

want to note the contributions of the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum under General Austin's leadership, and the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Division of the New York Army National Guard, located in my district, who just shipped out to Iraq on Monday. While they are serving in Iraq, I will be fighting to pass legislation to ensure that they receive full military retirement credit for their days of service at Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

I am pleased to note that today we are passing legislation to correct a longstanding inequity in survivor benefits for the spouses of our fallen veterans. The "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005" provides for a 5-year phase-in to eliminate the Widow's Tax. This unfair tax penalizes the widows and widowers of military retirees by reducing their Survivor Benefit Plan benefit from 55 percent of the retiree's pension to 35 percent once they reach age 62, normally the same age she or he is eligible for Social Security. The Social Security benefit the surviving spouse receives is often less than the reduction in the benefit, which results in a net loss of income. This legislation brings long overdue relief to the surviving spouses.

I will continue to support the members of Armed Forces in every way that I can. We owe all of them a debt of gratitude which we can never repay. They helped to make this country what it is today, and they have brought peace to other nations across the globe.

I would like to thank my colleagues from New York Representatives RANGEL and WALSH for organizing today's moment of silence for America's fallen soldiers.

#### FALLEN HEROES

SPEECH OF

#### HON. MAC THORNBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, on this Memorial Day, let us remember Marine Lance Corporal Aaron Austin. He was a young man from my district who loved our country and who lost his life fighting for its ideals in Iraq.

Lance Corporal Aaron Austin was a 21-year old from Sunray, Texas. He was part of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, and 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California. Aaron died April 26, 2004 near Fallujah on his second tour of duty in Iraq.

His family and friends described him as a warrior who was not afraid of anything. After joining the Marines, Aaron quickly became a leader of his machine gun team. He was the product of a small town and enjoyed the outdoors, sports and hanging out with his friends.

Survivors of Corporal Austin are parents, Doug Austin of Amarillo and De'on Miller of Lovington, New Mexico; two brothers, Eric Austin of Amarillo and Mike Austin of Las Vegas, Nevada; his maternal grandparents, Harvey Grigsby and Virgie Thomas of Lovington; his paternal grandmother, Juanita Austin of Yorba Linda, California; and many aunts and uncles. Aaron had planned to wed his fiancée, Tiffany Frank of Phoenix, Arizona on December 11, 2004. Aaron was loved by many and will be remembered as a courageous Marine.

Those who wish for the liberty of all people will forever owe a debt to Corporal Austin. This young man from the Texas Panhandle became a hero when he refused to be governed by fear and sacrificed his life for us and our safety.

Lance Corporal Aaron Austin has joined an unbroken line of patriots who dared to die so that freedom might live and grow and increase its blessings.

May God continue to bless our Nation with such heroes.

#### HONORING THE CITY OF WARSAW ON ITS SESQUICENTENNIAL

#### HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to congratulate the City of Warsaw, Indiana, and its residents on the city's sesquicentennial anniversary.

When Mathew Springer built Warsaw's first permanent residence—a tamarack log cabin on the edge of a swampy wilderness—in 1836, America was a young, vibrant nation, expanding rapidly across the continent from its eastern shores. Warsaw then was in the crossroads of this westward movement, and the region was rapidly populated by an intrepid collection of settlers much like Springer. Among those who came to inhabit this western land were traders, trappers, merchants and farmers, who put down roots and laid the foundation for the thriving community we see today.

Within two short decades of the construction of Springer's cabin, Warsaw had become a permanent community, a county seat worthy of incorporation in its own right. The original traders and merchants had constructed stores to sell their wares, community associations had formed, schools were constructed and a local government was firmly in place. The majestic courthouse, built by the citizens of Warsaw during this time of exciting development, still stands in the heart of the city as a symbol of the longevity of the city and its institutions.

It is striking to imagine the extent to which Warsaw's 19th century commercial enterprises have developed and informed the current economic engines of the region. In 1895, for example, Revra DePuy founded a small company to manufacture rather innocuous medical equipment like wire mesh and wooden splints. Today, firms such as Zimmer, Biomet, and DePuy have made Kosciusko County the center of the world's orthopedic manufacturing industry.

When thinking of the history of Warsaw and Kosciusko County, one cannot forget the natural splendor of the surrounding region, which has served as an attraction for settlers and visitors, alike, since the early 19th century. In addition to the simple enjoyment that the local community derives from them, Kosciusko's many lakes are a foremost recreational and tourist center in the State of Indiana. Kosciusko not only hosts visitors from across the state, but, indeed, from across America because of the county's beauty.

As Warsaw celebrates the 150th anniversary of its incorporation, it is my sincere pleasure to join in recognizing the valuable con-

tributions that the City of Warsaw and Kosciusko County have made to the region, the State of Indiana and America itself.

#### RECOGNIZING MICHAEL A. FELIX

#### HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Michael Felix, a leader in my district who has dedicated his life to educating students of all ages and improving the quality of life of military veterans in El Monte, California.

Mr. Felix served his country proudly during the Vietnam War and is a decorated army veteran. Motivated and eager to realize his full academic and professional potential, he enrolled in Citrus Junior College where he received his Associate of Arts degree in 1970. Immediately after, he enrolled in California Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly) and in 1973 Mr. Felix earned his Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and Recreation Administration.

Throughout his illustrious career, Mr. Felix has been a devoted educator, counselor, and leader for those in need. Whether in teaching children in elementary school or adults English as a Second Language and General Education Development courses, his commitment to education is admirable. Mr. Felix serves as a Senior Counselor and Administrator for the El Monte Union High School District, is an active member of professional organizations such as the California Teachers Association and the California Council for Adult Education, and is a member of my district's Congressional Nomination Committee for Military Academy Admissions.

Mr. Felix is a strong advocate for military veterans. He is a role model and a leader for countless veterans seeking federal and state assistance and serves as the Chairperson and Commissioner of the Veterans and Homeless Affairs Commission of El Monte. Mr. Felix is also a founding member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10218 of Greater El Monte and an active member of American Legion Post 261.

Mr. Speaker, I salute Michael Felix for his numerous years serving the people of El Monte and my Congressional District, and I wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

#### A TRIBUTE TO INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE COMPETITION FINAL- ISTS KYLE PLUM, COURTNEY DUNAR AND OLIVIA LITSEY

#### HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to three special students from my district. Kyle Plum, Courtney Dunar and Olivia Litsey have been recognized for their outstanding achievement in science and are finalists in the International Science Competition, sponsored by Toshiba and the National Science Teachers Association. Mr.

Plum, Ms. Dunbar, and Ms. Litsey have traveled to Washington, D.C. with their families to be honored at the ExploraVision awards gala next week. ExploraVision is the largest international science competition in the world with thousands of projects, and over 14,000 students participating this year.

These three bright young students each will be presented with a \$5,000 U.S. Savings bond for their outstanding work on their school science project entitled "The Sleep Doctor". ExploraVision asked students in its competition to envision technology that may exist in the next 20 years, and to describe how it would work. Kyle, Courtney, and Olivia envisioned a project called "The Sleep Doctor". This project creatively explores the four stages of sleep, rapid eye movement, and the sleep cycle. Using the innovative EEG Sleep Doctor technology, Kyle, Courtney, and Olivia were able to determine whether or not test subjects were having a nightmare during the rapid eye movement phase of the sleep cycle. Using the wireless EEG technology the students would be able to sense a subject's nightmare, and activate pre-programmed soothing sounds and smells to successfully restore feelings of safety and to generate a good night's sleep. Kyle, Courtney, and Olivia have been working tirelessly on this project since October of last year, and their efforts are quite evident by the outstanding final product.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the outstanding achievements of Kyle Plum, Courtney Dunar, and Olivia Litsey, and applaud the success of their educational endeavors and innovative technological ideas.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO JEAN BIONDO

#### HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 3, 2004*

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to pay tribute to Jean Biondo and thank her for her leadership and contributions to Colorado as District Manager of the Grand Junction Social Security Office. The level of integrity and honesty that she has brought to the Department of Social Security throughout her thirty-eight years of service are truly outstanding. As Jean celebrates her retirement,

let it be known that the citizens of Colorado and I are eternally grateful for the outstanding service she has given to countless citizens over the years.

Jean began working for the government in Pittsburg, Kansas, and was later transferred to the social security office in St Joseph, Missouri. In April of 2000 she was offered the job of District Manager of the Colorado Social Security branch that covers the Grand Junction area. During her time as district manager, her leadership has helped create an efficient district operation for serving the people of Southwest Colorado.

Jean has also been an active member of her community, dedicating her efforts to numerous civic organizations. She has been involved in Altrusa, an international association of professional women and men who volunteer their energies and expertise in projects dedicated to community betterment. This year Jean was the Treasurer and played an integral role in organizing their Cancer Walk. She is very involved in her church where she teaches Sunday School and helps with youth groups. Jean's newest hobby is golf, and one I hope she has a lot of time for in the coming months and years.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Jean Biondo has been an invaluable resource for the State of Colorado and to our Social Security system. Her hard work and selfless dedication to her job was extraordinary and is worthy of acknowledgment before this body of Congress and this nation. Thanks, Jean, for all your hard work, and I wish you and your husband, Mike, all the best in your well-deserved retirement.

#### FALLEN HEROES

SPEECH OF

#### HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 20, 2004*

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Master Sergeant Richard Lee Ferguson of Conway, New Hampshire. He bravely served the Army's 10th Special Forces Group supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Master Sgt. Ferguson made the ultimate sacrifice to protect his country and aid the Iraqi people when the military vehicle he was riding in tragically rolled over in Somara, Iraq on March 30, 2004.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Master Sergeant Richard Lee Ferguson and our other servicemen and women who have courageously given their own lives in order to protect and defend the democracy we enjoy in America and to extend the freedoms that come with democracy to those who live in fear and oppression worldwide.

#### FALLEN HEROES

SPEECH OF

#### HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 20, 2004*

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of a brave young Army Ranger who died Thursday, April 3, 2003, due to a suicide car-bomber at a checkpoint northwest of Baghdad. United States Army Specialist Ryan P. Long was a proud Ranger who gave his life, along with two of his fellow soldiers, helping the Third Battalion of the Seventy-fifth Ranger Regiment operate a checkpoint outside of Baghdad.

At only twenty one-years of age, Ryan was an inspirational young Delawarean who graduated from Seafood High School in June of 1999, where he had been vice commander of the Naval Junior ROTC program. Ryan joined the Army and became an Army Ranger, where he was part of an elite group chosen to carry out special missions. He was stationed in Fort Benning, Georgia and was deployed twice to Afghanistan before his service in Iraq, where he continued the noble fight against terror.

Ryan was a patriotic American who enjoyed soccer, golf, snowboarding, and motorcycles. Ryan was a fourth generation soldier, his father is retired Major Rudolf "Rudy" Long. Ryan followed in his family's tradition and chose to serve his country. He will be deeply missed by his parents, Rudy and Donna, and brother, his friends, teachers, and fellow soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere privilege to honor the life of a proud Ranger and heroic representative of the State of Delaware. Army Specialist Ryan P. Long deserves our gratitude and respect.