

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of Boeing's Space Launch Initiative TA-2 Self-Reacting Friction Stir Welding Cryogenic Tank Demonstration Team. Recently, these engineers from Huntsville, Alabama and Huntington Beach, California, successfully joined two twenty-seven foot diameter aluminum barrels together using a new process that utilizes friction rather than traditional welding methods. This successful test at the Marshall Space Flight Center was the largest test of the circumferential self-reacting friction stir welding. Boeing officials recognized this significant achievement by awarding this engineering team with the Boeing Silver Phantom Award.

This process will help NASA to overcome many technical obstacles that it will face during its ambitious exploration plans. By using friction, rather than electrical or gas fusion methods, the weld is significantly stronger and performed at a higher quality and lower cost. This process enables a wider range of options as NASA considers designs for future space launch vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, I close by sending my sincere congratulations to the Self-Reacting Friction Stir Welding Cryogenic Tank Demonstration Team for winning Boeing's Silver Phantom Award. I am proud to recognize their hard work and dedication that led to this important technical achievement.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2003
11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
OF NEW JERSEY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, every year, more high school seniors from the 11th Congressional District trade in varsity jackets for Navy pea coats, Air Force flight suits, and Army brass buckles than most other districts in the country. But this is nothing new—our area has repeatedly sent an above average portion of its sons and daughters to the Nation's military academies for decades.

This fact should not come as a surprise. The educational excellence of area schools is well known and has long been a magnet for families looking for the best environment in which to raise their children. Our graduates are skilled not only in mathematics, science, and social studies, but also have solid backgrounds in sports, debate teams, and other extracurricular activities. This diverse upbringing makes military academy recruiters sit up and take note—indeed, many recruiters know our towns and schools by name.

Since the 1830's, Members of Congress have enjoyed meeting, talking with, and nominating these superb young people to our military academies. But how did this process evolve? In 1843, when West Point was the sole academy, Congress ratified the nominating process and became directly involved in the makeup of our military's leadership. This was not an act of an imperial Congress bent on controlling every aspect of Government. Rather, the procedure still used today was, and is, a further check and balance in our democracy. It was originally designed to weaken and divide political coloration in the officer

corps, provide geographical balance to our armed services, and to make the officer corps more resilient to unfettered nepotism and handicapped European armies.

In 1854, Representative Gerritt Smith of New York added a new component to the academy nomination process—the academy review board. This was the first time a Member of Congress appointed prominent citizens from his district to screen applicants and assist with the serious duty of nominating candidates for academy admission. Today, I am honored to continue this wise tradition in my service to the 11th Congressional District.

The Academy Review Board is composed of six local citizens who have shown exemplary service to New Jersey, to their communities, and to the continued excellence of education in our area—many are veterans. Though from diverse backgrounds and professions, they all share a common dedication that the best qualified and motivated graduates attend our academies. And, as true for most volunteer panels, their service goes largely unnoticed.

I would like to take a moment to recognize these men and women and thank them publicly for participating in this important panel. Being on the board requires hard work and an objective mind. Members have the responsibility of interviewing upwards of 50 outstanding high school seniors every year in the academy review process.

The nomination process follows a general timetable. High school seniors mail personal information directly to the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy once they become interested in attending. Information includes academic achievement, college entry test scores, and other activities. At this time, they also inform my office of their desire to be nominated.

The academies then assess the applicants, rank them based on the data supplied, and return the files to my office with their notations. In late November, our Academy Review Board interviews all of the applicants over the course of 2 days. They assess a student's qualifications and analyze character, desire to serve, and other talents that may be hidden on paper.

This year the board interviewed over 50 applicants. Nominations included 9 to the Naval Academy, 10 to the Military Academy, 5 to the Merchant Marine Academy and 8 to the Air Force Academy—the Coast Guard Academy does not use the Congressional nomination process. The recommendations are then forwarded to the academies by January 31, where recruiters reviewed files and notified applicants and my office of their final decision on admission.

As these highly motivated and talented young men and women go through the academy nominating process, never let us forget the sacrifice they are preparing to make: to defend our country and protect our citizens. This holds especially true at a time when our nation is fighting the war against terrorism. Whether it is in Afghanistan, Iraq, or other hot spots around the world, no doubt we are constantly reminded that wars are fought by the young. And, while our military missions are both important and dangerous, it is reassuring to know that we continue to put America's best and brightest in command.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2003 11TH
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Ryan M. Cortner, Scotland, International School
Michael P. Dickson, Flanders, Mt. Olive H.S.
Marc D. Honrath, Dover, Morris Knolls H.S.
Asha Padmanabhan, Raritan, Bridgewater—Raritan
Heather G. Pinsky, Morristown, Morristown H.S.
Edward J. Schmeltz, Chatham, Chatham H.S.
Anthony Stegman, Sparta, Sparta H.S.
Christopher A. Wolff, Mendham, West Morris Mendham H.S.

MERCHANT MARINE

Steve R. Kline, Chatham, Chatham H.S.
Vincent J. Lusardi, Rockaway, Morris Hills H.S.
Jarrod M. Prill, Boonton, Boonton H.S.
Eric B. Warner, Morris Plains, Parsippany Hills H.S.
Richard W. White, Bloomingdale, Butler H.S.

MILITARY ACADEMY

Corey R. Belton, Brookside, West Morris Mendham HS
Assison T. Gaydosh, Bridgewater, Syracuse University
Sean P. Groome, Andover, Lenape Valley H.S.
Ross Kuskovsky, Livingston, Livingston H.S.
Anthony A. Margue, Randolph, Randolph H.S.
Michael A. Robinson, Brookside, West Morris Mendham H.S.
Allen J. Rooney, Madison, Madison H.S.
Stephane M. Slotten, Mendham, Newark Academy
Christopher M. Tarney, Chatham, Seton Hall Prep
Ernie Young, Whippany, Whippany Park H.S.

NAVAL ACADEMY

Sean K. Bergstrom, Mendham, Delbarton
Bradley C. Fromm, Madison, Madison H.S.
Chris Lakhiani, Mountain Lakes, Mountain Lakes H.S.
Julie-Ann Latona, Madison, Madison H.S.
John S. Quick, Liberty Corner, Oratory Prep
Jonathan V. Salmon, Bridgewater, St. Joseph's H.S.
Brian M. Schenig, Pompton Plains, Pequannock H.S.
Sarah A. Shewmaker, Short Hills, Millburn H.S.
Michael R. Wooters, Morristown, Seton Hall Prep
Michael J. Zecca, Bridgewater, Bridgewater—Raritan H.S.

HONORING U.S. MARSHAL MARK
TUCKER

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of one of North Carolina's most respected law enforcement officers, a man whom I am proud to have called a friend.

Deputy Mark Reid Tucker served our community as both a Wake County Sheriff's Deputy and a U.S. Marshal for eastern North Carolina. No matter the rank, law enforcement was a job he loved—and a job he did exceedingly well. He was killed in the line of duty earlier this month at 49 years of age.

Always equipped with a strong sense of right and wrong, Mark thought of law enforcement as a calling. It was a job that suited him perfectly.

Mark joined Wake County's Sheriff's Department in 1976. I first knew him as the president of the local chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police, and he has championed the interests of rank and file law enforcement officers from that position since 1988. After serving with the Sheriff's Department for some 20 years, Mark's lifelong interest in politics spurred him to pursue a federal marshal appointment in the Clinton administration. It was a long, hard battle, but Mark showed characteristic stamina as the process dragged out for several years. When his nomination appeared indefinitely stalled because of partisan battles over Presidential appointments, President Clinton decided to use a rarely invoked recess appointment privilege, and Mark went on to be confirmed to a full term as U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of North Carolina on May 24, 2000. There is no federal appointment that has given me more satisfaction, both because we worked on it so long and because Mark served with such dedication and distinction.

Mark was thrilled to be a part of the U.S. Marshals Service. He took security very seriously, working with local judges, Federal agencies, and my office to ensure that the courthouse was brought up to the standards for Federal judicial facilities. He also recognized that he had a responsibility to maintain good relations with the community. Taking on the role of an unofficial goodwill ambassador for the Marshals Service, Mark usually carried a deputy's badge in his pocket that he could award to a smiling child or interested citizen. When President Clinton left office, Mark returned to the beat in Wake County, going back to his roots and to the people who had long relied on his commitment to the job.

Mark was only the fourth officer to be killed in the line of duty in the Wake County Sheriff's Office's 71-year history, and the overwhelming response of his fellow officers makes clear how acutely they felt his loss. An entire community of law enforcement officers—from the DEA to the Marshals Service to local deputies—came together to find the person responsible, making an arrest within 48 hours. They said it was the least they could do for the deputy they described as "well-respected," "dedicated," and "a gentlemen, as well as a friend." Close to 1,500 people from law enforcement across the State attended his memorial service.

Mark leaves behind his loving parents, Dallas and Virginia Tucker, his wife Patricia, and sons Chad and Matthew. This tragedy has thrust the whole family into the media spotlight, and Patricia in particular has spoken of her husband and the circumstances surrounding his death with courage, compassion, and dignity.

Mark Tucker perfectly exemplified the dedication of our law enforcement community, and his death is a reminder of the risks these officers take for us every single day. But Mark was one of a kind, a unique combination—a cop's cop, a skilled political leader, an active and engaged citizen, a solid family man, a magnetic personality. His death is a great loss for the community, and we will miss him terribly. May we find comfort in the outpouring of affection and respect and gratitude that his memory has brought forth.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CRISTINA VILLARREAL

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Cristina Villarreal, a staff member who will be leaving my Washington, DC, office this week.

Cristina came to our office after graduating from American University to work as a staff assistant. She worked her way up to serve as a scheduler and as a legislative aide working on foreign affairs issues. Cristina has worked with me as we developed legislation (H. Res. 466) to call attention to the disturbing abduction and murder of hundreds of women taking place in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. H. Res. 466 conveys the sympathy of the U.S. House of Representatives to the families of the young women murdered in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, and encourages increased United States involvement in bringing an end to these crimes. Cristina also helped me organize a Congressional delegation to travel to Mexico to bring light to the over 300 young women who have been killed in Ciudad Juárez over the last decade. Cristina shares my commitment to bringing light to this human rights issue.

Cristina is beloved by her colleagues and will be missed by them. As Cristina moves on to pursue graduate education, I wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

THANKING COL. LEE FARMER FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Lee Farmer for his service to the country for over 30 years in the United States Marine Corps. On March 4, Colonel Farmer will be retiring from the Corps, completing a career marked by dedication and excellence.

Colonel Farmer was commissioned as an officer in November 1973. Early in his career he served as a Rifle and Weapons Platoon Commander as well as the Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of Company A, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. He remained with the Battalion as it became the first unit to initiate the unit Rotation Program, relocating to Twentynine Palms, Calif. There he served as a Rifle Company Commander for two years and was later assigned as the Staff Secretary of the 7th Marine Amphibious Brigade.

After graduating from the Amphibious Warfare School in 1982, Colonel Farmer served as Aide-de-camp to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In July 1984 he was reassigned to the Basic School, Quantico, VA, where he eventually assumed command of Company A. He then attended Marines Corps Command and Staff College.

He later transferred to Okinawa, Japan, where he served as the Assistant Plans Officer to Marine Aircraft Group-36. Transferring to Camp Pendleton in 1987, Colonel Farmer

was later deployed to Southwest Asia and participated in Operation Desert Shield.

Following the war, he attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, in preparation for his two-year assignment to Chile where he attended the Chilean Naval War College. He was reassigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, at the Pentagon, in July 1993, where he worked counter-narcotics issues until his assignment as the Military Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

Following this assignment, he returned to Camp Pendleton to command the School of Infantry. After leaving Camp Pendleton for another brief assignment in Okinawa, Japan, he again returned to Camp Pendleton, where he served as the Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations and Training until his reassignment as the Chief of Staff in May 2001.

Since Colonel Farmer assumed his role as Chief of Staff, he has worked closely with my office on a number of issues. Colonel Farmer has distinguished himself as an honest, sincere, and hard-working leader—ready to listen and always ready to help. During Colonel Farmer's tenure, Camp Pendleton has become one of our Nation's finest defense installations, training Marines who have served on the front lines of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Camp Pendleton Marines are in the process of returning to Iraq, replacing the Army's 4th Infantry Division in the largest troop rotation in history. These Marines will now carry out a task that is critical to our national security and to the security of the entire Middle East. They have been prepared by the leadership of Camp Pendleton—Colonel Farmer and the commanding officers who serve alongside him. These leaders of Marines have good reason to be proud of their service.

It has been a pleasure working with Colonel Farmer. We are grateful for his distinguished service to our country. He will be missed.

MINORITY HOME OWNERSHIP AND THE WOW INITIATIVE

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the importance of homeownership in our country; the difficulties that many Americans have becoming homeowners; and the financial strain put on Americans, particularly minorities, when seeking reasonable housing options.

Homeownership is an effective way for Americans to establish wealth and solidarity for their families. More should have the ability to pass homes from generation to generation, with the comfort and knowledge that home is more than a roof over one's head, but that home is a possession. Most consider purchasing a house a major investment, perhaps the largest that one will ever make, but to many it is more than an investment; it is the first step in achieving the American Dream. Families that own homes are entitled to an added sense of pride and a feeling of belonging to a neighborhood or community.

We should strive for all families to have the means necessary to become homeowners and