

and there is a little bit of dispute about the cost of the reimbursement for travel for these troops.

But I think the intention of Congress here is very, very clear, and it is really, really nice when Republicans and Democrats can come together and the people out there in the country can see that in fact we are not just talking about supporting our troops, but we are putting our money where our mouth is. It is exactly the right thing to do.

□ 1415

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity in late October and early November to travel to Iraq to visit our troops and to assess the rebuilding of that troubled nation. The first stop, Mr. Speaker, that we made was in Kuwait in the desert at one of the camps, and we saw the actual R&R facility where members of our military were being processed. We had the chance to talk firsthand to people that were about to leave the theater and go home and, boy, let me tell my colleagues, they were very excited, Mr. Speaker, to be able to come home and visit loved ones. We know this was during the time when they had to pay their own way; but, nevertheless, they were pleased to be able to do it.

Then we traveled in and out of Baghdad with members coming on some of the C-130 transport planes. Once again, the same thing, they were very anxious to be able to come home for a couple of weeks and to be able to reunite with their families.

So, Mr. Speaker, I salute our military for authorizing this. Obviously, this legislation corrects an inequity, where those members of our military who wanted to travel home prior to December 19 are now going to be reimbursed for their expenses. Mr. Speaker, as indicated by the previous speaker, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE), this was done in a bipartisan fashion. I salute not only the gentleman from California (Chairman HUNTER), the gentleman from California (Chairman Lewis), but certainly the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER), the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE), and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for their hard work on this very important piece of legislation that will deal with all of our troops fairly and will encourage this type of R&R in the future, which is so important to our troops in so many far-flung areas of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas for yielding me this time.

On Saturday of last week, I attended the funeral of Sergeant Phipps, who had been killed in Iraq in the line of duty. And, of course, as one could ex-

pect, it was a very solemn period, and there were thousands of people from his community who came to pay their last respects.

It occurred to me as this bill was coming to the floor that individuals should have the opportunity certainly to come home and visit for rest, recuperation, and to see their families and friends while they are alive and healthy.

So I simply came down to urge passage of this legislation and to indicate my support for it and to suggest that all soldiers who give of themselves should have the opportunity to experience interaction with their family.

I thank the sponsors of this legislation, and I urge its strong support.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) for his work on behalf of this bill; along with the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD), the gentleman from California (Chairman HUNTER), and the gentleman from Missouri (Ranking Member SKELTON) also for their fine work. I think this is a fine bill that will be much appreciated by our men and women in uniform and their families.

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, as a long-time supporter of the military, I was dismayed to learn that U.S. troops were forced to pay their way home from Baltimore-Washington International Airport, while on rest and recuperation leave.

Late last year, Congress enacted legislation, which I supported, requiring the Department of Defense to provide travel and transportation allowances to military personnel serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As of December 19, 2003, the Department began covering these costs. Unfortunately, a number of soldiers who were issued leave beginning on September 25, 2003 were not eligible for travel reimbursement. Today, the Congress has rectified this discrepancy by ensuring that all of our soldiers will be reimbursed for their travel while on leave.

I am well aware of the current demands faced by American soldiers and the sacrifices made by family members and loved ones. American soldiers have always excelled in their military duties and at a time when many of our troops are deployed for a year or more, it is imperative that Congress and the federal government adequately provide for them.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WHITFIELD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2057.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ESTABLISHING CAMPAIGN MEDALS TO BE AWARDED TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM OR OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3104) to provide for the establishment of campaign medals to be awarded to members of the Armed Forces who participate in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3104

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SEPARATE MILITARY CAMPAIGN MEDALS TO RECOGNIZE SERVICE IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM AND SERVICE IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—The President shall establish a campaign medal specifically to recognize service by members of the uniformed services in Operation Enduring Freedom and a separate campaign medal specifically to recognize service by members of the uniformed services in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—Subject to such limitations as may be prescribed by the President, eligibility for a campaign medal established pursuant to subsection (a) shall be set forth in regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary concerned (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code). In the case of regulations prescribed by the Secretaries of the military departments, the regulations shall be subject to approval by the Secretary of Defense and shall be uniform throughout the Department of Defense.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my support for H.R. 3104. I was pleased to join my colleagues, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), in introducing this legislation last September.

The legislation we are considering today authorizes campaign medals for military personnel who have been participating in the war on terror. Essentially, the legislation would authorize

separate medals to be awarded for service in Iraq and in Afghanistan. The President and the Pentagon would be charged with determining who would receive the medals.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who have served in the military realize that the medals awarded and the ribbons worn on the uniform are essentially a biographic statement of the service of the military officer or NCO. Speaking for myself, when I take the ribbons that I have earned after over 30 years of military service and I look at them, I can recall where I was, what I was doing, and what I received credit for from my military chain of command.

By the same token, military officers and NCOs observing each other in uniform with their decorations on their uniform realize whether an individual served in a theater of operations where they served. That is one of the reasons why we think it is important to differentiate between service in Iraq or service in Afghanistan, even though service in both locations involves the war on terrorism.

Looking at the charts that I have here today on display, my colleagues will notice that there are certain other occasions where individual medals are awarded, even though the campaign has one consistent objective. For example, we have a Cuban Occupation Medal and a Puerto Rican Occupation Medal, as well as a Spanish War Medal and the Philippine campaign. Some would argue that each of these decorations goes to the issue of one concerted effort by the United States, yet service in those different locations has previously been determined to result in a specific or a special award.

On another chart over here, we have, for example, the Korean War decoration, and I do not see it in front of me, but we all know that those members of the armed services who served in Korea were given a special award for that; but also if one served in Vietnam, as I did, one gets a special award, right here, the Vietnam campaign ribbon. As well, those who served in the liberation of Kuwait 10 years ago and those who served physically in Saudi Arabia, as those who participated in the liberation of Kuwait and were actually in Kuwait, have two different decorations, which are indicated here.

So the point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that in the past, it has not been unusual to provide awards and decorations that are specific to a particular theater or country in which a military officer or NCO has served, even though those campaigns and those activities may have been part of a larger enterprise.

It is on this basis, Mr. Speaker, that I believe that this legislation has great merit. I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I also rise in support of H.R. 3104, which requires the President to establish separate campaign medals for servicemembers who participate in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and then a separate medal for Operation Iraqi Freedom. I would like to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for the work he has done on this bill. As a career military officer, he recognizes the importance of providing proper recognition to our men and women in uniform.

The bill we originally introduced allowed members of the armed services to receive separate campaign medals for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. As amended on the floor today, it also includes all members of uniformed services.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, the intent of our bill is not to replace the administration's Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, nor the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, rather, to provide separate campaign medals to recognize folks who have participated in the Iraq campaign and in the Afghanistan campaign. This follows the pattern that this country has done before in honoring its men and women in uniform.

For example, we have a World War II Victory Medal, but then we also had separate theater campaign medals, such as the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal; and this bill leaves the regulations and eligibility for these two medals to be determined by the President and the Department of Defense.

One of the issues that has come up is, well, who is the responsible party for establishing these kinds of medals? In fact, Congress has often taken the lead to do that. I would like to go through some of these bills, if I might.

The battle of Manila Bay Medal, also called the Dewey Medal, was established by Congress in 1898. The Spanish War Medal authorized by Congress in 1918; the Mexican Border Service Medal authorized by Congress in 1918; the Philippine Congressional Medal authorized by Congress in 1906; the World War I Victory Medal in 1919, authorized by Congress; the Army Occupation of Germany, World War I, authorized by Congress in 1941; the Spanish Campaign Medal authorized by Congress in 1905; the World War II Victory Medal authorized by Congress in 1945; the Prisoner of War Medal authorized by Congress in 1985; the Medal for Humane Action also known as the Berlin Airlift authorized by Congress in 1949.

I would like to recognize another one too. In 1956, the Congress authorized the Civil War Campaign Medal, and the reason it was taken up in 1956, so many years after the Civil War, is because the Army had had a Civil War campaign badge, but a judge advocate general in the Army in 1905 thought that the Army probably did not have the authority, that only Congress had the authority to do a campaign medal, and Congress rectified this in 1956 by authorizing the Civil War Campaign Medal.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that I believe the record is very clear that Congress not only has the authority to do this but, in fact, that has been the history of establishment of a lot of our medals.

I would like to recognize too the leadership of the Committee on Armed Services who helped bring this bill forward. The gentleman from California (Chairman HUNTER) has been a forceful advocate, both publicly and privately, in support of this bill, as has the gentleman from Missouri (Ranking Member SKELTON).

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3104. This bill will establish separate campaign medals for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS), and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) for their hard work, the Committee on Armed Services for reporting this bill to the full House, and the leadership for getting it to the floor so expeditiously.

Upon returning from Iraq last fall, I introduced a similar bill to the one before us today. After visiting with soldiers on that trip, I became convinced that we needed to establish separate medals for service in Afghanistan and Iraq in order to give our troops the recognition they deserve. A number of the troops mentioned that they have served in both countries and would appreciate separate medals to distinguish their service. Many of our servicemen and -women who have served in these two very different campaigns in the war on terrorism feel the same way, and they deserve the recognition.

Currently, the Department of Defense has established the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal for those who have deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal is for those who have served in support roles since September 11. Our troops can only be issued these medals once, even if they have served in both operations.

□ 1430

I do not think these medals go far enough. The war on terrorism will be a long struggle with many major military campaigns and fronts.

In my opinion, this fact warrants separate medals for the war's first two major campaigns. There is also precedent for these medals. During World War II, for example, three campaign medals were issued to recognize the different fronts of the war: the American Campaign Service Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal.

During the 1990s, DOD issued the Southwest Asia Service Medal for the Persian Gulf war in 1991 and the Kosovo Campaign Medal for the 1999 U.S.-led war in Kosovo.

By awarding separate medals we simply recognize the specific contribution our servicemen and women have made in Afghanistan and Iraq. These medals would not take away from the significance of the global war on terrorism medal.

I also think DOD should establish separate medals for future major campaigns in the war on terrorism.

I want to conclude my remarks by saying thank you to the men and women of our armed services for their service and sacrifice. Moments like these always remind me that freedom is not free. Thank God we have men and women who are willing to volunteer their service to protect and fight for our great Nation. These medals are just one of the many ways we should recognize them.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) for her leadership on this bill. She has been working on this issue for some time, also.

I neglected to mention the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) who has his own Vietnam Service Campaign Medal for his work as a helicopter crew chief and is now a fine member of the Committee on Armed Services. And I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for his work.

Let me repeat in closing that those of us who have worked on this bill, have sponsored and cosponsored this bill, do not at all intend this as a replacement for the global war on terrorism service medals and expeditionary medals. We support those medals. What we think, though, is we need to recognize that contribution, that camaraderie that comes from our men and women in uniform that are serving in Iraq so they can have their own campaign medal and our men and women in Afghanistan so they can have their own campaign medal in addition to the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

So I urge support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

George S. Patton, Jr., once said, quote, "The results of decorations works two ways: It makes the men who get them proud and determined to get more, and it makes the men who have not received them jealous and determined to get some in order to even up. It is the greatest thing we have for building a fighting heart." I would only correct the great General Patton today by saying the men and women who receive them. Because, as we know, in today's military forces men and women are providing an equal contribution.

As my colleague has indicated, service in uniform and service in a war

zone is not simply about awards and decorations, it is about our national policy, and it is about working as a team with other men and women in uniform. But the awards and decorations they receive provide them with incentive and provide them with a living history which becomes their career in service to their country. That is why refreshing and upgrading the medals that are offered to our servicemen and women is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER), my friend, for yielding and for giving me this time.

Actually, this is a very, very important bill; and I speak in favor of it. As you know, we have two major, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East regarding the American forces. The first is a guerrilla warfare in Iraq and the second is going after the genesis and the home of the terrorists in Afghanistan that caused us so much and continues to cause us so much international terror.

I voted for the resolution regarding conflict in Iraq because I felt it was necessary, based upon the weapons of mass destruction allegation. We went in there; and, as a result of the very tremendous military field victory of our troops, we stayed. The ongoing guerrilla warfare has erupted which is an effort to do away with the stability and do away with transferring sovereignty to a stable, representative Iraq. The purpose of those are, whether they be Baathist or Fedayeen or jihadists or remnants of Afghanistan's al Qaeda, trying to destabilize that government. That is the purpose of guerrilla warfare. That is one war in and of itself.

The second in Afghanistan, the purpose there, of course, was going after those who have been causing terror to the United States for quite some time, beginning 1993 in the World Trade Center; 1996, the Khobar Towers bombing; in 1998, the simultaneous bombing of the embassies in Tanzania and Kenya; and then the boat bombing of the USS *Cole* in the harbor at Yemen; and, of course, September 11, 2001, came along, was the culmination. The terrorists home base is Afghanistan.

I think there should be separate ribbons for those separate conflicts, and I think this is very good. I compliment the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) for introducing this. I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for the strong support. I think it is the right thing to do. It should happen. So then when we see someone in uniform wearing either or both of these ribbons, we can recognize it and say thank you.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 2057 and H.R. 3104. S. 2057 provides retroactive travel reimburse-

ments for troops who returned home before December 19, 2003 from Iraq and Afghanistan for rest and recuperation leave. H.R. 3104 provides separate combat medals for the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. I think you would be hard pressed to find a Member of Congress who opposes these low cost bills to benefit our troops. The only question is: What took us so long?

During debate on the \$87 billion Iraq supplemental last October, I introduced an amendment that would have provided for free travel all the way home from Iraq and Afghanistan for troops on R&R leave, and would have required separate campaign medals be issued for service in Iraq and Afghanistan, among other important personnel benefits. The Republican leadership in the House would not even let this amendment on the floor for a vote. So here we are six months later, and we are only just now revisiting the issues.

Why so long? Quite simply, the Bush Administration opposed separate war medals for Iraq and Afghanistan, preferring instead to issue one service medal for the Global War on Terror. I understand the Administration's desire to put these operations in a larger context, but that does not translate to our troops on the ground. Circumstances leading up to and in Iraq and Afghanistan were very different, as are the challenges our troops face on the ground today. Furthermore, the Pentagon policy not only authorized a single medal for OEF and OIF, it does not prescribe service stars to reflect service in both conflicts or multiples tours of duty in the same conflict. This is blatantly wrong. Campaign and service medals proudly reflect military service in a particular conflict, enhance esprit-de-corps, and are a strong part of military history. It means a great deal to an infantryman to look at his fellow soldiers and say "Iraq—yes sir, I was there."

The British established the Iraq Campaign Medal to recognize service in, and in support of, operations in Iraq. Australia established separate "Afghanistan" and "Iraq" clasp for their Active Service Medal to reward OEF and OIF service. So why would we deny our servicemen, who are sacrificing so much for our country, separate medals that can boost morale for such a small price?

And if the Global War on Terror continues for many years on many fronts as the President has suggested it might, are we to expect that the Administration would prefer that we issue no new campaign medals in perpetuity? H.R. 3104 makes sure this will not be the case.

S. 2057 and H.R. 3104 are low cost, long needed morale boosts for our troops in the field, and though it has taken us too long to get to them, I wholeheartedly urge their passage today.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WHITFIELD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3104, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### CONGRATULATING THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 386) congratulating the United States Air Force Academy on its 50th Anniversary and recognizing its contributions to the Nation.

The Clerk read as follows:

##### H. CON. RES. 386

Whereas on April 1, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation establishing the United States Air Force Academy to prepare young men for careers as Air Force officers;

Whereas in July 1955, the first class entered the Air Force Academy, attending classes in temporary facilities at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver, Colorado;

Whereas the Air Force Academy moved to its permanent home near Colorado Springs, Colorado in August 1958;

Whereas the first class of 207 cadets graduated in June 1959;

Whereas in 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation authorizing each of the Service Academies to expand enrollment from 2,529 to 4,417 students, and today, 4,000 cadets attend the Air Force Academy;

Whereas women were first admitted to the Air Force Academy in June 1976, and the first class that included women graduated in June 1980;

Whereas 44 classes and 35,000 cadets have graduated from the Air Force Academy in its 50-year history;

Whereas the mission of the Air Force Academy is to inspire and teach outstanding young men and women to become Air Force officers and to prepare and motivate them to lead the Air Force in its service to the Nation;

Whereas the Air Force Academy is recognized worldwide as the premier developer of aerospace officers and leaders with impeccable character and knowledge; and

Whereas April 1, 2004 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Air Force Academy: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—*

(1) congratulates the United States Air Force Academy on its 50th Anniversary;

(2) acknowledges the continued excellence of the United States Air Force Academy and its critical role in the defense of the United States; and

(3) recognizes the outstanding service to the Nation that graduates from the United States Air Force Academy have provided.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON).

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that

all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) for her leadership in proposing this resolution. I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 386 which congratulates the U.S. Air Force Academy on its 50th anniversary and recognizing its contributions to the Nation.

It is particularly meaningful to me to be here today. I have several perspectives. In addition to being a Member of Congress, I am a veteran myself. I served 31 years in the Army National Guard. But I greatly appreciate the service of the Air Force. It has been extraordinary, the military professionalism that truly has been generated by the Air Force Academy.

I had the extraordinary opportunity firsthand to accompany the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), as the ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services, to visit Iraq last September; and I saw firsthand the success of the precision bombing which protected the civilian population and protected the schools and the mosques while the military targets were utterly destroyed in one of the most successful military operations in the history of the United States, protecting the American people from the terrorists by going after them in Afghanistan, going after them in Iraq. And American families are safer.

Additionally, I am grateful to be a service academy parent. I know firsthand how academies promote the high standards of academics. Actually, my son went to an academy which is in the State of Maryland, not in the State of Colorado, but I do have great appreciation for the Academy.

There are facts that should be known, that 32 cadets have been selected as Rhodes Scholars, including our colleague, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON), who also has, I think, the great distinction of being the first female graduate of the Air Force Academy serving in Congress.

Additionally, six cadets have accepted Marshall scholarships; nine cadets have received the Harry S. Truman scholarship; 92 cadets have been accepted as Guggenheim Fellows. There is so much to be appreciative of of the military service, the academic success of the Air Force Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the resolution.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 386 intro-

duced by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) and my colleague on the Committee on Armed Services; and I commend her on your efforts to recognize the 50th anniversary of the United States Air Force Academy.

On April 1, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into the law a bill that established the United States Air Force Academy; and this Thursday, April 1, 2004, the Nation will recognize the 50th anniversary of this Academy and its efforts to inspire and develop outstanding young men and women as Air Force officers.

However, the history of the Academy began long before the bill was signed by President Eisenhower. One of the first to recognize the need and to advocate for an air service academy was Brigadier General Billy Mitchell, often considered to be the father of the United States Air Force. He was an outspoken advocate of strategic air power, and he had attempted to establish an air school for many years.

Progress on the Air Force Academy began in 1949 when Secretary of Defense James Forrestal established a board of military and civilian educators to recommend a general system of education for the services. The board, which was headed by Dwight D. Eisenhower, then president of Columbia University, and Robert L. Stearns, then president of the University of Colorado, recommended that an Air Force Academy be established; and this was done in 1954 under President Eisenhower's signature.

The Academy's commitment to excellence began with its first class in July of 1955, which was comprised of 306 men who lived in temporary facilities at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver, Colorado. Lieutenant General Hubert R. Harmon, recalled from retirement, became the first superintendent. The Cadet Wing moved to its current location 3 years later in 1958, and the first class graduated in 1959.

In 1964, the academies were allowed to nearly double their enrollment to over 4,400 cadets. In 1976, the first class of women was allowed to attend the service academies, including the Air Force Academy. Since then, more than 35,000 cadets have graduated from the Air Force Academy, including 196 international cadets.

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) recognized several of the scholarly attributes of cadet graduates, including 32 cadets who have been selected as Rhodes Scholars. I want to call attention to the fact that one of those is my colleague, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON), who was also a Rhodes Scholar.

I also want to recognize 31 cadets have accepted Fulbright-Hays scholarships. Probably even more importantly, Air Force cadet graduates are not only accomplished scholars but have also distinguished themselves on the battlefield. One hundred and twenty-nine graduates have been killed in combat; 36 graduates were prisoners of