recently one of my constituents, Staff Sgt. James T. Taylor, completed his 785th walk, thus concluding his memorable service as a sentinel at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak for the entire Congress when I say that our fallen soldiers, both identified and unknown, deserve this fitting tribute and recognition at Arlington National Cemetery. They also deserve to be guarded by soldiers like Staff Sgt. James T. Taylor and other members of the "Old Guard," who are prepared to make personal sacrifices

in order to preserve the sanctity and memory of their fallen comrades.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally commend Staff Sgt. Taylor on his dedicated and meritorious service to this grateful Nation. Our country is a better place because of his service.

Finally Mr. Speaker, I have attached a copy of an article from the Pentagram that honors the "last walk" of Staff Sgt. Taylor and would like to call it to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

[From the Pentagram, Jan. 22, 1999]

TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SENTINEL MAKES HIS
LAST WALK, PAYS HIS FINAL RESPECTS

(By Renee McElveen)

An ice storm the night before left everything encased in crystal, creating a surreal atmosphere.

The only sounds at that hour were the popping sounds of tree branches breaking off under the weight of the ice, and the measured clicks of metal on marble as Staff Sgt. James T. Taylor's boots traced a precise pattern.

It was 6:45 a.m. on Jan. 15 in Arlington National Cemetery. Taylor was making his final preparations for what would be his 785th walk, his final walk, as a sentinel. He had a chance to prepare now, before the cemetery opened to the public, and run through one time with others the last-walk ceremony that would mark the end of his tour as an honor guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

This day was a long time coming for the 32-year-old Tennessee native. He was a materiel storage and handling specialist attending Advanced Individual Training in 1986 at Fort Lee, Va., when his platoon traveled to Washington, D.C., to see the guard-change ceremony at The Tomb of the Unknowns.

He was so impressed by the ceremony, he asked his platoon sergeant how he could go about becoming a sentinel. At that time, the duty Military Occupational Speciality was limited to Infantrymen. Taylor did not think he could ever become a sentinel since he was serving in a logistics MOS.

He completed his enlistment in 1988 and left active duty to join the Tennessee National Guard back home. Taylor attended college in Berea, Ky., then transferred to Middle Tennessee State in Murfreesboro, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in special education in 1993.

He re-enlisted that same year as an infantryman. Taylor said he decided to go back on active duty because he missed the Army and the camaraderie of military service.

"You don't get that anywhere else," he explained.

Taylor was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) in the Military District of Washington in 1994 and spent a year in Delta Company performing ceremonial duties in the cemetery. He volunteered to become a sentinel for The Tomb of the Unknowns, and was transferred to Hotel Company.

Taylor then entered an intensive training program for his new assignment. The training period for a sentinel is about six months. "It just depends on how quickly a soldier grasps the knowledge and progresses," Taylor explained.

Not only does the sentinel have to learn "the walk," he must become proficient in the manual of arms for the M-14 rifle, prepare his uniform to standard, learn a seven-page history of The Tomb of the Unknowns, memorize 150 locations of headstones as well as pages upon pages of facts about the cemetery in "The Knowledge Book."

Some of the facts about the cemetery which the sentinels must memorize are:

1. Name the caparisoned horse for the funeral of President John F. Kennedy.

Answer—Black Jack.

2. How many POWs are buried in Arlington National Cemetery?

Answer—Three (2 Italian and 1 German).

3. What is a cenotaph?

Answer—A headstone erected in memory of someone whose remains are not recoverable.

The purpose of learning all of these facts about the cemetery is for the sentinel to be able to answer questions during the frequent visitor tours of their quarters below the amphitheater, Taylor said. Also, the sentinels are often stopped on their way to their cars by the tourists and asked about locations of burial sites of famous individuals.

The Knowledge Book also contains the mission statement of the sentinel, the "guard of honor" for the Tomb of the Unknowns. The sentinel is to be responsible "for maintaining the highest standards and traditions of the U.S. Army and this nation while keeping a constant vigil at this national shrine." The sentinels' "special duty is to prevent any desecration or disrespect directed toward The Tomb of the Unknowns."

Sentinels are tested periodically throughout their training, according to Master Sgt. Richard K. Cline, sergeant of the guard for the sentinels. Oral exams are administered at the three-, six-, nine-, and 12-week intervals. Cline said a timed performance exam accompanies these tests. Sentinels must take the test administrator to the headstones of persons named by the administrator and give biographical sketches on the notables within the time allotted.

In order to "graduate" and qualify to wear the Tomb Badge, sentinels must take and pass a written exam, pass a uniform inspection, and demonstrate proficiency in the time-honored ritual of maintaining the guard sentinel, referred to simply as "the walk."

Taylor said that he had to learn how to eliminate any bounce whatsoever in his walk, which translates to a technique of rolling the feet in a particular manner. His trainer told him the walk should make people think of the way a ghost might move, drifting along smoothly with no up and down movement.

In addition, the sentinel's arms must not bend at the elbows during the walk, but instead swing in a straight line like a pendulum on a grandfather clock. The eyes must stay focused straight ahead, ignoring the crowds of tourists, which can number up to 2,000 at a single changing of the guard ceremony during the summer months, Cline said.

Taylor said it irritates him when soldiers outside The Old Guard tell him he has "easy duty" because all he does is "walk back and forth." He says they have no idea of the intensive training involved, the performance standard required in all weather conditions, and the level of commitment sentinels have to their job.

"This is probably the greatest honor I ever will have," he said.

Taylor said he has performed his sentinel duty under all types of weather conditions. Snow, sleet, rain, heat, or even thunderstorms do not deter the sentinels from guarding The Tomb of the Unknowns.

A poem submitted by a visitor (known only as Simon) to The Tomb of the Unknowns in 1971 has since been adopted as "The Sentinel's Creed."

"My dedication to this sacred duty is total and wholehearted. In the responsibility bestowed on me never will I falter, and with dignity and perseverance my standard will remain perfection. Through the years of diligence and praise and the discomfort of the element, I will walk my tour in humble rever-

ence to the best of my ability. It is he who commands the respect I protect his bravery that made us so proud. Surrounded by well-meaning crowds by day, alone in the thoughtful peace of night this soldier will in honored glory rest under my eternal vigilance."

Sentinels are on duty for 24 hours, then off for 24 hours. During the winter months, sentinels perform two of three hour-long walks each 24-hour period and two hour-long night shifts. During the summer months, sentinels perform six or seven 30-minute walks, and two night shifts.

Cline said the walks are shortened to 30 minutes during the summer months to accommodate the large number of tourists visiting the MDW area. Shorter walks result in more changing-of-the-guard ceremonies, which are a popular tourist attraction at the cemetery.

Taylor said he has had many memorable moments as a sentinel. Two moments, one very public and one very private, stand out in particular.

In 1997, he was selected as the presidential wreath bearer for President Bill Clinton during the Veterans Day Ceremony at The Tomb of the Unknowns. Taylor admits he was nervous, but once the National Anthem started playing, he said, "I felt like a giant out there."

The private moment occurred during one of his early morning walks. The only visitor at the cemetery at that hour was a man wearing uniform items from the Vietnam War era. Taylor said the man stood at attention at the end of the plaza near the guard booth, saluting him. The man watched him for the entire hour and appeared to be very emotional, watching him perform his duty.

"It was a real moving experience for me," Taylor said.

He said he changed his uniform after his tour, then went back up to the amphitheater to try to find the man so that he could speak with him, but he was already gone.

While assigned to Hotel Company, Taylor held five positions at The Tomb of the Unknowns. He was a sentinel, an assistant relief commander, a relief commander, an assistant sergeant of the guard and a trainer.

One of the sentinels he trained, William Q. Hanna, returned for Taylor's last walk. Hanna completed his enlistment in the Army in December. He said he served with Taylor for more than two years, and wanted to be present for his "special moment."

Hanna explained that the last walk is a "rite of passage" and an extremely emotional event for a sentinel as he pays his final respects to The Tomb of the Unknowns. "I could hardly get through mine," he recalled.

At 10:45 a.m., Taylor asked Hanna to drive to the Visitors Center to pick up his family and bring them back to the amphitheater. His mother, Sandra S. Taylor of Knoxville, Tenn., had driven 10 hours through the ice storm so that she could be there for his last walk. His father, James L. Taylor, and stepmother, Linda Taylor, of Middlesboro, Ky., had spent nine hours on the road as well.

While waiting for his final hour-long walk as a sentinel, Taylor made adjustments to his uniform. He pulled the brim of his Dress Blues service cap down and adjusted it over his eyes, checking his reflection in the mirror. Pfc. Daniel Baccus took a large piece of masking tape and blotted up any stray lint on Taylor's raincoat. Taylor then went to the water fountain and ran water over his white gloves and rubbed them together. The water provides a better grip on the wooden stock of the M-14 rifle.

At 11 a.m., the bells toiled the hour and Taylor made his way down the marble sidewalk to take his place on the plaza for the

last time. Cline inspected his uniform and weapon. The guards were changed, and Taylor spent the next hour guarding the Tomb of the Unknowns.

At noon, the bells toiled the hour again, Taylor walked to the center of the plaza to retrieve four red roses from his fiancée, standing at the base of the steps.

He placed one red rose at the base of each of the three crypts, and the fourth rose at the base of the marble tomb. A bugler played "Taps." Taylor saluted. His last walk as a sentinel at The Tomb of the Unknowns was over.

HONORING MORRIS KING UDALL,
FORMER UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE FROM ARIZONA

SPEECH OF

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 1999

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice in commemoration of the remarkable career of Mo Udall.

During my first term in Congress, the great respect that we all had for Mo was demonstrated in an incident that took place in the Rules Committee. We had under consideration the rule on the Alaska National Land Act, the landmark legislation which preserved thousands of acres of pristine wilderness in the state of Alaska.

There were two competing versions of the bill: one that was reported from the Interior Committee and one that was authored by Mo. Mo's bill was defeated in his own committee and the reported bill was supported by interests who sought to drill for oil in the Alaska wilderness, a position Mo vigorously opposed. Mo acknowledged his defeat in committee but still sought the right to offer his bill as a substitute on the floor.

There was a fierce battle over the rule. Everyone knew that Mo had the votes in the House to pass his substitute. Mo's bill was favored by the environmental community and they lobbied furiously to allow the Udall substitute to be considered in the House. However, the opponents of Mo's bill were lobbying just as hard to deny him the chance to present his substitute once the Alaska Lands bill came to the floor.

The Rules Committee was closely divided on the question of whether or not to specifically make Mo's substitute in order. I was the most junior Member of the committee and would thus vote last on the roll call. When the vote got to me, the vote was tied: everyone in the room assumed that since I was from Texas, an oil producing state, that I would side with the oil industry and against Mo.

However, I held Mo Udall in such high regard as a person and as a legislator, that I voted with him to allow him to offer his substitute on the floor. He was, after all, the Chairman of the Interior Committee and a champion of protecting the wilderness, and there was little doubt in my mind, in spite of my home-state loyalties, that he should be given that opportunity.

Ultimately, the rule passed and when Mo's substitute was voted on, it passed by a vote of 268 to 157. The bill itself, as amended with the Udall substitute, was ultimately passed by an overwhelming vote of 360 to 65.