

Through their foundation, the VFW supports programs that promote citizenship education and volunteerism and facilitate aid for veterans and their families in need of both medical, rehabilitative, educational and employment services. Additionally, their members and those of the VFW Auxiliary volunteer countless hours at our veterans and military hospitals. During this time of increased military deployments, it is so important to have a network of veterans our injured soldiers and families can turn to for help and assistance.

Throughout my 7 years in Congress, I have been fortunate to meet with VFW members in Washington as well as in my district on a regular basis as they advocate for increased veterans funding, services for homeless veterans, better education benefits for our veterans and many other issues. They have an incredible history. I would like to take this opportunity not only to thank them for all they do for our veterans but also to congratulate them on their 105th anniversary.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 105th anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, who for decades have been committed to securing the rights and benefits of veterans that have serviced this country with honor, dignity, and valor.

In 1899, after the Spanish-American War and the Philippine War, a group of veterans banded together founding the Veterans of Foreign Wars to ensure proper medical benefits for members of the military returning from foreign service. With a mission to improve the lives of veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has lobbied for quality health care, education, and retirement benefits of veterans and their families for over 105 years. They have worked to protect the memory and legacy of those who lost their lives while in military service defending the freedom and values of our great Nation. In the state of Connecticut, there are over 26,000 members and 6,000 auxiliary members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Nationwide, this organization has more than 2.6 million members who served in World War I, World War II, Korean war, Vietnam, Persian Gulf war, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The Connecticut Veterans of Foreign War posts have been instrumental in raising awareness and fighting for better health care and benefits for those who risked their lives for our country.

I believe that the Veterans of Foreign Wars should be recognized for their proud service to the veterans of Connecticut and the nation. Therefore, I urge my fellow Members to vote with me in support of H.J. Res. 108 and honor the Veterans of Foreign Wars as an organization committed to the courageous veterans of the United States of America.

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support to this important resolution honoring the Veterans of Foreign Wars on its 105th anniversary. I was proud to introduce this resolution with Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, and I want to express my thanks to the distinguished chairman and ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for helping move it quickly to the floor.

In the wake of the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection, thousands of wounded veterans returned from war to find

that there were no healthcare benefits or pensions provided for them. So, as people in the military do, they banded together to work as a team to provide care for each other by starting the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization. This belief in service to fellow veterans is the core value of the VFW, and it continues this tradition today.

The VFW now serves more than 2½ million American heroes who answered the call when the Nation needed them. For 105 years, the VFW has fought for increasing veterans' benefit, improving veterans' healthcare, and ensuring that America's veterans receive the recognition they deserve for their service. The VFW continues to live up to its motto every day—honoring the dead by helping the living. I am proud that the House is passing a resolution honoring such an effective and dedicated advocate for our Nation's veterans.

I am also proud that this year the Veterans of Foreign Wars will be held by a son of Tennessee and a Nashville native: VFW Commander-in-Chief John Furgess. John fought for his country in Vietnam as a young man, and when he returned he continued to serve by working for the Veterans Administration for 20 years. Over the course of his distinguished career in the VA and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, John has helped thousands of veterans get the benefits they have earned and the care they deserve. John's dedication to his country and his fellow veterans is a model for all Americans, and I look forward to seeing the VFW flourish under his leadership in the coming year.

Finally, as we look back on the 105-year record of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it is also important to look forward. I am also proud that in congratulating the veterans of Foreign Wars we are also honoring our Nation's future veterans—the troops engaged in combat overseas today in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The brave men and women of our Armed Forces put their lives on the line for all Americans, most of whom they have never met. There is no higher expression of selfless service than the willingness to risk one's life for others, and for the ideals that this country holds dear. The troops on the front line today—who are tomorrow's veterans—deserve our repeated thanks for serving the Nation.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 108.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT A MINUTE OF SILENCE SHOULD BE OBSERVED ANNUALLY ON VETERANS DAY

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution

(H. Con. Res. 195) expressing the sense of Congress that a minute of silence should be observed annually at 11:00 a.m. on Veterans Day, November 11, in honor of the veterans of all United States wars and to memorialize those members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of the United States.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 195

Whereas Reverend George Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend Clark Poling, and Father John Washington served aboard the USAT Dorchester during World War II;

Whereas Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling, and Father Washington were referred to as the "Four Chaplains";

Whereas, on February 3, 1943, the Dorchester was hit by an enemy torpedo and began to sink;

Whereas in the face of grave danger the Four Chaplains sought to calm and reassure the men on board;

Whereas the Four Chaplains handed out lifejackets and directed the frightened men to lifeboats;

Whereas when the last lifejacket had been handed out, the Four Chaplains removed their own lifejackets and gave them to four men who had none;

Whereas the Dorchester sank and took with her 672 men and the Four Chaplains, who stood arm in arm with their heads bowed in prayer and went down with the ship;

Whereas none of the Four Chaplains inquired about whether the young man to whom he gave his lifejacket was a member of his own faith;

Whereas the Four Chaplains will remain forever in the memories of Americans as an example of the kind of heroism which has always characterized the best of the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas the sacrifice of the Four Chaplains stand as a testimony to all heroic veterans who have fought for the United States;

Whereas each year on November 11 the United States pays tribute to its war dead and veterans in a national observance known as Veterans Day; and

Whereas a national minute of silence observed annually at 11:00 a.m. on Veterans Day, November 11, would provide the people of the United States with an opportunity to honor the veterans of all United States wars and memorialize those members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in defense of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that a minute of silence should be observed annually at 11:00 a.m. on Veterans Day, November 11, in honor of the veterans of all United States wars and to memorialize those members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of the United States.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

□ 0215

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 195, legislation expressing the sense of Congress that a minute of silence should be observed annually at 11

a.m. on Veterans Day, November 11, in honor of the veterans of all United States wars and to memorialize those members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in defense of our country.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution recounts a particularly moving event from World War II. On February 3, 1943, a German U-boat torpedoed the American transport ship, the USAT *Dorchester*, sinking it off the coast of Greenland. Among the nearly 1,000 American soldiers aboard the *Dorchester* were four chaplains whose selfless acts of courage have left a distinguished legacy.

The four chaplains, Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling, and Father Washington worked to help save their fellow soldiers. They distributed life jackets until no more were available. Then the four chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to four other soldiers.

True to their faiths and to their fellow men until the end, they were last seen arms linked in prayer on the hull of the ship as it went down.

The sacrifice of the four chaplains stands as a testimony to all heroic veterans who have fought for the United States. A stained glass window on the third floor of the Pentagon's A-ring honors these brave Americans.

Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 195 would provide the people of the U.S. with an opportunity to honor the veterans of all the United States wars and to memorialize those members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in defense of our Nation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is with great reverence that I support this concurrent resolution for a minute of silence at 11 a.m. on Veterans Day. On Veterans Day we recognize the over 26 million veterans in our country. We remember those who have passed away, and we honor those who currently wear the uniform. They are inspiring stories of shared sacrifice that come out of every battle in every war and conflict, none more telling than the one of "the four chaplains" of World War II.

These four chaplains shall not be forgotten nor will the many veterans who go unlisted by name on Veterans Day. These stories will be remembered as just one example of all historic service members who have fought and died for the United States.

November 11 has been set aside as the day of tribute to these men and women who have answered the call to service for our Nation. A minute of silence at 11 a.m. on Veterans Day will give all Americans the opportunity to pause and remember all veterans of the United States who have given so much in service to our country.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I do want once again want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), the ranking member, and the gentleman from New Jersey (Chairman SMITH) for all that they have done for the veterans of our country.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a strong supporter of H. Con. Res. 195 which expresses the sense of Congress that a minute of silence should be observed annually at 11:00 a.m. on Veterans Day, November 11, in honor of the veterans of all United States wars and to memorialize those members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of the United States. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation and I want to thank my distinguished colleague Congressman CLAY for honoring our veterans through this needed legislation. An annual moment of silence during Veteran's Day will serve as a constant reminder to the public that our nation will always honor their decorated veterans. Veteran's Day being the one day when we celebrate America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

The idea of having a national day to recognize the sacrifices of those who served in war was born in 1926, when Congress enacted a concurrent resolution recognizing November 11th as a national holiday. Originally this day was called "Armistice Day." This day was created to celebrate the end of the brutal hostilities of World War I. November 11th would be a day dedicated to the cause of world peace.

With the approval of legislation on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars. Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, himself a decorated veteran of war, issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation" which stated in part: "In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose." It was with that endearing spirit that America celebrated the first Veterans Day. This annual holiday continues to be one the most fundamental celebrations of the American spirit. Today, we express our sentiment that a moment of silence is needed to remember the full extent of sacrifices our veterans have made for this great nation.

This legislation is just a small portion of the effort being made by some in this body to protect and celebrate our nation's valiant veterans. We must all continue to fight for them in Washington because they went to the greatest lengths to fight for us abroad.

In the 18th Congressional district of Texas alone there are more than 38,000 veterans and they make up almost ten percent of the 18th district's civilian population over the age of 18. Yet, despite these large numbers we often forget about our veterans. We do this in part because our men and women of the armed services come home from war and lead normal productive lives; often our veterans go unnoticed in the general population. However, our veterans are not normal people; they are truly extraordinary individuals who have changed the course of our lives in ways that we may not even realize. I hope we will always keep this thought in mind; and observing

a moment of silence on Veteran's Day will help us to remember. We cannot forget to celebrate our veterans, for if we forget to celebrate them, we forget all that makes this nation truly great. I urge all Members to support this legislation and to support our nation's veterans because without their sacrifice our nation would not be where it is today.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 195. It is most fitting and appropriate that the American people observe a moment of silence each year to remember and honor all the brave men and women who have given their lives in defense of our great nation.

A moment of silence on Veterans Day will give a national experience to the observance of this important federal holiday. This legislation's Veterans Day observance is also a special tribute to the valiant efforts of the Four Chaplains—Reverend George Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend Clark Poling and Father John Washington, who gave up their lives while serving on the USAT *Dorchester* during World War II. That ship was hit by enemy torpedo on February 3, 1943, and sank in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. The Four Chaplains helped to instill a sense of calm and reassurance to the soldiers in battle. They gave spiritual guidance and support as they gave up their own life jackets to those who had none. These American heroes then stood, arm in arm, heads bowed in prayer and went down with their ship.

The Four Chaplains will be forever remembered as heroes who characterized the very best qualities of American soldiers. Their lives serve as a testimony to all the heroes who have fought for our nation. Today, across the United States the memory of the Four Chaplains continues to bring comfort and inspiration. Four Chaplains Services bring together people of all races, faiths and creed in more than 2,000 interfaith services each year. It is only proper that our nation honor and celebrate the memory of the Four Chaplains.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to the Veterans Committee for moving this legislation forward; I appreciate all the members who have worked so hard to enhance our Veterans Day celebration. I want to especially thank my friend, Mr. PASCRELL, for all his efforts to promote a national moment of silence in honor of our nation's veterans and when the legislation before us is enacted into law, I would certainly hope that all radio and television stations will join in observing the Veterans Day moment of silence.

America's veterans are without any question the group most worthy of the gratitude of the people of our nation. It is time that we honor our heroes in a shared national moment of silence.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 195.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.