

was not accurately depicted in history. Their names were not mentioned, their achievements were not celebrated, and their sacrifices were not honored. He considered it his mission to correct the historical omissions of the role of African American soldiers, and he developed a comprehensive collection of historical information, including visual displays and artifacts that he used during lectures to community groups and to the many schools where he was invited to speak.

He would speak about the contributions of African Americans in battle that history did not record. He told about the Tuskegee Airmen, the Red Ball Express, and the lesser-known Fighting 369th—a group of African Americans, largely from New York City, who valiantly chose to fight for a country that gave them only minimal civil rights and would not even allow them to carry arms or participate in battle. But this band of patriots would not be deterred, and eventually fought as Americans for our ally, the French. They were so fierce in battle, in fact, that the enemy called them “The Hell-Fighters,” and they would later come to be known as The Harlem Hell-Fighters.

He was tenacious in his attempts to have the recognition due African American soldiers afforded them, and was the catalyst for the movement that eventually led President Clinton to recognize those soldiers; as a result, a number of African American soldiers who had been overlooked for the Purple Heart were later awarded that medal in recognition of their service in WWII. Purple Hearts were not the only awards withheld from African American soldiers. President Eisenhower, when presenting Letters of Commendation, chose to send Letters to white soldiers only. My Uncle John was directly responsible for President Clinton’s decision to award Letters of Commendation to those African American soldiers who participated in the D-Day Invasion and whose service had gone unmentioned and unrecognized for decades.

One of my uncle’s most treasured experiences, capping off his life’s work, was visiting Washington last Memorial Day weekend for the official dedication of the long-awaited World War II Memorial. As a veteran of the war, he and his wonderful wife Ruth, who were married over 60 years, were able to view the moving ceremony from special seats and also mingled with the crowds, enjoying great camaraderie with other World War II veterans gathered together for this historic occasion.

John Garrett, Jr. lived life to the fullest. When he and his wife attended my Annual Congressional Ball in March, they danced the night away, outlasting most of the others on the dance floor. He also made a point of traveling to Washington every fall to participate in the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference.

Mr. Speaker, let us honor John Garrett, Jr. for his patriotism and his service to our country. He was tireless in his fight to ensure that all our soldiers received the honor that was due them. He was a role model for our community, enlightening thousands of school children with the true story of the role African Americans played in our Nation’s history, and instilling in them pride for the legacy of their ancestors. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Ruth, his son Kenny and his granddaughter, Cindy.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BETH ISRAEL—THE WEST TEMPLE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Beth Israel—The West Temple, in commemoration of its 50th anniversary. Beth Israel was organized in April 1954 by Abe Silverstein, an early director of the NASA Lewis Research Center and 25 founding families, to provide a religious center for Reform Jews living on Cleveland’s west side. The congregation’s first service, Rosh Hashanah, was on September 27, 1954, at the First Universalist Church in North Olmsted. For the next three years, services were held at either the Universalist Church or the North Olmsted Community Club House. Following the merger with the West Side Jewish Center in October 1957, Beth Israel occupied the Center’s newly completed building at 14308 Triskett Road in Ohio’s 10th Congressional District. The building was dedicated on May 11, 1958. The congregation continues to worship there today.

For its first seven years, Beth Israel was served by a succession of six student rabbis from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Among them was Daniel Litt who became Beth Israel’s first full-time rabbi, serving from 1961 to 1965. The year 1965 also brought the construction of a new eight-room, two-story wing and the first of two Cleveland Foundation library grants. The library and its volunteer staff have provided services for the congregation as well as colleges, schools, and churches throughout western Cuyahoga County. By 1995, the library contained more than 6,000 volumes and audio-visual materials.

Beth Israel draws its members from Cleveland’s west side and western suburbs in Ohio’s 10th Congressional District. It prides itself on its commitment to education and social action. Its school, staffed by volunteers, covers preschool through grade 12 and has more than 100 students enrolled. Among its alumni is Sally Priesand, who went on to become the first woman ordained to the rabbinate in the United States and to serve as Beth Israel’s rabbi. As an outgrowth of the temple Social Action Committee, Beth Israel’s members found the Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism. Council founder Lou Rosenberg became a leader in the national movement to assist Soviet Jewry. Beth Israel’s current rabbi, Alan Lettofsky, remains active in local affairs and has spoken out at interfaith rallies to save local hospitals and on other issues of concern to the people of Ohio’s 10th District.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Beth Israel—The West Temple for its 50 years of service to, and a center of worship and community for, my Jewish constituents on Cleveland’s west side and western suburbs. Please join me in marking this auspicious occasion.

FREEDOM FOR REGIS IGLESIAS RAMIREZ

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Regis Iglesias Ramírez, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Iglesias Ramírez is a member of the Christian Liberation Movement. Because of his belief in freedom of religion, democracy and human rights, Mr. Iglesias Ramírez is an opponent of the nightmare that is the Castro regime. Despite the constant threat of retribution by the dictatorship, he has continually demanded his inalienable human rights.

Unfortunately, in March 2003, as part of the regime’s heinous crackdown on peaceful, pro-democracy activists, Mr. Iglesias Ramírez was arrested. In a sham trial, he was sentenced to 18 years in the totalitarian gulag.

Mr. Iglesias Ramírez is languishing in an inhuman, grotesque gulag simply because of his religious convictions and his desire to live in liberty. According to Amnesty International, he has been threatened and harassed because he persists in studying his Bible while incarcerated by the regime. It is reprehensible that, at the dawn of the 21st Century, men and women like Mr. Iglesias Ramírez are still locked in dank dungeons because of the tenets of their faith.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is May 20, and on that day, 103 years ago, the Cuban people obtained their independence; the Republic of Cuba was born. Today the Cuban people, led by heroic activists such as Mr. Iglesias Ramírez, continue to fight for freedom. It is my fervent hope that next year, on May 20, the Cuban people will be able to celebrate the anniversary of Cuba’s independence and also celebrate the return of freedom to that long suffering island.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable that peaceful Cubans of all genders, creeds and colors are locked in Castro’s barbarous gulag because they believe in a free Cuba. While the entire world sits by and ignores the suffering of the Cuban people, brave men and women like Mr. Iglesias Ramírez represent the best of mankind. My Colleagues, we must demand freedom and human rights for all people, especially those who live under the darkness of totalitarian regimes. We must demand immediate and unconditional freedom for Regis Iglesias Ramírez and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

COMMEMORATING THE 64TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF CRETE

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 64th anniversary of the Battle of Crete by introducing this House Resolution which recognizes and appreciates the historical significance of the people of Crete during World War II.

This was a historic event with direct significance to the Allies' victory of World War II. On May 20, 1941, thousands of German paratroopers and gliders began landing on Crete. Both the Allies and Nazis wanted Crete because of its strategic location. At that time the British controlled the island. It was a very strong point on the lifeline to India and protected both Palestine and Egypt.

The Nazi invasion force included the elite German paratroopers and glider troops. Hitler felt this was to be an easy victory, yet he is quoted to have said shortly after the invasion, "France fell in 8 days. Why is Crete free?"

The invasion of Crete took eleven days. It resulted in more than 6,000 German troopers listed as killed, wounded, or missing in action. The losses to the elite 7th parachute division were felt so hard by the German Military that it signified the end of large-scale airborne operations.

This valiant fight by the Cretan people began in the first hour of the Nazi airborne invasion, in contrast to the European underground movements that took a year or more after being invaded to begin.

Young boys, old men and women displayed breathtaking bravery in defending their Crete. German soldiers never got used to Cretan women fighting them. They would tear the dress from the shoulders of suspected women to find bruises from the recoil of the rifle. The penalty was death.

On July 28, 1941, The Times (London) reported that "five hundred Cretan women have been deported to Germany for taking part in the defense of their native island."

Another surprise for the German soldiers who invaded Crete was the heroic resistance of the clergy. A priest leading his parishioners into battle was not what the Germans anticipated. At Paleochora, Father Stylianos Frantzeskis, hearing of the German airborne invasion, rushed to his church, sounded the bell, took his rifle and marched his volunteers toward Maleme to write history.

This struggle became an example for all Europe to follow in defying German occupation and aggression.

The price paid by the Cretans for their valiant resistance to Nazi forces was high. Thousands of civilians died from random executions, starvation, and imprisonment. The Germans burned and destroyed entire communities as a reprisal for the Cretan resistance movement. Yet this resistance lasted for four years.

The Battle of Crete changed the final outcome of World War II, and significantly contributed in delaying Hitler's plan to invade Russia. The invasion was delayed from April to June of 1941.

The 2-month delay in the invasion made Hitler's forces face the Russian winter.

The Russian snowstorms and the sub zero temperatures eventually stalled the Nazi invasion before they could take Moscow or Leningrad. This was the beginning of the downfall of the Nazi reign of terror.

This significant battle and the heroic drive of the Cretan people must always be remembered and honored. Democracy came from Greece, and the Cretan heroes exemplified the courage it takes to preserve it.

Today, the courage and fortitude of the Cretan people are seen in the members of the United Cretan Associations of New York which are located in Astoria, Queens.

I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring the Cretans in the United States, Greece, and the diaspora.

HONORING THE CAREER OF
RICHARD MARTIN

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor a man who has dedicated his life to protecting our nation's treasures so generations of Americans can continue to enjoy their riches. Richard Martin, Superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, is retiring after 48 years of federal land management service.

Without question, my district has some of the finest landscapes in the world—from the High Sierras where these parks are found to the vast Central Valley where agriculture is king. All of these riches are interrelated. I came to know Superintendent Martin during his tenure of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Since day one, I have had the privilege of working closely with Dick to find solutions to critical visitor use issues and I have found him a man of his word and deed. I have been especially impressed with his ability to reach out to Valley residents to make the park more accessible. Dick has encouraged park staff to participate as active members of the many communities the park borders and discover how any park decision affects the neighborhood. He has developed close friendships with Valley communities and provided park educational opportunities for all.

Superintendent Martin has also tackled issues that go way beyond the National Park System to include the war on drugs. This is a problem no one expected the park staff to have to undertake until the disgusting discovery of a re-routed mountain stream, poisoned by a time release fertilizer component, irrigating hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of marijuana. Automatic weapons, animal carcasses, and a landfill emitting methane gas, are often found in these illegal marijuana plantations within the park. I applaud Dick's effort to eliminate this destructive cash crop and restore the stream and vegetation. We have visitors walking along trails near these locations and private property not far away—we want to ensure the safety of everyone and Dick has taken this task to heart.

Superintendent Martin's career has spanned some of this nation's most remote and vast landscapes, from the lowest in elevation—Death Valley National Park, to a far north locale at Alaska's Wrangell St Elias National Park and Preserve, to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Dick is an extraordinary park manager with an eye on retaining our parks for future generations. He and I have found ways to provide access, along with preservation—all in a desire to maintain our national heritage.

As the sun sets on his government career, I suspect that I will one day find him walking or riding along one of our western trails with his wife and four grown children. It will be great to see him continue to enjoy what he spent 48 years to protect. Dick, I wish you a hearty so-long and a fond farewell.

INTRODUCING A BILL TO POSTPONE THE 2005 ROUND OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill to postpone the 2005 round of military base closure and realignment. This bill would postpone the conclusion of the Realignment report issued by the Department of Defense on 13 May 2005, as well as any preceding or subsequent plans that may ultimately be enacted to close or realign military bases on U.S. territory. This bill will postpone such closures and realignments until a specific set of criteria have been fulfilled, including until both the Defense Department and Congress have had the opportunity to fully study the recommendations and their implications for the national security and defense of the United States.

This round of base closure and realignment also should not go forward while we have hundreds of thousands of troops deployed overseas in major conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The constant rotation of troops and other personnel to these major theaters of operations has caused great disruption, logistical strain, and terrible burdens on our servicemembers, their families, and the military itself.

Also, we should not proceed with this round of base closures and realignments before the 2006 release of the Quadrennial Defense Review. Congress must have ample time to study the recommendations of the QDR before agreeing on any major closure and realignment strategy. To do otherwise just does not make any sense.

Mr. Speaker, for these and other reasons I feel it is essential—for the strength of our military, the effectiveness of our defense, and the security of all Americans—that we postpone this round of BRAC closings until we are able to satisfy the critical criteria outlined in this bill. I hope my colleagues will join me by supporting this legislation and I hope for its speedy consideration on the House Floor.

IN HONOR OF SALVATORE J. CHILIA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Salvatore J. Chilia, as the State of Israel Bonds is honoring his decades-long commitment and work in supporting and protecting the American worker.

Mr. Chilia began work as an electrician with an apprenticeship in 1967. His service to workers began in 1977, when he was elected as an officer of Local 38's examining board. Mr. Chilia served seventeen years on the executive board, including nine years as chairman. In 1989, he was elected president of Local 38, working on behalf of 2,200 active members and 850 retirees. Throughout his tenure as board member, president and chairman, Mr. Chilia maintained an unwavering