

know as the Big Red One. I recommend that all in this House take the time to view it. As Mr. Merli recounts the events of that night in Belgium to Roger Mudd, the emotional loss of his assistant gunner, whom Mr. Merli views throughout time as the real hero that night, tears welled up in his eyes. Selfless as always, Mr. Merli states that the true heroes are the American soldiers who did not come back and gave their lives in the service of their nation.

Upon returning from the war, Gino Merli served our nation's veterans for thirty-four years as an adjudication officer at the Veterans Administration Center in Plains Township, Pennsylvania. Service and sacrifice were the foundations upon which he lived his life. This nation has been truly blessed by men such as Mr. Merli who have sustained us in times of war and healed the veteran in times of peace.

In a letter to an appreciative citizen, Mr. Merli wrote:

Not everyone can be a Medal of Honor recipient. But everyone can take pride in himself—have pride in his heritage. We must always keep trying to better ourselves and our surrounding and we must never quit. Always remember America is you and me.

I want to assure the many military men and women from Northeastern Pennsylvania and throughout the country who are serving in harm's way, that this nation will never break the sacred promise between the veterans and the people for whom they have sacrificed.

Mr. Merli fought the good fight in peacetime and war. He will be sorely missed, but his actions and sacrifice and service to his country will never be forgotten. From a grateful American people and nation we extend our condolences to Mr. Merli's family. Godspeed Pfc Merli, we know that you will hold the high ground until relieved.

Mr. Speaker, I request that Mr. Merli's Medal of Honor Citation be included as part of the permanent CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for future generations to honor and read.

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to:

MERLI, GINO J.—Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Army, 18th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Sars la Bruyere, Belgium, 4-5 September 1944. Entered service at: Peckville, Pa. Birth: Scranton, Pa. G.O. No.: 64, 4 August 1945.

Citation: He was serving as a machine gunner in the vicinity of Sars la Bruyere, Belgium, on the night of 4-5 September 1944, when his company was attacked by a superior German force. Its position was overrun and he was surrounded when our troops were driven back by overwhelming numbers and firepower. Disregarding the fury of the enemy fire concentrated on him he maintained his position, covering the withdrawal of our riflemen and breaking the force of the enemy pressure. His assistant machine gunner was killed and the position captured; the other 8 members of the section were forced to surrender. Pfc. Merli slumped down beside the dead assistant gunner and feigned death. No sooner had the enemy group withdrawn than he was up and firing in all directions. Once more his position was taken and the captors found 2 apparently lifeless bodies. Throughout the night Pfc. Merli stayed at his weapon. By daybreak the enemy had suffered heavy losses, and as our troops launched an assault, asked for a truce. Our negotiating party, who accepted the German

surrender, found Pfc. Merli still at his gun. On the battlefield lay 52 enemy dead, 19 of whom were directly in front of the gun. Pfc. Merli's gallantry and courage, and the losses and confusion that he caused the enemy, contributed materially to our victory.

**A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LYNWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CA, AND ITS OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP FOR LYNWOOD BUSINESS OWNERS**

**HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 12, 2002*

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, whereas, the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce, California, was founded in 1946, and W.W. Jones, principal of the high school, was elected the first president of the chamber, and Jack Weaver was elected the first secretary;

Whereas, 2001 marks the 55th anniversary of the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce, California, an organization that has provided outstanding assistance to its members, helping their businesses flourish;

Whereas, the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce, California represents over 1,500 home-based, commercial, industrial, and manufacturing businesses in Lynwood;

Whereas, the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce, California continues to promote area businesses through functions such as the Annual Business and Economic Development Expo;

Whereas, the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce, California hosts important events for business owners, including forums for minority and women business owners and the Annual Legislative Conference, which allows businesses to meet with their elected officials from the local to Federal level; and

Whereas, the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce, California provides youth scholarships, including the Mr. and Miss Lynwood Scholarship Competition and the Annual Educational Golf Classic, which have generated over \$150,000 in the past years.

Now therefore, be it recognized that Congresswoman JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD proudly recognizes that the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce, California serves the businesses of Lynwood with distinction; and provides important scholarships for children and assists business owners, including minorities and women, to promote their businesses.

**FATHERS ARE IMPORTANT**

**HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 12, 2002*

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of America's fathers.

Mr. Speaker, fathers are important. They're important to our communities, our civic institutions and most of all they are important to their families, especially their children. Tonight, 40 percent of American children will go to sleep in a home without their father. Forty mil-

lion children will see another day come and go without hearing the sound of their father's voice or playing catch with their Dad in the backyard or having their father tuck them into bed. And what's even more sad is that it's not because their fathers went on a business trip or had to work the late shift. It's because their fathers are gone. And for these children tonight is going to be a lot like last night and may be a lot like tomorrow night. Forty million American children have not seen their fathers in over a year.

Mr. Speaker, being a father has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. Watching my children grow and teaching them right from wrong has given me more joy than I ever thought possible. Just this last year, I became a grandfather for the first time. Watching my son be a father to his son has reconfirmed for me the importance and joys of fatherhood. I salute the many single mothers who work hard to support and care for their children. But, fathers are important. They can't be replaced.

**RECOGNITION OF CARL "BRONKO" STANKOVIC**

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 12, 2002*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Mr. Carl "Bronko" Stankovic, a proud World War II veteran and dear friend of mine. Bronko has recently brought to my attention an inspirational poem written by his friend Bev Freeman, of Morgan Hill, California, during the Second World War. Bev passed away last year leaving behind not only loved ones but strong friendships forged during the war. After the funeral, Bronko and Bev's daughter, Carolyn Turner, came across a poem written by Bev and two members of his Tank Battalion that embodied the war experience not only for Bronko, but many other veterans.

This poem speaks powerfully to the uncertainty and fear faced by World War II combatants. The emotions it represents rings true with Bronko, and the hundreds of veterans he has shared this poem with. Bev's poem has been copied and given out at reunions since its discovery, and now I would like to share it with the Congress of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I submit this untitled poem as a tribute to Bev's tank crew and to the memory of all our lost World War II veterans:

Look, God I have never spoken to you.  
But now, I want to say, "How do you do?"  
You see, God, they told me you didn't exist.  
And, like a fool, I believed all this.

Last night from my turret I saw your sky.  
I figured then they told me a lie.  
Had I taken time to see things you made,  
I'd have known they weren't calling a spade a spade.

I wonder, God, if you'd shake my hand?  
Somehow I feel that you will understand.  
Funny I had to come to this Hellish place  
Before I had time to see your face!

Well, I guess there isn't much more to say.  
But I'm sure glad God that I met you today.  
I guess the hour will soon be here.  
I'm not afraid since I know you're near.

There's the signal; Well, God, I've got to go.  
I like you a lot—this I want you to know.

Look now, this will be a kind of a rough fight.

Who knows, I may come to your house to-night.

Though I wasn't friendly to you before, I wonder, God, if you'd wait at the door? Look, I'm crying, Oh, me shedding tears; I wish I had known you these many years.

Well, I have to go now, God, so good-bye. Strange, since I met you, I'm not afraid to die.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this poem inspires my distinguished colleagues as it has inspired me. The Greatest Generation has given so much to younger generations that I am happy to give something back by submitting this poem to the House of Representatives. I would ask my colleagues to join me in honoring World War II veterans with a moment of silence.

#### PERMANENT DEATH TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 6, 2002*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2143, the Permanent Death Tax Repeal Act and I urge my colleagues to lend this measure their support.

This measure would repeal the sunset provision pertaining to the death tax that was included in the comprehensive tax relief legislation passed by Congress in the spring of 2001.

Without passage of today's bill, the death tax provisions, which are gradually phased out over the next 8 years, will revert to 2001 levels in 2011.

The estate tax is an outmoded policy that has long outlived its usefulness. Alternatively known as the death tax, this tax was instituted in 1916 to prevent too much wealth from congregating with the wealthy capitalist families in early 20th century America. The law failed in its original purpose, as the truly wealthy are always able to shelter their income with the help of tax attorneys that the middle-class cannot afford.

Instead, as incomes have risen in the past 30 years, the death tax, like so much of the Tax Code, has begun to impact the middle class, especially those with cash poor estates, like small businesses or family farms.

The Congress addressed this problem last year, by providing for a 10-year phase-out of the death tax. However, this structure makes advanced estate planning difficult, especially for those planning for after 2011.

Given this, it makes sense to simply repeal the sunset provisions affecting the death tax after 2010. This measure accomplishes this goal, and I urge my colleagues to join in support.

#### A STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR ALEX STEINER

**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 12, 2002*

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, Alex Steiner, Holocaust survivor and longtime resident of Highland Park, New Jersey, died May 23, 2002 in Oregon. Alex ("Sanyi," to his intimates) was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1920. He was a young man when World War Two came to his native land. Like many able-bodied Jewish male citizens, he was confined to a Hungarian labor camp for most of the War. After the War, Alex, his mother and older sister (their father, an older brother and many other extended family members did not survive), were displaced persons in Germany. They immigrated to the United States in 1949 to New Brunswick, New Jersey, where Alex's uncle sponsor and his family lived.

Alex embraced American patriotism and bought into the American dream. He was hardworking and ambitious for himself and for his family. Among his occupations he owned a shoe store in New Brunswick and sold commercial real estate. He and his wife Julie ("Joli"), a concentration camp survivor, extended themselves to provide a comfortable home in a good neighborhood for the family. Alex was always openly grateful to the United States for providing him a chance for the good life. He often insisted that few understood how unparalleled in goodness and opportunity our country is.

After his retirement and his wife's death, Alex moved with his son to Portland where his lawyer daughter and her family lived. He was a loving, attentive grandparent to his two grandsons and an active optimistic person to the moment of his final illness.

Alex Steiner was a lively, fun-loving, voluble, energetic social man. He was a talented musician who played several instruments and could readily pick up any piece of music. In Germany he led an orchestra that performed for American service personnel. When he came to America, he brought as an appreciative present for his young American cousin a full-sized accordion.

He was a loving relative, whose closeness to his uncle and others was especially touching. Survived by his son, daughter and two grandsons, he will be missed as a bright spot in life by those who knew him well.

#### TRIBUTE TO CLINTON, MISSOURI

**HON. IKE SKELTON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 12, 2002*

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this means to congratulate the city of Clinton, Missouri, for being recognized as the first recipient of the "Random Acts of Service" award sponsored by Hilton Hotels Corporation. In response to a national re-commitment to the service of our neighborhoods and our nation, Hilton Hotels launched a nationwide community effort aimed at committing one million random acts of service in 2002.

The community of Clinton, Missouri, in conjunction with the program "Random Acts of Service" will be involved in many volunteer efforts during the months of May and June. Volunteers from Hilton Hotels and citizens of Clinton, Missouri, will be restoring the Historic Missouri Artesian Park in Clinton, among other projects.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the city of Clinton for helping to make their community and our great country a better place to live. I know that Members of the House will join me in wishing them all the best in the days ahead.

#### TRIBUTE TO HENNINGER HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

**HON. JAMES T. WALSH**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 12, 2002*

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Henninger High School Boys Basketball Team for winning the Class A State Championship. The win was a great testament to the hard work and dedication of this team and its staff.

The Black Knights of Henninger made history when they won the Class A championship title by defeating McQuaid Jesuit High School of Rochester, 71 to 56. They were the first team in their section to bring home a Class A championship. On top of this great victory the Black Knights had a close to perfect season winning 25 of their 27 games played.

Henninger player Chris Turner was deserving of special recognition by breaking the Class A single-game record, scoring 38 points to aid in the teams victory. He and fellow teammate Jerice Crouch were also players on the New York All-State Team and helped to carry the Black Knights to their victory.

I would also like to give a special recognition to Joe Mazella for his dedicated service as Head Coach to the Black Knights. He is going to be stepping down from his position at the end of this season. Mazella finished his career with an impressive record of 245 wins and 78 losses. Under his direction, the team won nine Onondaga League championships and five sectional crowns. Personally he has won the All-Central New York coach of the year twice, once in 1995 and then again in 2002.

On behalf of the people of the 25th district of New York, it is my honor to congratulate the Henninger High School Basketball Team and its coaching staff on their Class A Championship. With these remarks I would like to recognize the following players and staff: Chris Turner, Chase Frazer, Jerice Crouch, Quincy Fulmer, Markese Brown, Jason Nelson, Justin Wright, Terrance Evans, Roger Robinson, Erris Robinson, Dan Rogers, Lawrence Graser, Lenell Graham, Sedric Hawkins, and Head Coach: Joe Mazella.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JIM DeMINT**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 12, 2002*

Mr. DeMINT. Mr. Speaker, on June 11, 2002 I was unavoidably detained and was not