

"BAND OF BROTHERS": THE
STORY OF EASY COMPANY, 101ST
AIRBORNE DIVISION

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, it was during the early morning hours prior to the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944 that the men of Easy Company parachuted into Normandy. Company E, as was their official designation, was part of the 101st Airborne Division that carried out many objectives during World War II. Their acts of heroism begin with their participation in Operation Market Garden and continue on to the climactic Battle of the Bulge. Their service continued through Germany, ending with the capture of "Eagle's Nest," Adolf Hitler's mountain fortress. Their brave deeds, documented in Stephen Ambrose's book, "Band of Brothers" is now an HBO television mini-series.

On Monday, September 24, 2001, we had the opportunity to meet many of the great members of Easy Company. They came from far and wide to share, with Members of Congress, their story of defending freedom across Europe. In these trying times, their story is an inspiration to the men and women of the Armed Forces.

Last evening we watched in a special screening of the television mini-series as Easy Company landed behind the German battlements and took out an artillery battery that was firing on the Allied forces at Utah Beach. By destroying four 105mm guns, and killing or running off 60 soldiers, Easy Company significantly contributed to the successful landing of Allied forces on D-Day. Because of the overwhelming success of this mission, Easy Company's maneuvers are still studied at West Point today.

Those Members of Congress who represent the veterans of Easy Company were privileged to speak briefly of these heroes. It is my pleasure to represent Major Dick Winters. He was the commanding officer of Easy Company, and perhaps best represented the heroism of Easy Company through his courage, character, and charisma. Unfortunately, Dick could not make the event from his home in Hershey, Pennsylvania, but he sent me his remarks which I was honored to read.

Here are the kind words written by Major Winters about his fellow soldiers, "In 1942, I was assigned by Colonel Sink to Company E. Ever since then the men of Company E have been my buddies in combat, my friends, my family—forever. I shall never forget them."

At the conclusion of the event, everyone in attendance rose in applause for several minutes to praise the heroic efforts of Easy Company. Among Members of Congress, top military personnel and guests alike, dry eyes were few and far between.

The story of Easy Company is testament to the Allied forces' fight for freedom in World War II. Today, we benefit from their sacrifices made nearly sixty years ago, and for that, we are all eternally grateful. I know that the House of Representatives joins me in honoring these brave soldiers. Let us never forget their story.

WISR 680 AM

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, during the past 60 years, we have gone to war four times, landed on the moon, seen the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall. During the past 60 years, presidents have been shot and assassinated, computers were invented, presidents resigned and were impeached and the pope was shot. During the past 60 years, we've added two states to the union and amended the U.S. Constitution six times.

During the past 60 years, WISR 680 AM has kept residents of Butler County up to date on those events and more, becoming a part of the community in the process. WISR brought visits to Butler County by figures such as First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and presidential candidate John F. Kennedy into people's homes as well as provided an outlet for opinions by local residents.

WISR was licensed to broadcast by the Federal Communications Commission on Sept. 26, 1941. It was one of the first radio stations in northwestern Pennsylvania to focus on regional, local and community news as well as broadcast local editorials. It was also the first in the area to develop a local talk radio format. Hosts such as Dave Malarkey and before him Larry Berg offered the community a valuable outlet for the views.

The Rosenblum family owned the station for 55 years and the station call letters stand for Isaac Samuel Rosenblum, the father of the station founder, David. As a local, family run station, the station has supported and continues to back countless charity and community events.

I join the Butler area community in congratulating WISR for delivering quality news and talk radio to the area for 60 years. As a radio station, WISR was not only responsible for delivering the news but also took on an important role in shaping our community. I hope that the future allows many, many more generations of Butler area residents to learn to tune into to WISR.

HONORING TWO REMARKABLE INDIVIDUALS DURING HISPANIC HERITAGE WEEK

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, a wonderful thing about our country is how we celebrate each other in art, custom, food and friendship.

A "nation of immigrants" might have been blighted had Pilgrims not learned from Native Americans. Proof? Check the menu for the first Thanksgiving Dinner.

Now almost everyone samples each other's traditional dishes, catches the color and feeling of each other's special days, senses the human goodness in each heritage and faith. This is how strangers turn into neighbors in so many ways that our ways of getting along have become unique in the world.

It is so American no one else even comes close.

Now we are joyfully in another such season of sharing and appreciation.

On September 17, 1968, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives adopted House Joint Resolution 1299, creating an Hispanic Heritage Week. Twenty years later, Public Law 90-498 was enacted expanding the Week to a month eventually stretching from September 15 through October 15 each year. The period includes the anniversary of Mexican Independence and "birthdays" of many other Latin American countries.

Cultural sharing will take many forms across the United States of America. At heart, it will reveal itself in real people not only glad they are who they are but glad to be here.

LOS AMIGOS OF ORANGE COUNTY, persons who have met weekly for 23 years to talk over community concerns in my district, asked that the two following stories be shared. Millions of people create a blur but sketches of two—a book creator and a bookseller—are offered in the hope they will convey very personal, human glimpses of America's lively, evolving Hispanic Heritage.

[From *La Voz*, Nov. 16, 2000]

LIFE'S AN OPEN BOOK? CRACK IT

(By Galal Kernahan)

Miami? A big city in Florida? A river in Ohio?

Or is it someplace baked and a little bleached? Is it where the sun is a presence, winds sometimes mutter and deer browse on the other side of the hill? Is it where you could read the day away in an outhouse with no more interruption than a buzzing fly?

Rueben, the first of the five boys and two girls of Cipriano Marfinez and Rometia Rivas de Martinez, was born in Miami, Arizona, in 1940. There he grew to young manhood. His parents were transplanted Chihuahuenses. One took root. The other didn't.

The children attached their mother to that small copper town, but their father blew away on the notes of an alto saxophone. He made it big with Big Bands like the Glenn Miller Orchestra. By the time the road and that life got old and he got old, his boys and girls were men and women who remembered him no more clearly than he did them.

Rueben came to love books during his school years. He took them everywhere. They took him everywhere. All in Miami.

When he was 10, the town, like other Southwestern copper towns, was coming off its World War II-hyped mining high. By the time he graduated from high school, nothing was being hauled to the smelter anymore. At 18, he went to East Los Angeles.

Beside what books taught him, what did Miami teach? What has stayed with him? "My grade school was segregated to Apaches and Mexicans, but the teachers were good. I loved shop," remembers Rueben. "And Miami? It was so ugly, it was beautiful."

In California, he worked and read, got married and read, attended East Los Angeles Community College and read, had children and read and got divorced and read. Also, he raised three teenagers and read and lived to tell the tale.

Then he read and read and looked up to see he had nine grandchildren.

Rueben is more than 40 years a barber, more than 25 in Santa Ana. There were places and times in human history when barbers probably ran everything. They certainly knew everything that went on.

If they loved reading, too, they were formidable forces in the life of their communities. Rueben is a formidable force in the Orange County Latino community and far beyond.

Locally? Consider that most Latino candidates for any political office hold fundraisers in his Santa Ana bookstore. And now

with a unique cross-the-alley emporium of children's books he is reaching for youngsters.

Far beyond? Six years ago, he suggested to Community Leader and Actor Edward James Olmos ideas that became the Latino Book and Family Festival. Wherever it goes—Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, San Jose, San Diego, New York—Rueben's books anchor a "Book Village" that contributes directly to the goal of encouraging Latino parents to read to their children and children themselves to read. Families come by the thousands.

Acting on his own advice, he reaches for future generations with a unique emporium of children's books just cross-the-alley from his Santa Ana bookstore. It is full of color and lined with stories in Spanish and English . . . and Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chinese, and . . .

It all makes you wonder. Which is its purpose. Rueben's life is an open book he seems to read like a child. He turns pages, laughs and says, "What's this?" Then he tries to tell you he knew it all the time . . . that he planned it.

He is a strong believer we all should write down our goals. He writes his down. No one could have that many! And do credit to them, too.

On a coast-to-coast TV program, he commanded fathers to be perfect husbands: "Take out the trash and read to your children!" He, is a sought-after motivational speaker, a consultant to publishers, a friendly prod to writers and artists, an energizer to teachers and a media personality.

The biggest independent bookstore in Orange County, California, began as a few books for customers in a barber shop. Now he carpets the space next door with kids eager to be read to.

Rueben's life is an open book with one new chapter after another. He reads on and says, "Amazing!" And then, "That's me, too!"

VICTOR STRINGS WORDS TO COMPUTE LIFE x 13
(By Galal Kernahan)

As Victor Villasenor emerged from adolescence, his parents sent him to Mexico City. He was overwhelmed by what he saw. The world suddenly opened, widened, deepened.

He became ill. A doctor was summoned. "You are a doctor?" "Yes." "You are a Mexican?" "Yes," answered the baffled physician. Victor thought that, though all Mexicans might not be farm workers like his friends on his father's place in Oceanside, it was unlikely they would be persons in the professions.

New realities shook him. The discovery of books catapulted him into dawning understanding of human landscapes and feelings, strivings and failures. A conflicted teenage functional illiterate he started down an endless road to finding himself. In writing.

He drove himself for decades ten hours a day, six days a week untying, re-ordering and retying strings of words. Eventually, some books reached print and modest success. Then, in 1981, he wrote the made-for-TV motion picture *THE BALLAD OF GREGORIO CORTEZ*.

Well-wishers came to the large, old Spanish colonial house on a bluff in Oceanside, California. He paid an emotional tribute to his parents, Salvador and Lupe. He promised he would write their lives. All celebrated the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) telecast. The picture was released to movie houses the next year.

In 1991, ten years later, a more-than-500 page work—parts of it laboriously rewritten more than 40 times—became a milestone in Latino literature. *RAIN OF GOLD* sold more than 200,000 copies in hardcover. Any given copy may have been read by six-to-ten people.

It recounts the Mexican youth of Lupe and Sal: surviving the Revolution, their separate journeys across the Border, how they met on this side. It ends with their marriage in Santa Ana, but not before sketching the personalities of their mothers, Victor's grandmothers. His father's scandalized the faithful at her church in Corona. Her lively conversations—even arguments—with God and Mary did not go unnoticed.

Now, more than another decade has passed. Victor has gone through multiple rewritings of his latest book. It is about Sal, Lupe and their lives in 1929, 1930 and 1931. It is published by HarperBooks.

Salvador has been dead for years. Lupe passed away in 2000. Both are very alive in pages Victor has filled. So is the cosmically talkative grandmother who, together with Sal, finally makes clear to the author what lies behind all he has been writing.

There have been tumultuous first years of marriage not made any smoother by Sal's profession. He's a bootlegger.

Victor remembers what his father often told him: *Casi todos nacen y mueren y nunca abren los ojos. Poca gente abre los ojos porque no usa todo su sentido.* ("Almost everyone is born and dies without opening their eyes. Few people open their eyes because they don't try fully to perceive things.")

What that really might mean became clear in a startling brush with the law. Salvador is driving a truck heavily laden with barrelsful of whiskey in Corona. His well-connected mother is with him. A cop pulls them over.

She begins telling God the officer will not see the barrels and that she needs help for her son and that God owes her one and that she wants it right now! The cop looks in the back of the truck and says, "Nothing here, but you better get some air at a gas station because your tires are almost flat."

Crisis over, Sal asks, "How did you do that?" "Easy," she says, and explains.

"When people finish this book," Victor claims, "They are going to think magic is possible." The title: *THIRTEEN SENSES*.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN B. GOURLEY

HON. JOSEPH M. HOFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate John B. Gourley the Chairman of the East Norriton Township Board of Supervisors for twenty-four years as a distinguished community leader in this Pennsylvania community.

A forty-year resident of East Norriton, Mr. Gourley has served as vice president and twice as president of the Montgomery County Association of Township Supervisors. He was the founder and first president of the Delaware Valley Association of Township Officials which encompasses the Counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery. Mr. Gourley also founded and was the first vice president of the League of Municipalities which includes 56 Pennsylvania communities. He founded the first Township newsletter in East Norriton and initiated television coverage of township meetings.

After serving five years in the United States Navy, Mr. Gourley built a professional career as a national and executive sales manager in the chemical field. Mr. Gourley has been a dedicated member of multiple civic organiza-

tions including the American Legion Post in Jeffersonville, the Sons of Italy, the East Norriton Republican Committee, and the Boy Scouts of America. He is also a long time member of Visitation B.V.M. Roman Catholic Church.

Mr. Gourley is married to Nancy Pistilli-Gourley and they are the proud parents of John B. Gourley, Jr., Esquire, William Scott Gourley and Ann Marie Gourley. I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize John Gourley for his outstanding service and commitment.

IN MEMORY OF MR. CHET OBLOCK

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Chester A. Oblock, owner of the infamous Pyramid Cafe and beloved friend, for a lifetime of dedicated service to his community.

Mr. Oblock, a Cleveland native, has been a lifelong resident of the city's South Side. He is perhaps best known for the delicious meals he has been serving in the Pyramid Cafe since 1964. Three years later he began sponsoring the Pyramid Cafe slow-pitch softball team. The team grew and with practice became the first Cleveland team to win the Amateur Softball Association's National Men's Open Slow Pitch Tournament in 1975. In 1987, he was inducted into the Greater Cleveland Slow-Pitch Hall of Fame.

Mr. Oblock was known by his friends for his great love and generosity to all his players, friends, and family. When the team traveled out of Cleveland, he took money out of his own pocket to pay for the families of the softball players to stay in hotel rooms. More important than any of his prized softball games was his family.

Before sponsoring his prize-winning softball team, Mr. Oblock served his nation selflessly in military service. During World War II, he served in Europe with the Army's 104th Infantry Division, the "Timberwolves."

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the memory of Mr. Chester A. Oblock, a truly great man. Mr. Oblock is a man who truly will be missed in the Cleveland community. His love for not only the game of softball, but for all his community is an inspiration to many. His warm smile and gentle spirit will be remembered by many.

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AGAINST THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT ATTACKS LAUNCHED AGAINST THE UNITED STATES

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I, like you, have been watching in disbelief and sadness the reports from New York City and Washington, D.C. in the aftermath of the terrible attacks launched against the United States.