

PAYING TRIBUTE TO HENRY
BERNARD DANNELS

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a solemn heart that I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the life and memory of a valuable member of the community of Estes Park, Colorado. Henry Bernard Dannels died recently, at the age of seventy-eight. He was a kind mind with a caring heart and will surely be missed by all those whom Henry knew.

Mr. Dannels was born in Longmont, Colorado in 1923. As a teenager, he moved with his family to Estes Park where he attended high school. He later went on to graduate from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley after which he began his public service. Dannels served as a Lieutenant and Commanding Officer in the Navy during World War II in the Pacific theatre. After returning to Colorado, Henry became a fixture for the youth in his community, volunteering for the Boy Scouts of America as a Cubmaster, Scoutmaster and Explorer Advisor. In recognition of his efforts, he was honored with the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America as well as the Golden Key Award from the City of Estes Park.

Henry's true dedication and service to his community began in 1972. Following in his father's footsteps, he was elected as a town trustee for Estes Park. He served as a town trustee until he was elected Mayor in 1984. Mr. Dannels served as a dedicated and caring Mayor until his retirement in 1996. Prior to retiring, he established a long list of achievements. His efforts and accomplishments did not go unnoticed. December 18, 1992 was named "Mayor Bernie's Day."

Mr. Speaker, Henry was a great asset to the people and the town of Estes Park, Colorado. He fought for Americans in the Pacific as well as in City Hall. My thoughts and prayers go out to Mr. Dannels' friends and family during these trying times. Henry's efforts will serve as a benchmark for those who follow his lead and his contributions will not be forgotten.

SLOVAK PARLIAMENT NARROWLY
DEFEATS REPEAL OF CRIMINAL
DEFAMATION PROVISIONS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on November 8, Slovak Parliamentarian Tomas Galbavy, a member of the ruling Slovak Democratic Coalition, introduced an amendment to the Slovak penal code which would repeal articles that make defamation of certain public officials a crime. My fellow parliamentarian made an important stand at a time when many seem to believe that free speech is an expendable luxury. As Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I commend Deputy Galbavy for his efforts to strengthen one of the most important cornerstones of democracy.

The criminalization of slander, libel or defamation, as well as laws which purport to pro-

tect public officials or bodies from "insult," is a longstanding concern of Members of the Helsinki Commission. In fact, I have repeatedly raised concern about the use—or, more correctly—abuse of such laws. Most recently, at Commission hearings in September and October, I expressed concern about the use of such laws in the current crackdown on independent media in Azerbaijan. In November, "Insult laws" were again used as an excuse to close an independent paper in Azerbaijan. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, as an elected politician, I get "insulted" every day of the week—and twice on Sunday. It's part of the job.

I am not alone in my views. At OSCE meetings, the United States has repeatedly called for such laws to be repealed. Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Organization of American States Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression issued a joint statement in February 2000 which concluded that "criminal defamation laws should be abolished."

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, Slovakia's current criminal defamation law—a holdover from a bygone era—is not consistent with the international commitments and obligations it has undertaken as a free and independent state. I am particularly concerned that journalist Alex Kratky has been charged with a criminal offense for criticizing a speech delivered by Slovak President Schuster. If found guilty, Kratky faces two years in prison for his opinions.

Unfortunately, the Galbavy amendment was defeated by the narrowest of margins, failing by just one vote. Although Deputy Speaker Pavol Hrusovskys voted in favor of the amendment, most of the other parliamentary leaders either abstained or did not participate in the vote. The Slovak Parliament came so close to doing the right thing, so close to demonstrating the kind of regional leadership so desperately needed, but stopped short by one vote.

I know the Slovak Parliament has a great deal of work before it now, and I particularly appreciate the work of the Parliament and the Government in supporting the war on terrorism and their efforts to ensure that U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373 is fully implemented. At the same time, I believe that there are still opportunities for Slovakia to act on the important human rights issue of criminal defamation.

First, the Constitutional Court could declare the provisions of Articles 102, 103 and 206 unconstitutional—especially bearing in mind, as Deputy Minister Lubomir Fogas has noted, Slovakia's Constitution gives priority to Slovakia's international human rights obligations. I hope, however, that Slovakia's elected leaders will not wait for the court to act, since that can take a long time. Instead the initiative could be reconsidered and, with a few more Deputies voting to repeal defamation and libel from the criminal code, Slovakia would set an example for other countries to emulate.

IN SUPPORT OF MEGAN SMITH,
2002 WINTER OLYMPICS TORCH
RUNNER FOR THE SIXTH CON-
GRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Megan Smith, an outstanding young citizen from my home town of New Britain, Connecticut. Megan is an excellent student, exceptional athlete and is highly esteemed by her peers for her positive attitude, considerate nature and high standards. For possessing these characteristics, Megan has been given the great honor of being selected as a 2002 Winter Olympics Torch Runner for my district.

Her accomplishments speak for themselves. Megan is ranked in the top five percent of her class, and deftly balances this commitment to her studies with an equally strong commitment to her athletics. She is a top player on her school's volleyball and basketball teams, and has already been accepted to Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut, on a full basketball scholarship beginning next fall.

Despite her rigorous schedule, Megan devotes many hours to performing community service work. She divides her time between Gaffney School's special education preschool program; St. Francis Middle School's basketball activities; and at tryouts and practices for the Connecticut Starters 10 National Team. Because of Megan's leadership, scholarship, character and service to her community, she was inducted into New Britain High School's Chapter of the National Honor Society and also was designated the female recipient of the Wendy's High School Heisman Scholar Athlete Award.

I cannot think of a better person to represent the Sixth Congressional District during the Olympic Torch run. Megan is an exemplary young woman whose giving heart and extraordinary talents will bring her much success. I salute Megan Smith for her invaluable contributions to her school and to her community. Congratulations.

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE MIL-
LER PRESENTS WWII VETERAN
NICK COMINOS WITH MEDAL OF
HONOR

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of joining the family and friends of WWII Veteran Nick Cominos in a ceremony to present several medals on Saturday, December 1, 2001, just days before the 60th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. These medals are a long-overdue recognition of his heroic efforts in the Dalmatian Islands and Greece as part of a covert reconnaissance operation that led to the retreat of the Nazis from the area in 1944.

Federal military decorations are awarded to members of the armed forces exhibiting valor and self-sacrifice, the heroic acts of Mr. Nick Cominos are worthy of such an honor.

Almost 58 years ago, on Christmas Eve Nick Cominos and his Company boarded the liberty ship, *Pierre L'enfant*, to join a large convoy to the Atlantic. Thirty-one days later Cominos' Company landed on the only one of the Dalmation Islands in Adriatic Sea not occupied by the Nazis, the Island of Vis.

From their base on the Island of Vis, Company C raided the Nazi occupied Island of Solta. Within two days, Company C and their allies had captured the island. This was not without a cost. Company C lost one man and six others were wounded, including Nick Cominos.

After recuperating and returning to Vis, in August of 1944, Mr. Cominos and his Company C were deployed to Greece where they parachuted behind enemy lines and conducted covert reconnaissance missions to disrupt the German occupation of Greece. The Nazis retreated from Greece in November of 1944, at which time the Greek/American Operational Group was disbanded.

The type of covert ground operations first used by Mr. Cominos and the men of Company C, 2671st Reconnaissance Battalion of the Office of Strategic Services are now being used to help fight the war against terrorism in Afghanistan.

Mr. Cominos and other World War II veterans have received numerous medals commemorating their service to this country during the war. However, because the records of the Office of Strategic Service were classified until 1988, the individual acts of bravery of Mr. Cominos and Company C have not been officially recognized.

Friday, December 7, 2001 is the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Many have drawn parallels between the terrorists attacks of September 11th and Pearl Harbor.

We have a living parallel. A WWII veteran and his Company who pioneered the types of special covert operations which are helping to bring closure to the tragic events of September 11.

In a time of national emergency, when we are once again engaged in military operations on foreign soil in an international effort to defend freedom, it is important to praise those who have served our country so courageously in the past and whose actions make them role models for our troops in Afghanistan and in future military efforts.

It is my honor to publicly recognize Mr. Nick Cominos for his acts of courage, heroism, and sacrifice in WWII.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CADET PATRICK HUX

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a solemn heart that I would like to take this opportunity and pay tribute to a young man whose life was taken during his service to protect others. Cadet Patrick Hux, of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado passed away on November 25, 2001. As our nation mourns his loss, our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends during this difficult period of time.

On a snowy night, Patrick and fellow cadets witnessed a driver in distress when the driv-

er's car, due to icy conditions, sped out of control and crashed into an embankment. Despite dangerous road conditions, the cadets stopped to provide the driver with assistance. This noble gesture cost Patrick his life. While assisting the driver, Patrick warned his fellow cadets of the impending danger. His honorable actions left him in harm's way.

Patrick is not unlike like the many members of our armed forces. He wanted to serve his country and he chose the Air Force as a way to help protect America. Many service people have lost their lives in the defense of the citizens of this nation, on and off the battlefield. For Patrick, his battlefield that night was an icy, snow-covered road.

Mr. Speaker, during this time of national tragedy, Patrick symbolizes what our men and women in the armed services stand for. They fight for our protection, for our way of life, and our freedom. Patrick looked out for his fellow citizens that terrible night, and his actions saved the lives of others. I would like to express my condolences to Patrick's family, the Air Force Academy, his fellow cadets, and friends. He touched the lives of many and he will be greatly missed.

CONGRATULATING LA OPINIÓN NEWSPAPER

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate one of the most influential Spanish Language newspapers in the United States on its 75th anniversary. Founded on September 16, 1926, La Opinión has played an important role in the development of the Hispanic community by reporting on issues relevant to the many Hispanic subgroups in the United States.

La Opinión's journalistic contributions to the Hispanic community are many. Sixty percent of my constituents are Hispanic, they range from newly arrived to fifth generation immigrants. As the leading Spanish language newspaper, my constituents depend on La Opinión for various types of information, including news from their home countries, national events and learning about America's way of life. La Opinión provides useful information for everyday life, creates awareness of local, national and international issues, and promotes political consciousness.

La Opinión has established itself as a leader in the information world. It has demonstrated its true commitment to inform and educate the community objectively. However, its success rests most importantly in the ability to present material in a human way and making every story applicable to the reader's life.

Once again, I congratulate and commend the staff of La Opinión for their commitment to inform the Latino community in the 31st District of California for the last 75 years.

AUSTIN-EAST AND MARYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, every Member is proud when one of their hometown football teams has a winning season, but I am especially proud to say that two of my District's high school teams have won a Tennessee State Championship in their respective divisions. The Austin-East Roadrunners from Knoxville and the Maryville Rebels fought their way to victory on Saturday, December 1st.

For the Maryville Rebels, this was a remarkable repeat performance. As Running Back Carl Stewart said following the game, "It's tradition." In fact, this is the third time in four years that the Rebels have carried the title of State Champions. One of the keys to success that these players share is the belief that every game, no matter the odds, is winnable. They consistently remain focused on the next play and give it all they have.

For the Austin-East Roadrunners, this season was especially rewarding. Many of the Roadrunners had played together since they were seven-years-old, and Saturday's game offered the chance to end their season side-by-side as champions. As Austin-East Senior Mark Andrews said following the game, "Just tell Knoxville we've got a state championship * * *" To Mark and his teammates I say, I believe your team's efforts deserve to be shared with Knoxville and with the entire House of Representatives. Congratulations.

Those of us who have played football at any level know that it requires a lot of hard work, sweat and even, from time to time, a few tears beginning in summer training to achieve a state championship in December. These high school students have shown us all what can be accomplished with the right focus and dedication to excellence.

I believe we can all learn a lesson from the fine young men on both teams. Head Coaches George Quarles of Maryville and Stanton Stevens of Austin-East, along with every player, coach, parent and fan, should be proud of these teams' efforts—I know I am.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO TONY BOBICKI

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Tony Bobicki of Alamosa, Colorado. Tony has recently been named to carry the Olympic torch for the 2002 Winter Games. As a representative of the City of Alamosa, Tony will be among 11,500 Americans selected to carry the torch across the United States.

This is a great honor for many individuals in the country, but more so for Tony. Tony was selected for overcoming a condition that threatened to take away his ability to walk. Diagnosed with hip socket deterioration at the age of six, Tony was told the chance to walk