

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

again would be slim to none. With a determination known to many in the community, Tony refused to give up, left his crutches in the second grade, and learned to walk again. He went on to compete in the athletic arena and was awarded the Outstanding Athlete of the Year as a senior in high school.

Today, Tony is Captain of the Volunteer Fire Department, and with the use of a shoe insertion, leads a normal life. His condition still provides discomfort, but Tony is determined to live on. His determination led to his appointment to carry the torch for the community of Alamosa. In reaction to this honor, Tony stated he will "not walk but jog," during his torch bearing opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Tony Bobicki and his will to succeed in life. He has overcome insurmountable odds to walk again and his courage serves as a model for those suffering from similar ailments. I would like to extend my congratulations to Tony, his family, and the community upon receiving this honor for Alamosa and the State of Colorado. Good luck in your "jog" Tony and I wish you the best in your future endeavors.

A DRUM ROLL FOR SAGINAW  
HIGH'S MARCHING BAND

**HON. JAMES A. BARCIA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2001*

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sound the trumpets for the 107-member Saginaw High School Trojans Marching Band for consistently playing their way to victory in various musical competitions and also to praise Band Director Jeannine Coughlin for her persistence and determination in returning the Marching Trojans to a place of prominence among high school bands in mid-Michigan and across the nation.

When Jeannine Coughlin first picked up the director's baton in 1993 to lead the Marching Trojans, band membership was down to a low of thirty musicians and it was a struggle to recruit students to participate. Jeannine expeditiously remedied the situation by persuading young people that learning to play an instrument was within their capabilities if they were willing to put in the effort and practice. Her confidence and enthusiasm quickly spread throughout the school and a top notch marching band was reborn.

Moreover, the band's success has amplified, reaching well beyond the confines of its practice room and its performance venues. In their new black and gold uniforms, band members proudly display a sense of school pride and unity that goes a long way in instilling an admirable self-image and strong sense of self-respect for the entire student body.

I have had the privilege and pleasure of listening to the band and watching their well-choreographed dance routines as we marched together in a parade. I can personally attest to their superior musical skills, lively cadence and unbridled spirit. Their talent also has been widely recognized wherever they perform, including a first-place finish last May in the parade review competition at the Showcase Music Festival in Atlanta, Georgia. The squad beat out 22 other high school bands from across the country for the grand prize trophy

and \$200, The band also scored another first-place victory in the 2001 Mackinaw City Memorial Day Parade.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the Saginaw High School Marching Trojans and Band Director Jeannine Coughlin for energizing the musical talents of young people and for providing unparalleled rhythmic interludes at sporting events, parades and so many functions throughout the year. Their dynamic and mellifluous performances will linger in the memories of listeners long after the show is over.

OVER-THE-ROAD BUS SECURITY  
AND SAFETY ACT OF 2001

**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2001*

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I join my Transportation and Infrastructure Committee colleagues in introducing the Over-the-Road Bus Security and Safety Act of 2001. Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, over-the-road bus drivers and passengers in the United States have been the targets of many serious assaults, including one assault killing seven passengers and another assault injuring 33 passengers. In addition, there have been at least three other serious over-the-road bus security breaches. Recent terrorist acts on Israeli buses and in bus stations further heighten the need for stronger bus security measures in the United States.

The intercity bus industry serves more than 4,000 destinations in the United States, and making intercity bus facilities secure is indeed a formidable task. Federal financial support is needed for passenger and baggage screening in terminals; implementation of a ticket identification system; emergency communications systems linked to police and emergency personnel; enhanced driver compartment security; increased security training; development and maintenance of information and communications systems with law enforcement; installing cameras and video surveillance equipment; and other measures to make buses, terminals, and garages more secure. The Over-the-Road Bus Security and Safety Act of 2001 authorizes the funding and requires the planning necessary to make these critical bus security improvements.

The legislation authorizes \$200 million in fiscal year 2002 to allow the Secretary of Transportation to make grants to private bus operators for system-wide security improvements to their operations. The bill imposes a 25-cent passenger surcharge in fiscal years 2002, 2003, and 2004 on tickets over \$5. The proceeds of the fee will be used by the Secretary for security grants in 2003 and future years.

Over-the-road buses, which transport approximately 774 million passengers annually, are the only viable means of transportation for many people throughout the country. They serve thousands of communities that have no other form of intercity public transportation and provide the only affordable means of transportation for millions in urban areas. Just as passage of aviation security legislation is vital to encouraging passengers to fly, again, intercity bus security legislation is needed to restore confidence in our intercity bus system.

The bill is not a handout. Since September 11, the intercity bus industry has spent millions on enhanced security measures. The funds provided by the bill will supplement measures already undertaken by the industry to increase the security of the bus system and restore the public's confidence in traveling by bus. I urge my colleagues, all of whom have communities in their districts served by intercity buses, to support this legislation.

Although I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of this bill, I strongly encourage the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to take the next step and develop a comprehensive infrastructure security package. Recently, Congress enacted the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, the most important aviation security legislation of the last three decades. Although the Act creates a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for all transportation security functions, we have much work left to do. We have enormous security needs among all of our modes of transportation—from passenger and freight railroads, transit systems, and pipelines, to bridges, ports, and tunnels—and other infrastructure facilities, including public buildings, locks and dams, and wastewater and drinking water facilities.

For instance, I am very concerned about securing the railways that carry more than 40 percent of the nation's freight traffic and millions of passengers—both commuters and intercity travelers. Amtrak continues to play a vital role in the nation's transportation network. For example, even before the terrorist attacks, Amtrak carried more passengers between New York City and Washington, D.C. than either of the air shuttles. In cities and their surrounding areas throughout the nation, millions rely on commuter trains to get to work each day. New York's Penn Station handles nearly 400,000 Amtrak, rail commuter, and rail transit passengers every day. Yet the infrastructure—the bridges, tunnels, track, stations, yards, and other facilities—that supports all of these movements is not secure from sabotage or other terrorist acts.

At the same time, the Nation's freight railroads carry tremendous volumes of hazardous materials—more than one million tons daily of hazardous chemicals, 15 percent of the nation's total. In addition, the railroads are major transporters of coal, agricultural commodities, the products of mines and quarries, and manufactured goods, especially automobiles. If the railroads were shut down due to a terrorist action, the national economy would quickly grind to a halt.

A relatively small number of key bridges and rail transportation nodes are vital to the smooth and continuous flow of traffic. Likewise, a number of major tunnels handle significant volumes of freight and passenger traffic. A terrorist attack on any one of these facilities could have devastating consequences in terms of lives lost or economic disruption. However, one of the outgrowths of the September 11 tragedies has been a thorough and ongoing assessment of our transportation infrastructure vulnerabilities. We have begun to determine what will be needed to ensure the safety and security of those who ride the nation's railroads and what must be done to ensure the uninterrupted flow of rail freight traffic. Some of these estimates are preliminary, but they do provide a good initial reading of the needs.