

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to recognize an outstanding Oregonian and public servant on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his service to the Pine Grove Fire Department. Friends and colleagues of Edward Riddell Lage, Jr. will soon observe the passage of the half-century milestone in which he has helped protect the lives and property of his fellow citizens. Like each of them, I stand in awe of Eddie's remarkable dedication to others. I take great pride in adding my voice to the chorus of Oregonians who have expressed gratitude for his many contributions to his community.

Mr. Speaker, Eddie Lage is a fourth-generation farmer who was born July 28, 1936, into a well-respected Oregon farm family. As a young man, he joined the all-volunteer Pine Grove Fire Department on May 12, 1953, beginning what would come to be a lifetime spent in community service. Eddie's fellow volunteers describe him as a tireless and faithful firefighter with a near perfect record of attendance at drills and other meetings. This commitment would ultimately be rewarded with Eddie's appointment as fire chief as well as to a position on the department's board of directors. He remains a fixture among the community's volunteer firefighters, inspiring them with his selfless dedication to others. Perhaps most remarkably, he has no plans to give himself a well-deserved rest.

Eddie exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism and good citizenship, and the Oregonians he helps keep safe owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude. In addition to his service on the Pine Grove Fire Department, he has also served as a member of the National Ski Patrol for 25 years, as well as the Crag Rats, an outfit in the Columbia Gorge that rescues climbers from nearby Mt. Hood. If there is an organization dedicated to helping Oregonians in their hour of need, chances are that Eddie is a member of that organization. As with his service as a volunteer firefighter, the work he has done as a rescuer has been totally without pay. The satisfaction of helping others is the only compensation that he desires.

Mr. Speaker, Eddie Lage has served as a board member and past president of the Washington/Oregon Canning Pear Association, where he advocated on behalf of his fellow Northwest orchardists. Eddie has also served the young people of his area, donating his time and energy to helping ensure bright futures for those who come after him.

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He has been active with the Boy Scouts of America and served as a member of the Columbia Pacific Council. He has held the role of an advisory member of the Future Farmers of America; and perhaps most admirably, Eddie served for 8 years as a member of the Oregon National Guard, proudly wearing the uniform of these United States.

Eddie Lage personifies the well-trained and highly motivated public servant who is dedicated to the protection of his community. He has sacrificed his time, risked his life, endured discomfort, and shouldered tremendous burdens for no other reason than his commitment to others.

Mr. Speaker, most of us spend our lives hoping that we will leave the world a better place than we found it. Eddie Lage need not entertain such a hope. In his case, it has long since been fulfilled. I am grateful for Eddie's devotion to his fellow citizens. I am honored to represent such a fine man in the United States Congress and to call him a friend.

THE FORGOTTEN EXODUS: JEWISH REFUGEES FROM ARAB LANDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as Israel and Palestine take steps towards peace and as President Bush and the State Department released the road map for peace in the Middle East, I would like to draw attention to an important issue in the peace process. The issue of refugees is widely regarded as one of the most contentious aspects of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

However, up until now the debate has focused primarily on the plight of Palestinian refugees and the question of the right of return. Mr. Speaker, it is critical that future peace negotiations and discussions, specifically on the rights of refugees, address both sides of the issue, both Arab and Jewish. Many people do not realize that during the years following the establishment of the State of Israel, more Jews than Arabs became refugees. It is estimated that over 900,000 Jews were stripped of their property and expelled from Arab nations. Approximately 600,000 refugees were absorbed and assimilated by Israel, and the remaining 300,000 fled to other nations, including the United States and Canada.

At a time, Mr. Speaker, when Jews face severe persecution, economic deprivation, discrimination, and expulsion from Arab lands, Jews turn to Israel as a place to begin their lives anew. Israel opened her arms and welcomed the refugees, granting Arab Jews citizenship and welcoming them into Israeli society. Jews in Arab nations were forced to forfeit the lives they had worked so hard to achieve, to abandon their homes and livelihoods. They had to turn their backs on centuries of Jewish history, culture, and community. They had to leave behind schools, synagogues, hospitals, and businesses, all without compensation and all confiscated by the various Arab governments.

However, the fact that Israel chose to absorb and assimilate the refugees from Arab nations does not lessen the

fact that they were all expelled or otherwise compelled to leave their homelands.

I have personally spoken with several of my colleagues in Congress about this often-forgotten aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They agree on the importance of holding a congressional hearing on this subject and the need to educate Members of Congress and to ensure that they and the public are informed of the issues at stake and the sacrifices made by Jews from Arab lands when they were forced to leave their homes and countries.

Mr. Speaker, Congress cannot continue to be silent on the plight of Jewish refugees. It is critical that Congress address this issue while the refugees are still alive. By doing so, we can ensure that justice for Jewish refugees assumes its rightful place in the debate. And this must be done while we can still address their rights as victims.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, along with nearly all Americans, I felt a great sense of pride at the competence and skill displayed by our military in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was extremely gratifying to see nearly all Americans united behind our troops. Even though all did not agree with the idea behind the war, at least they supported the troops.

Over the last several months, a number of communities in my district provided meals for military personnel being transported across Nebraska. That is not a big deal, but this spirit of support was really a rebirth of a project called the North Platte Canteen. The North Platte Canteen's history is as follows: just 10 days after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, North Platte, Nebraska, residents learned that on December 17, 1941, Company D, Nebraska National Guard troops, were scheduled to travel through North Platte aboard a military train. According to sources, that train could possibly make a stop in North Platte on its way to the west coast. So nobody