

as both my sons became Scouts. I will continue to protect the Scouts from those that wish to harm this fine organization.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote for H. Con. Res. 6.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise to oppose H. Con. Res. 6, a resolution expressing, the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should continue to exercise its statutory authority to support the activities of the Boy Scouts of America.

I do not oppose the Boy Scouts. However, I do oppose the Federal Government using its resources to support an organization that blatantly discriminates against various groups.

As a private organization, the Boy Scouts may exclude individuals from membership based on their sexual orientation, religion, or gender. I disagree with that decision, but it is their right.

But I oppose a resolution commending any part of our government—even the Department of Defense—for supporting the Boy Scouts or any other organization that promotes active discrimination.

The author of this resolution may be concerned that courts are calling into question the appropriateness of the support the Department of Defense provides to the Boy Scouts. I hope the courts do move forward to end this explicit government support of discrimination. We should do that here in Congress, but instead my Republican colleagues are trying to hinder the courts from enforcing civil rights.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today I voted against H. Con. Res. 6, because I am disappointed with the Boy Scouts of America's exclusionary policies that prevent gay boys and teens from participating in scouting. While the Boy Scouts' positive work within our Nation's communities is notable, the message that the organization sends to gay youth by shutting them out diminishes its greater goals of teaching respect, personal honor, and service.

It is important to encourage and support all of our children and by excluding gay youth the Boy Scouts of America is preventing some young men from experiencing the positive benefits Scouting can offer.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I have long admired the services of the many Boy Scout volunteers and have benefited from the organization myself. It is sad that their good works have been clouded by a policy that governs who can participate in the organization. Until the organization changes that policy, I do not feel comfortable voting for resolutions such as this.

I look forward to the day the Boy Scouts of America can better represent their communities by extending membership to all persons who abide by the Boy Scout creed.

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 6—Sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should continue its support of the Boy Scouts of America.

I rise as a life-long member of the Scouts, and a proud Eagle Scout.

This week marks the 95th anniversary of the incorporation of the Boy Scouts of America. Madam Speaker, the Boy Scouts stand for something—they stand for what we want all young Americans to be.

To be Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful and Friendly.

There are not many organizations, Madam Speaker, that stand for the same values and

principles today that they did at the time of their founding or incorporation. The Boy Scouts of America are not an organization that has changed its core values in order to maintain a sense of political correctness in an age of vanishing values.

There are not many organizations that exist today, like the Boy Scouts of America that are willing to stand up and tell young men that they should strive to be:

Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful,
Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent.

Those are the principles of the Boy Scout Law. And it is my sense, and I believe the sense of my constituents and those of the rest of America, that Congress continue to support the Boy Scouts of America.

The Boy Scouts will be gathering this summer at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia, and Congress should resolve to encourage in strong terms that the Department of Defense continue its support of the Scouts today, for the coming national jamboree, and in the future.

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and encourage everyone to support this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 6.

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. HEFLEY. Madam 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.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 74) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 74

Resolved, That the following named Members and Delegates be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.—Ms. Schwartz of Pennsylvania (to rank immediately after Mr. Cuellar).

(2) COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.—Mr. Smith of Washington, Mr. Van Hollen.

(3) COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY.—Ms. Loretta Sanchez of California, Mr. Markey, Mr. Dicks, Ms. Harman, Mr. DeFazio, Mrs. Lowey, Ms. Norton, Ms. Zoe Lofgren of California, Ms. Jackson-Lee of Texas, Mr. Pascrell, Mrs. Christensen, Mr. Etheridge, Mr. Langevin, Mr. Meek of Florida.

(4) COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT.—Mrs. Jones of Ohio, Mr. Gene Green of Texas, Ms. Roybal-Allard, Mr. Doyle.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 26) honoring the Tuskegee Airmen for their bravery in fighting for our freedom in World War II, and for their contribution in creating an integrated United States Air Force.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 26

Whereas the United States is currently combating terrorism around the world and is highly dependent on the global reach and presence provided by the Air Force;

Whereas these operations require the highest skill and devotion to duty from all Air Force personnel involved;

Whereas the Tuskegee Airmen proved that such skill and devotion, and not skin color, are the determining factors in aviation;

Whereas the Tuskegee Airmen served honorably in the Second World War struggle against global fascism; and

Whereas the example of the Tuskegee Airmen has encouraged millions of Americans of every race to pursue careers in air and space technology: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that the United States Air Force should continue to honor and learn from the example provided by the Tuskegee Airmen as it faces the challenges of the 21st century and the war on terror.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 26.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, in March of 1942, five young men at a rural Army airbase in Tuskegee, Alabama, graduated from aviation cadet class in the Army Air Corps. These men, like other World War II fighter pilots, accepted extraordinary risks to carry out their missions. They were brave and patriotic. Hailing from towns and cities across America, these young soldiers came to Tuskegee, Alabama, with the dream of serving our Nation in the air. They would graduate with honors as captains and lieutenants.

From 1942 to 1946, 992 fighter pilots would graduate from this rural Army airbase in central Alabama. Their missions would be over enemy territory in Italy and North Africa, some of the

most challenging assignments of the war, and some of them would not return. Yet many did. Those who did survive those battles lived to claim unprecedented records of success and high honors for their bravery.

But we all know World War II was not their only battle. These proud soldiers, the Tuskegee Airmen, were the first African Americans ever to serve our Nation as Army fighter pilots. They were true leaders, men who battled our enemies overseas while fighting bigotry and racism at home.

Madam Speaker, as we debate today's resolution honoring the Tuskegee Airmen, we will hear of their struggles. We will hear their stories of being turned away at the officers' clubs because of their race, and we will hear of the prejudices they faced overseas.

Yet they did not give up. They persevered, and along with others from our greatest generation, joined with our allies across the globe and helped defeat the forces of tyranny.

The Tuskegee Airmen are symbols of America, Madam Speaker, strong through difficult times and courageous in the face of adversity.

In the month when our Nation celebrates the contributions of African Americans to our Nation's history, it is important we take this time to honor their bravery. Their courage and persistence are examples for all of us to follow. We have much to learn from their service and much to honor for their contributions to our civil rights legacy.

As our military continues to fight the war on terror overseas, we should pause to remember the battles fought long ago by these proud Americans. Not only is our world freer because of their courage, but our Nation is stronger because of their sacrifices.

I want to thank my colleagues for being here today to honor the Tuskegee Airmen, and I look forward to doing what I can to keep their legacy strong so future generations may also share in their accomplishments.

I would also like to add, Madam Speaker, that as part of my efforts to honor the Tuskegee Airmen, I have been leading an initiative to help build a National Park Service museum in Tuskegee, Alabama, to memorialize these brave Americans.

Obviously, on this important occasion I would welcome any and all support from Members that would join me in this initiative, and would answer any questions later.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 26, introduced by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS). This resolution recognizes the Tuskegee Airmen for their brave and honorable service during World War II.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen is a phenomenal story, and it highlights

the Tuskegee Airmen as shining examples of the perseverance and strength of the U.S. Air Corps as they faced the challenges of 21st century. It is fitting that we recognize such an outstanding group of individuals who were pioneers in integrating the Army Air Corps and, eventually, the Air Force as we celebrate Black History Month.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame prejudice and discrimination to become some of the most highly respected airmen of World War II. Until 1941, African Americans were denied the opportunity to become leaders in the military and they were prohibited from flying because it was believed that African Americans lacked the qualifications for such noble combat duty.

African Americans have played a significant role in the history of our military over the past 300 years, and it was absurd to suggest that the ability was lacking. African Americans soldiers have fought in every war and have contributed so much of themselves to ensure this country's reputation as a superpower. The refusal to allow for black pilots was simply rank racism.

It was the unshakeable belief by so many that this obvious bigotry was wrong that finally gave way to the historical beginning of the integrated United States Air Force. Distinguished men such as Booker T. Washington and General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., came to Macon County, Alabama, and reality created the legend that we know today.

Booker T. Washington founded the Tuskegee Institute, which established a well-respected aeronautical engineering program; and thousands of students, including student officer Captain Benjamin Davis, who was in the first pilot class, went through the institute's flight program and became known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen included not only over 1,000 fighter pilots, but they also included navigators, bombardiers and maintenance and support personnel that ultimately comprised the famed 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group.

During World War II, the 99th Fighter Squadron, led by the late General Benjamin Davis, was originally sent to North Africa, but moved to the European continent and flew over Italy in 1944. The 99th held the record of 200 combat missions without losing a single bomber to enemy fire, a record for a squadron.

It is therefore only fitting, Madam Speaker, that the Congress takes the time today to appropriately recognize the men who participated in the Tuskegee Experiment. No standards were lowered for the pilots or any of the others who trained in operations, in meteorology, in intelligence, in engineering, medicine or any of the other officer fields.

The Tuskegee Airmen proved without a doubt that loyalty, bravery and sacrifice were not based on the ethnicity of an individual, but on their individual motivation, determination and

devotion to duty. The men who participated in this great experiment were dedicated young men, possessing the strong personal desire to serve the United States of America at their best. They enlisted at a time when this country was engaged in enormous conflict, but they took on the challenge and they took on the responsibility and served with distinction.

Today we honor their achievements and all of those who have taken the oath to defend this great country.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the my friend, the distinguished gentleman from the First District of Alabama (Mr. BONNER).

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Alabama, and I want to give my sincerest congratulations to him for providing this leadership in bringing this issue, this discussion, to the American people today.

Madam Speaker, as we celebrate our Nation's 79th annual Black History Month, it is only appropriate to reflect on the accomplishments of Alabama's Tuskegee Airmen. These brave soldiers came from every corner of the United States with the ambition of serving their country to the best of their ability.

The Tuskegee Airmen were committed and capable. Their success demonstrated that a soldier's ability is determined by his skill and persistence, not by creed or color.

Tuskegee's established airfield and proven civilian pilot training program made it an obvious choice for the location of a center to instruct America's first African American military aviators. Upon receipt of the contract granted by the U.S. Army Air Corps, Tuskegee Institute began the training of America's original black aviators in 1941.

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The first cadets accepted their silver wings in March of 1942.

In recalling the 15,000 missions completed by the Tuskegee Airmen, we note a distinguished record of service. The airmen destroyed over 1,000 German aircraft, one enemy destroyer, and many enemy installations. They also boast the extraordinary record of flying over 200 bomber escort missions over Europe without the loss of a single bomber to enemy fire.

The accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen did not go unnoticed by their peers and associates. They returned home bearing the honor they deserved, including 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 8 Purple Hearts, and 14 Bronze Stars.

Their triumphs in the air exhibited undaunted courage and capacity that were certainly to equal that of any pilot prior to or certainly thereafter. With the assistance of the men and

women of the Army Air Corps, the Tuskegee Airmen made integration into our military possible.

In 1948, President Harry Truman enacted Executive Order Number 9981, which directed equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the United States Armed Forces. In time, order 9981 led to the end of racial segregation in our military.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in Alabama, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the achievements and the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. Their successful endeavor into military flight provided inspiration to a new generation of aviators.

On March 24, 1945, the 332nd Fighter Group received the Presidential Unit Citation for its longest bomber escort mission to Berlin, Germany. On the 50th anniversary of such an accomplishment, I rise to honor these men who succeeded not only in great military feats, but also in breaking down the barriers and boundaries of racial segregation.

As Tuskegee University's President Dr. Benjamin Payton said, "The Tuskegee Airmen story is about much more than flying airplanes, it is about teaching people to soar."

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman who is proud to represent Tuskegee University in his congressional district, the third district of Alabama.

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

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 26 honoring the heroic accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen. At a time when race narrowed the horizons and limited the opportunities of many Americans, the Tuskegee Airmen soared high above the low expectations of the day.

The Tuskegee Airmen served their country with great valor and distinction and set in motion the movement to desegregate the Armed Forces, a crucial moment in the civil rights struggle. Black History Month is a good time to remember the American heroes that were not given the full recognition that they were due. The Tuskegee Airmen are deserving of all of the praise that they will surely receive today. All took great risks for their country and some made the ultimate sacrifice. Americans remember our heroes and hold a special place in their hearts for the Tuskegee Airmen.

Those that are still with us have continued to serve their country on the home front in various ways and have received not all of the attention. However, a friend of mine from Chicago, Rufus Hunt, who served with the Tuskegee Airmen, has helped to keep the memory and spirit of these brave Americans alive by serving as their

chief historian. Others have taught flying skills to underprivileged youth, and still others have worked as mentors.

We have a great active group of Tuskegee Airmen in the City of Chicago, the DODO Chapter, and they are still teaching young people how to fly. They have a Young Eagles program. One of my proudest possessions is a jacket that I have that the Tuskegee Airmen's DODO Club has given to me.

So I join with all of us as we extol the virtues of those brave men and now women who are members of the Tuskegee Airmen who continue the great tradition of providing the greatest of service and tremendous aviation.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY), my friend and colleague.

(Mr. TERRY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a cosponsor of this resolution, and I thank the gentleman from Alabama for offering it.

It is an honor for me to be part of this recognition of the Tuskegee Airmen, members of the Greatest Generation who fought fascism abroad and overcame discrimination at home to become one of our Nation's most successful military units. Their story deserves to be told often, not just in February, to remind all Americans how far we have come to honor the many sacrifices made along the way.

I have the privilege of representing four Tuskegee Airmen who reside in Nebraska's Second Congressional District: Robert Holts, Ralph Orduna, and Charles Lane, all of Omaha and just south of Omaha in Bellevue, Harry Tull. Another Airman, Paul Adams, lives in nearby Lincoln.

I am especially proud to note that Colonel Lane of Omaha was the youngest black fighter in World War II. His daughter, Karen Davis, is a longtime member of my congressional staff and she does a wonderful job; and Colonel Lane can be as proud of her, as we are of him.

I also want to mention Omaha native Alphonza Davis, a graduate of Omaha Tech High School and Omaha University, who finished first in his class at Tuskegee and was chosen squadron leader. He was killed in combat in 1944 while over Germany. Today, the local Tuskegee Airmen chapter is named in his honor.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen is unfortunately rooted in the racial segregation that still existed in our country during World War II. As a result, African Americans who wanted to fly in the military were trained at a separate location near Tuskegee, Alabama. The Tuskegee Airmen, or Red Tails as they were called because of the crimson tails on their aircraft, were the first squadron of African American combat pilots in the U.S. military. By the end of the war, nearly 1,000 men had graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee.

Under the command of Colonel Benjamin Davis, Jr., these warriors fought over North Africa, Sicily and Europe. By the way, Colonel Davis would go on to be the Air Force's first African American general.

How good were these Tuskegee Airmen? In a book entitled "Mustang Aces of the 9th and 15th Air Forces," one pilot bomber recalled that the Tuskegee pilots had earned great respect from the bomber pilots they protected. Here is a direct quote: "The Red Tails were always out there when we wanted them to be," he said. "We had no idea they were black; it was the Army's best kept secret."

Today, the Tuskegee Airmen and their record of success is no secret. Throughout the war, not a single bomber protected by the Red Tails was ever shot down by enemy aircraft. By the war's end, the Tuskegee Airmen had flown over 15,000 sorties, completed over 1,500 missions, destroyed more than 260 enemy aircraft, and more than 1,000 enemy vehicles on the ground; and been awarded 744 Air Medals, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 14 Bronze Stars, and 8 Purple Hearts.

Of the estimated 450 who saw combat, 150 lost their lives while on combat flights or in training, including Colonel Lane's childhood friend, John Squires.

I join my House colleagues in saluting the Tuskegee Airmen 60 years after they first donned the Nation's uniform. They have secured their place in history as American heroes. We are proud of them all. We thank them for their service to this great country. I thank the gentleman from Alabama for his work and for this worthy tribute.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS).

(Mr. TOWNS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, many people indicated earlier on that the blacks did not have the intelligence to be able to be involved in aviation; and, of course, after a short period of time, they were proven wrong. I think about some of our great leaders who actually were a part of the Tuskegee Airmen. I think about Percy Sutton who was a great leader in the New York area and, of course, has done so many things for people. I think it came from his involvement with the Tuskegee Airmen and his being involved in Tuskegee University. Then Rosco Brown, who was known as one of the world's greatest educators, a person who headed one of our universities for a period of time; and I think about how all of them were involved with the Tuskegee Airmen.

So there was no question about it. There were many that were qualified to do it, and they did a magnificent job. Their performance was unmatched, and I am so proud that this House today is recognizing them.

I just want to say to the people who actually brought forth this resolution, I want to commend them on H. Con.

Res. 26, because I think the time has come when we recognize the outstanding work of the Tuskegee Airmen. We should not just do it during the month of February because, first of all, when we think about their accomplishments, February is the shortest month of all. That within itself is sort of selfish. But the point is I think we need to do it 365 days a year, and if there is a leap year, we need to do it 366 days, because the job that they did and the things that they did on behalf of this country is something that we should continue to talk about daily.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) for introducing this important legislation.

Madam Speaker, as the country celebrates Black History Month, it is important to take time to honor the Tuskegee Airmen who, despite significant racism targeted at African Americans, strove to serve their country and defend its freedoms during World War II.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen is familiar to many of us. On July 19, 1941, the U.S. Air Force began a program at the Tuskegee Army Airfield located in Alabama to train black Americans as military pilots. The program started with only 13 men; but by its conclusion, it graduated nearly 1,000 men who became the Nation's first black airmen.

Many of the graduates of the Tuskegee program were sent overseas for combat assignment, either in the 99th Pursuit Squadron or the 332nd Fighter Group, both of which were honored for their service. In fact, the 99th Fighter Squadron received two Presidential Unit citations for outstanding tactical air support in aerial combat, and the 332nd Fighter Group received one Presidential Unit citation for its longest bomber escort mission to Berlin, Germany, where they destroyed three German jet fighters and damaged five additional jet fighters without losing any of the bombers or any of its own fighter aircraft to enemy aircraft.

Unfortunately, despite their outstanding service, the Tuskegee Airmen experienced a great deal of racism. The racism directed at the airmen came to a head in early 1945 when black officers tried to enter the Freeman Field Club, an officers' club in Indiana, against direct orders for them to stay out. Madam Speaker, 103 officers were arrested, charged with insubordination, and ordered to face court-martial.

Fortunately, the court-martial proceedings were quickly dropped against 100 of the officers; two officers eventually had their charges dropped; and one officer, Lieutenant Roger "Bill" Terry, was convicted.

At this moment I would like to recognize my uncle, John Mosely, who was a Tuskegee Airman and who was recently honored by his community of Aurora, Colorado. He is one of the leading citizens of that community, having worked for the Urban League and many other programs. I dedicate this resolution to him and his wife, Edna Mosely.

Fifty years later, however, at the Tuskegee Airmen National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, 15 of the original 103 officers that were arrested received official notification that their military records had been purged of any reference to the Freeman Field incident. Also, Mr. Terry's court martial conviction had been reversed and his military record cleared. The remaining officers received instruction for clearing their records.

Madam Speaker, the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen is not the Freeman Field incident; instead their legacy is that of serving their country with distinction which helped the U.S. Armed Forces and the United States integrate in the years following World War II.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support this legislation and urge all of my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RUPPERSBERGER).

(Mr. RUPPERSBERGER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

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Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 26, honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and their amazing contributions during World War II, and their impact in creating an integrated United States Air Force. I am honored for this opportunity to speak during Black History Month on this important resolution.

As the first African American combat unit in the Army Air Corps, the Tuskegee Airmen helped shatter stereotypes by fighting for freedom both abroad and here at home. Their individual and collective acts of courage helped pave the way for the desegregation of the Army in 1948.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize four members of the Tuskegee Airmen with ties to the Second Maryland Congressional District. Alfred L. Woolridge, Gordon T. Boyd, Leroy A. Battle, and Alfred McKenzie were four individuals with separate lives and histories. Each brought unique skills to their service and each helped form this historic group of this Tuskegee Airmen. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I thank them for their contribution and service.

These gentlemen exemplified the bravery of the legendary Tuskegee Airmen. They served their country, both on the battlefield and off, and were valuable members of their Maryland communities.

Madam Speaker, at a time of war with a new generation of service men

and women serving bravely to bring liberty to the oppressed, I think it is only fitting that we remember these members of the greatest generation, the Tuskegee Airmen.

Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 417 honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and their amazing contributions during World War II and their impact creating an integrated United States Air Force. I am honored for this opportunity to speak during Black History Month on this important resolution.

As the first African-American combat unit in the Army Air Corps, the Tuskegee Airmen helped shatter stereotypes by fighting for freedom both abroad and here at home. Through their heroism in the skies above North Africa and Europe, the Airmen demonstrated that African-Americans could be effective members of the military. Completing over 500 missions during the war, the Tuskegee Airmen destroyed over 250 enemy aircraft without losing a single American bomber. Their individual and collective acts of courage helped pave the way for the desegregation of the Army in 1948.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize four members of the Tuskegee Airmen with ties to my hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. Alfred L. Woolridge, Gordon T. Boyd, Leroy A. Battle, and Alfred McKenzie were four individuals with separate lives and histories. Each brought unique skills to their service and each helped to form this historic group of Tuskegee Airmen. I would like to take this opportunity to speak briefly about each of these incredible men and share a bit about them with you.

Mr. Alfred L. Woolridge, a Baltimore resident, joined the Tuskegee Airmen after enlisting in the Army in 1942 and being assigned to the Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. A scientist with a master's degree in chemistry and mathematics, Mr. Woolridge worked as an aircraft engineering officer ensuring that the planes were safe to fly every morning. After leaving the Army in 1946, Mr. Woolridge worked as an analytical chemist in Maryland until 1974. He remained an active member of his Baltimore community until his death in March of 1998.

After being inducted into the Army Air Corps during World War II, Mr. Gordon T. Boyd Jr. became a bombardier and a navigator. He joined the Tuskegee Airmen after being assigned to the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Mr. Boyd ascended to the rank of first Lieutenant and is credited with helping newer cadets adjust to military life. After being honorably discharged in 1946, Mr. Boyd worked as a management specialist for the U.S. Census bureau until his retirement in 1979. Before his death on May 5, 1995, Mr. Boyd became a charter member of the East Coast Chapter D.C. Tuskegee Airmen Inc.

Mr. Leroy A. Battle was a jazz musician who played with Billie Holiday before he was drafted into the Army in 1943. He volunteered to join the Tuskegee Airmen and soon became a bombardier and a navigator. On April 5, 1945, Mr. Battle along with 100 other airmen, defied orders by attempting to desegregate the officer's club at Freeman Field in Seymour, Indiana. The Freeman Field Incident played an important role in African-American attempts to combat racism in the Armed Forces and eventually paved the way for President Truman's order to desegregate the Army in 1948. After

being honorably discharged from the Army, Mr. Battle spent 29 years teaching before retiring in 1978. He continues to be an active member of this community by speaking out about his experiences as a Tuskegee Airman.

Mr. Alfred McKenzie joined the Tuskegee Airmen after being drafted into the Army in 1942. After completing advanced training, Mr. McKenzie became a B-25 pilot. He was sent to Freeman Field in Indiana where he later joined Mr. Battle and 100 other airmen in attempting to desegregate the officer's club. After World War II ended, Mr. McKenzie continued to fight for the cause of civil rights. After being passed over for a promotion numerous times at the Government Printing Office, McKenzie filed a class action law suit. The suit resulted in an order to end discrimination in promotions and a \$2.4 million award back pay to over 300 people. He continued to work for various civil rights causes until his death on March 30, 1998.

These gentlemen exemplified the bravery of the legendary Tuskegee Airmen. They served their country both on the battlefield and off and were valued members of their Maryland communities. Mr. Speaker, at a time of war, with a new generation of servicemen and women serving bravely to bring liberty to the oppressed, I think it is only fitting that we remember these members of the Greatest Generation—the Tuskegee Airmen.

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER).

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 26, honoring the Tuskegee Airmen.

When Tuskegee's first school officially opened on July 4, 1881, Booker T. Washington became the first principal and was the first of many magnificent leaders of that institution.

Due to the rigid racial segregation in the United States during World War II, over 966 black military aviators were trained. And one of those men, I am proud to say, was my father's older brother, my uncle, LeRoy Cleaver, Jr., of Wichita Falls, Texas.

My uncle and others served here at home, in North Africa, Sicily, and Europe. They proved that they were not only some of the Air Force's best men but the military's best men.

On October 9, 1943, Tuskegee's 99th Pursuit Squadron was paired with the all-white 79th Fighter Group. These groups were integrated and no longer restricted to being escorts; instead, they were assigned to the highly hazardous duty of bombing key German strongholds.

Tuskegee Airmen destroyed over 1,000 Germany aircraft and received some of our Nation's most prestigious military honors, including 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, eight Purple Hearts, and 14 Bronze Stars; and they never lost a single ship.

On February 2, 1948, President Harry Truman of my district in Missouri did what no previous President had dared. He announced courageously in a special message to Congress that he had "instructed the Secretary of Defense to

take steps to have the remaining instances of discrimination in the armed services eliminated as rapidly as possible."

Even in the dark and demeaning dungeons of discrimination, the Tuskegee Airmen served with dignity.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) has 9½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for purposes of control.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

(Mr. BISHOP of Georgia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the courageous men of the 332nd Fighting Group, the Tuskegee Airmen.

In 1940, Charles "Chief" Anderson led a cadre of instructors to train an extraordinary group of African American young men led by General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. After enduring months of training, these men defied their critics and earned their wings to become the 99th Pursuit Squadron and would later form the 332nd Fighter Group.

The 332nd was based out of North Africa and flew combat missions over Italy. Most notable, on the 4th of July 1943, the New York Times reported from North Africa that "An American Negro fighting squadron escorting bombers yesterday over Sicily destroyed a Focke-Wulf 190 to score the formation's first victory." In combat over Europe, the Tuskegee Airmen shot down or damaged more than 400 German aircraft, winning 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 744 Air Medals. The 332nd was the only escort group in the U.S. Army Air Force never to lose a bomber. Their record is as remarkable as it is renowned.

The men of the 332nd were both warriors and patriots who fought for equality and liberty at home and abroad.

I was blessed to know several of the early Tuskegee Airmen, including my neighbor growing up, Mr. William Gordon, Sr., a pilot, an educator, a mentor and a distinguished businessman.

It is altogether fitting that we remember them together during Black History Month and as our young men and women of the Air Force support the global war on terror through the Air Force's global reach and presence.

Today, I am proud that we salute the Tuskegee Airmen, American heroes, for their courageous and distinguished service to this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the courageous men of the 332nd Fighter Group, the Tuskegee Airmen.

In 1940, Charles "Chief" Anderson, a self-taught pilot, went to the Tuskegee Institute to

train black pilots. He was the lead instructor of an extraordinary group of African American young men led by General Benjamin O. Davis Jr. After enduring months of training, these men defied their critics and earned their wings to become the 99th Pursuit Squadron. The president of Tuskegee tried to persuade the U.S. War Department to use its airmen as combat pilots as World II loomed, but the Army resisted, alleging that African Americans lacked the intelligence and discipline to fly airplanes. A turning point came in 1931 when the first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, visited Tuskegee and went on an aerial tour with Chief Anderson.

Months later, the 99th Pursuit Squadron, based out of North Africa, was flying combat missions over Italy. In their first escort mission, the 38 fighters of the 99th held off more than 100 German attackers. On the 4th of July 1943, the New York Times ran this article from the Allied Headquarters, in North Africa; an American Negro fighter squadron escorting bombers yesterday over Sicily destroyed a Focke-Wulf 190 to score the formations first victory. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was on the airfield to congratulate First Lieutenant Charles Hall of the 99th Pursuit Squadron when he returned after shooting down the plane. In perhaps their most spectacular mission, then Colonel Davis led the Tuskegee Airmen on a 1,600-mile escort mission to Berlin. Until that day, the Allies had shot down only two of the new German jet fighters. But on that day alone, Colonel Davis and his Tuskegee Airmen downed three. In combat over Europe, the Tuskegee Airmen shot down or damaged more than 400 German aircraft, winning 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 744 Air Medals. The 332nd Fighter Group was the only escort group of the U.S. Army Air Forces never to lose a bomber. Their record is as remarkable as it is renowned.

The men of the 99th were both warriors and patriots who fought for equality and liberty at home and abroad. I was blessed to know several of the early Tuskegee Airmen, including my childhood neighbor, Mr. William Gordon, Sr., a pilot, an educator and a distinguished business man. It is fitting that we remember them today as our young men and women of the Air Force support the Global War on Terror throughout the Air Force's global reach and presence.

Today, I salute the Tuskegee Airmen, American heroes, for their courageous and distinguished service to this great nation.

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for yielding me time.

Let me begin by thanking my good friend, the gentleman from the State of Alabama (Mr. ROGERS). We are both Alabama native sons. What a testament to the Tuskegee Airmen that today a white Alabamian and a black Alabamian stand here to pay tribute to their remarkable work.

So much has been said about their remarkable accomplishments, and I will not repeat any of that, but something needs to be said about the origins of these men.

When they were born every single one of them was born in a segregated society that was dedicated to the proposition that men and women are unequal and created unequally. When every single one of these men was born, they lived in a world that doubted their value, that doubted their worth, that doubted their potential to contribute to this country, and yet they rose above it. They worked and practiced in an Army, for that matter, that was segregated. Yet they somehow rose above it.

There are young men and women who are listening to us right now, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that they will take this lesson from our standing here and saluting these airmen today: That even if you are born in a condition and climate that holds you back, even if you are born in conditions of the inner city and rural parts of the South that would seem to tell you what you cannot do, look up to the Tuskegee Airmen, because they are an example of human beings rising to their highest potential against all kinds of odds.

I close, Mr. Speaker, simply by saying again, as a son of Alabama, that this is the progress that our State has made. When the history of the last century is finally written and the history of human progress is written, let it be said that these brave men came to my State of Alabama to learn about serving their country and that they learned a talent that helped keep our country free. May we draw some inspiration from that.

I thank all of the outstanding Members who have spoken on this bill today.

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for yielding me time, and I thank the sponsoring Member, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) for his kindness.

Mr. Speaker, I was introduced to the Tuskegee Airmen through my father in law, Phillip F. Lee, who spent many hours and many moments with the family telling us about not only the history, but the compassion and the character of these brave men.

Might I say that although we applaud the United States military for being one of the first institutions in the United States to integrate its services and its forces, let me try to paint for you very briefly the kind of atmosphere that these young black men entered into.

It was an enormously segregated America, an America that had recently come through a challenging depression, and an armed services that did not confront them or view them as equal, yet

with dignity in uniform they stood strong. They loved their country, and they trained young airmen who later became generals of our Armed Forces.

They were known in World War II to be the battalion that never turned back. They joined their colleagues, irrespective of their color. They went after those who needed to be saved and they did it with valor. Even though they came back to the Nation as second-class citizens, they always lived their lives as Tuskegee Airmen.

I salute the city of Tuskegee and I salute Alabama for hosting these young families. My mother-in-law lived, of course, as a young bride in Tuskegee, Alabama. It was that charitable atmosphere, of course, for those young men that allowed them to be able to train and to be excellent.

So today I rise with my colleagues to support and applaud this resolution and to be able to say that we together now in a bipartisan manner and, of course, with all of our diversity and our appreciation for what America really stands for, we stand here today on February 9, 2005, united as an America that loves its United States military, but we will never forget the brave men who, against all odds, stood as regal Tuskegee Airmen, making a difference in this valiant effort.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) for allowing us the opportunity to debate this, but more importantly, for cementing the history at this very important time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution currently on the floor under suspension of the rules, H. Con. Res. 26. This bill was introduced by our colleague from Alabama, Mr. ROGERS, and the Committee on Armed Services and honors the heroic and renowned Tuskegee Airmen for their sacrifices in World War II as well as for their contribution to the Civil Rights movement.

I joined our colleague from Nevada, Mr. PORTER, to speak about his resolution, H. Con. Res. 417, that honored the Tuskegee Airmen and their contribution in creating an integrated United States Air Force. At the time we supported that resolution, this Nation dealt with a very serious human rights crisis that was partially perpetrated by our own military personnel in the Iraq region. However, the Tuskegee Airmen represented a positive example of a respect for human rights as well as civil rights at the highest level.

Five members of the Tuskegee Airmen group visited middle and high school students at the M. O. Campbell Educational Center in Houston's Aldine Independent School District in conjunction with the "Wings Over Houston Air Show." That event left an indelible mark on the youths of Houston who look up to our men and women in uniform.

Lt. Col. Lee Archer, Lt. Col. Charles McGee, Dr. Roscoe C. Brown, Jr., Lt. Col. Herbert "Gene" Carter and George Watson, Sr. visited with Leadership Officer Training Corps (LOT) and Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) students to talk about their roles as pilots and ground support personnel during World War II and how their presence in the armed forces helped to break down racial bar-

riers for those who came after them. One of the things that stood out was a question that Lt. Col. Charles McGee posed before leaving the students: "Think about this, you are going to be responsible for what happens in this country for the next 15 or so years . . . What will you contribute to it?"

I highlighted this question because it is very applicable to the current situation that we face in Abu Ghraib. We must be accountable for the way we treat our brothers as well as our foreign neighbors. The human rights element of the civil rights struggle for African Americans can be used to guide our actions today in Iraq and every day. Because of the fortitude and commitment shown by the Tuskegee Airmen, our Armed Forces have the talent and skill that allows us to sleep at night knowing that we are in the most capable hands.

A program began on July 19, 1941, in Alabama to train black Americans as military pilots. Flight training was conducted by the Division of Aeronautics of Tuskegee Institute, the famed school of learning founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881. Once a cadet completed primary training at Tuskegee's Moton Field, he was sent to nearby Tuskegee Army Air Field for completion of flight training and for transition to combat type aircraft. The first classes of Tuskegee airmen were trained to be fighter pilots for the famous 99th Fighter Squadron, slated for combat duty in North Africa. Additional pilots were assigned to the 332d Fighter Group which flew combat along with the 99th Squadron from bases in Italy.

In September 1943, a twin-engine training program was begun at Tuskegee to provide bomber pilots. However, World War II ended before these men were able to get into combat. By the end of the war, 992 men had graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee. 450 of these men were sent overseas for combat assignment. Approximately 150 lost their lives while in training or on combat flights. More men were trained at Tuskegee for aircrew and ground crew duties—flight engineers, gunners, mechanics, and armorers.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward in the international fight against terrorism, the spirit and tenacity of the Tuskegee Airmen must inspire us to fight terror together as a team. The team must be comprised of all of our international neighbors. I support this resolution and am honored to share these words.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for purposes of control.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the State of Georgia (Mr. BARROW).

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak of bravery, of courage, and of a war that was fought on two fronts, at home and abroad.

Over 60 years ago America was at war with totalitarianism and fascist forces spreading across Europe and the Pacific. And here at home, our country was training and building an army to answer the call, an army with a history of excluding African Americans from aviation training.

That was the case until just 3 months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when a class of five aviation candidates finished training at the Tuskegee Army Airfield on the campus of the Tuskegee

Institute in Alabama, soon becoming the Nation's first African American fighter pilots. They were George S. Roberts, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., Charles H. BeBow, Jr., Mac Ross, and Lemuel R. Custis.

These were the original five Tuskegee Airmen, pilots who entered into combat at a critical part of the war and was instrumental in helping to turn the tide.

Between 1941 and 1945, over 1,000 aviators trained at the Tuskegee Army Airfield. Together, fighting alongside hundreds of thousands of their fellow citizens, they helped defeat the threat of fascism, proving that America is strongest when they are not divided by bigotry, prejudice, or racism.

The military record of these distinguished airmen speaks for itself, 15,500 missions completed, 260 enemy aircraft destroyed, one enemy destroyer sunk, an unprecedented record of flying more than 200 bomber escort missions without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft.

The Tuskegee Airmen returned home with Distinguished Flying Crosses, Legions of Merit, Purple Hearts and Silver Stars, but beyond the medals and accolades, these men paved the way to an important and long-overdue victory, the full integration of the U.S. military. That is the lesson of the Tuskegee Airmen, that love of country, skill, and daring are qualities that transcend race or skin color.

Today, as we face new threats from abroad, let us learn from the courage and example set by the Tuskegee Airmen. Let us recommit ourselves to putting old and inexcusable divisions behind us. America's strength lies in our unity, and to move forward, we must work together as one nation, whether it be on foreign battlefields or in our local communities.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I also want to make a few remarks on this legislation before us, the Tuskegee Airmen Act, and I want to speak on that because this is so personal to me. My mayor of Highland Village, Texas, a city that is central to my district, my mayor, Bill Lawrence, is the son of one of the original Tuskegee Airmen.

Today, I will be happy to vote for this legislation honoring a proud group of African American heroes of World War II. The House of Representatives should pass H. Con. Res. 26 to honor the Tuskegee Airmen for their bravery in fighting for our freedom in World War II and for their contribution in creating an integrated U.S. Air Force.

The Tuskegee Airmen are the fighter pilots of the 99th Pursuit Squadron, which was later incorporated into the 332nd Fighter Group, who fought during World War II in the U.S. Army Air Corps and were trained at Tuskegee Army Field in Tuskegee, Alabama. No better time exists than during Black

History Month to put forth such outstanding legislation.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, I was in the country of Iraq and, in fact, visited with the current 332nd Fighter Group, the original Tuskegee Airmen; and there is a mural honoring their proud heritage displayed at their base.

This group is so important to our current activity in Iraq, this is the group at Baa'd Air Force Base that transfers injured soldiers from the field in stable intensive care environments back to Ramstein, Germany, and then back to the United States. This outstanding group of men and women serving today have transferred over 19,000 patients with only one intertransfer death, truly an outstanding record.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) has 3½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) has 4½ minutes remaining.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) for bringing forward this resolution and for sharing his time during this debate and discussion today.

Mr. Speaker, of the Tuskegee Airmen deserve every accolade that this body can possibly extend. I want to say to the Tuskegee Airmen, if you are watching this by television, to the families of the Tuskegee Airmen, this country owes to each of you a great, great debt of gratitude.

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May God continue to bless each one of you and may God bless your families.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The gentleman is reminded to address his comments to the Chair rather than the viewing audience.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his participation and the kind words from all of those who spoke here today about this very important recognition.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 26 to honor and pay tribute to the valiant efforts of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II, who defended the freedom of the United States and the World while breaking down the racial barriers of the U.S. military.

In the midst of World War II, the U.S. Army Air Corps began a program to expand the role of African Americans in the military. In July 1941, 13 men started the first aviation cadet class at Tuskegee Army Field in Tuskegee, Alabama. After 9 months of vigorous flight training, five men successfully completed the program and graduated from the Tuskegee Flying School. These five airmen included Captain Lemuel R. Custis of my home State of

Connecticut, who went on to become one of the first members of the 99th Fighter Squadron. The United States sent the 99th Fighter Squadron to North Africa and later Europe, where the Tuskegee Airmen proved to be valuable to the Allied Forces. By the end of the war, 992 men had graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee, of which, 450 were assigned to combat overseas. In total, the Tuskegee Airmen of the 99th, 100th, 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons distinguished themselves with 1,578 missions. The 332nd earned a Presidential Unit Citation for "outstanding courage, aggressiveness, and combat technique" while escorting heavy bombers over Germany.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me today in honoring the outstanding record of the Tuskegee Airmen who proudly defended our Nation and paved the way for full integration of the U.S. military. Their achievements and bravery represent the best qualities of America, and we all owe them our appreciation for their valiant contribution to this country.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, the storied history of our Nation's Armed Forces was written by the great men and women who served our country with honor and bravery.

Among the most courageous was a group of men who defied both fascism abroad and racism at home while establishing a record as one of the most successful fighting units in American history.

Mr. Speaker, in the 108th Congress I was honored to sponsor House Concurrent Resolution 417 honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and I am again delighted to stand here today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 26 honoring the Tuskegee Airmen for their bravery and sacrifice.

My first experience with the Tuskegee Airmen occurred through one of my former staff members, Traci Scott. Her father, Captain Jesse H. Scott was an original member of the Airmen and was so eager to join that he even lied about his age to be accepted into the Tuskegee Airmen.

I also had the opportunity to meet with Mr. George Sherman, a former Tuskegee Airman that currently resides in Las Vegas. I was privileged to hear first hand accounts and see photos that provided a glimpse of what it must have been like to be a Tuskegee Airman.

The Tuskegee Airmen were a group of dedicated and determined young men who enlisted to become America's first African-American airmen. These airmen were trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Tuskegee, Alabama beginning in 1941.

The airmen trained at Tuskegee received two Presidential Unit Citations for outstanding tactical air support and aerial combat, and they established the incredible and unprecedented record of flying more than 200 bomber escort missions without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in recognizing the accomplishments of this unique group of American heroes.

As our nation engages in combating terrorism around the world, we rely upon the global reach and presence provided by our Air Force. The example set by the Tuskegee Airmen encouraged millions of Americans of every race to pursue careers in air and space technology. The Tuskegee Airmen proved that

skill and determination, not skin color, are the determining factors in aviation.

As we celebrate Black History Month this February, it is important that we remember not just the historical circumstances that divided our nation, but we must also remember those individuals that helped push the Civil Rights Movement forward. We are forever indebted to those men who silently risked their lives to protect a country that, at the time, did not necessarily appreciate, nor recognize, their brave sacrifice.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored and grateful for the opportunity today to recognize the inspirational challenges that the Tuskegee Airmen courageously embraced and surmounted as the first African-American pilots in our Nation's distinguished Armed Forces.

I commend my colleague, MIKE ROGERS, for introducing H. Con. Res. 26, that recognizes the invaluable contributions that these valiant men made to our country and the significant example that they continue to offer us today.

An illustrious group of men who served the United States with honor and bravery, the Tuskegee Airmen defied both fascism abroad and racism at home, as they proved determined to defend our families, communities, and Nation as a whole throughout the course of the Second World War.

As the only unit ever to secure the impressive and unprecedented record of flying over 200 escort missions without the loss of a single bomber aircraft to the enemy, the Tuskegee Airmen confirmed, without a doubt, that skill and determination, not skin color, are the determining factors not only in aviation, but in anything we endeavor to achieve yesterday and today.

The example set by these individuals encouraged millions of Americans of every race to pursue careers in air and space technology.

But it extends even further than this.

The extraordinary feat of the Tuskegee Airmen to overcome segregation and prejudice to go on and become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II established the possibility for all Americans—despite race, culture, religion or gender—to achieve their own dreams and aspirations.

Their courage to confront the constraints of American society contributed to the courage of others to confront the dangers of the war, and today continues to contribute to the courage of Americans to persevere and succeed in the face of adversity and hardships.

Once again, I express my utmost sincere gratitude and admiration for the courage of the Tuskegee Airmen and hope that our colleagues here today will join in this much deserved recognition of their sacrifices and contribution.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Tuskegee Airmen for their bravery and for their patriotism. The Tuskegee Airmen blazed trails as they grazed the clouds high above the Mediterranean. They fought on the frontlines of two wars simultaneously, and they were victorious in both. These pilots, navigators, and bombardiers helped save Europe from the murderous clutch of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. They also won a crucial battle in the war for racial equality in America.

The first African American air squadron, the Tuskegee Airmen were an elite flight unit, known as the Red Tail Angels and as the Black Bird Men. These fearless fighter pilots

flew in 15,500 missions and destroyed over 260 German aircraft. They were awarded for their "extraordinary heroism" with 850 medals, including numerous purple hearts and silver stars.

Mr. Speaker, the Tuskegee Airmen flew under the leadership of a great man, Ben Davis, Jr. Ben Davis knew he wanted to fight for his country and he knew he wanted to fly. A passionate pilot, Ben Davis, Jr. made sacrifices for his dreams. When he set his mind on attending West Point, he was told that he would face discrimination there. Undeterred, he decided to attend the prestigious academy anyway. Throughout his time at the famed school, he was forced to live by himself and eat alone.

But, Mr. Speaker, for Ben Davis, the sacrifices were worth it. As commander of the Airmen, he never lost a single Bomber to enemy fire. He became the first African American to hold the title of Major General and Lieutenant General of the Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, when Ben Davis and the Tuskegee Airmen alighted from their planes at the end of World War II, they returned to America as heroes on two counts. Not only had they helped to ensure the defeat of tyranny overseas, but they had won a decisive battle for racial equality at home. These men were an inspiration for generations of aspiring black soldiers. They should serve as models to the many soldiers fighting bravely and proudly in Afghanistan and Iraq today.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 26, honoring the Tuskegee Airmen for their bravery in fighting for our freedom in World War II, and for their contribution in creating an integrated United States Air Force. I thank my friend and colleague, MIKE ROGERS of Alabama, for introducing this legislation.

Dayton, OH, which I am proud to represent in Congress is the home of the pioneers Orville and Wilbur Wright, and is the birthplace of aviation. The Wright Brothers were pioneers of flight, as were the Tuskegee Airmen. But before they could fly, the Tuskegee Airmen had to overcome racial prejudice and segregation. And overcome they did. These brave Americans went on to become one of the most respected fighting units of World War II. Nicknamed the "Red Tails" because of the red tail markings on their aircraft, the tenacious bomber escort cover provided by the Tuskegee Airmen often discouraged enemy fighter pilots from attacking bombers they escorted.

The Tuskegee Airmen passed on the lessons they learned in flight to those who came after them: between 1941 and 1945, the Tuskegee Airmen trained over 1,000 black aviators for the war effort. The bravery and dedication of these airmen can be appreciated by their enviable service record of over 15,500 missions, in which over 260 enemy aircraft were destroyed, one enemy destroyer was sunk, and numerous enemy installations were damaged. The Tuskegee Airmen served with distinction and earned over 850 medals and throughout their storied history, the Airmen did not lose a single bomber to enemy fire in more than 200 combat missions—a record that is unmatched by any other fighter group.

There is a local chapter of an organization named for the Tuskegee Airmen at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio: The Mac Ross Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen. The

chapter is named after Mac Ross, a Dayton native, and one of the first five African-American airmen to become Air Corps pilots in 1942. It serves as a reminder to all of us of the heroic tale of these airmen who fought in a world war, and at home, for freedom.

As a proud Daytonian, I am pleased to join my colleagues in honoring the Tuskegee Airmen, pioneers who braved prejudice at home and combat abroad and as a result did their part in winning World War II and creating an integrated Air Force.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H. Con. Res. 26, Honoring the Contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen were a group of dedicated and determined young men who enlisted to become America's first African-American Airmen and earned their silver wings to become the Nation's first Black military pilots in March of 1942. I would like to recognize Tuskegee Airmen Richard Enty, Charles McGee, and Eugene Guyton who were born in Cleveland, OH, and were among the most admired and respected African-American pilots in the country. As we celebrate Black History Month, it is only proper to remember the courageous and historic accomplishments of these brave pilots.

The military selected Tuskegee Institute to train pilots because of its commitment to aeronautical training, and between 1941 and 1945, trained over 1,000 Black aviators for the war effort. The Tuskegee Airmen, under the command of COL Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., flew successful missions over Sicily, the Mediterranean, and North Africa.

The Airmen completed 15,500 missions, destroyed over 260 enemy aircraft, sank one enemy destroyer, and demolished numerous enemy installations. In addition, these brave pilots destroyed more than 1,000 German aircraft while accumulating an unprecedented record of flying more than 200 bomber escort missions over central and southern Europe without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft. Over the course of World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen returned home with some of our Nation's highest military honors including 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 8 Purple Hearts, and 14 Bronze Stars.

The accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen proved that they were highly disciplined and capable fighters, and through their example, millions of Americans of every race were encouraged to pursue careers in air and space technology.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my strong support for H. Con. Res. 26.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the concurrent resolution honoring the Tuskegee Airmen for their bravery in fighting for our freedom in World War II, and for their contribution to creating an integrated U.S. Air Force.

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African Americans to be trained by the U.S. Military to be pilots in the U.S. Army Air Corps. Due to the rigid pattern of racial segregation that prevailed in the United States during World War II, Black military aviators were forced to serve in segregated units and not allowed to train or fight alongside their white countrymen. Despite initial obstacles, 445 went overseas as combat pilots in the Europe, North Africa and the Mediterranean. Flying "bomber escort" and ground

attack missions on 15,533 sorties and 1578 missions between May, 1943 and June 9, 1945, the Tuskegee Airmen compiled the enviable Air Force record wherein none of the bombers they escorted was lost to enemy fighters, they destroyed 251 enemy aircraft and won more than 850 medals. Their record was not without losses, however, with 32 POWs and 66 Tuskegee Airmen killed in action.

Mr. Speaker, we all remember President Kennedy's famous call to all Americans: "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." Some 20 years earlier this group of brave soldiers went above and beyond that call in fighting for a country that at the time refused to fight for them. Their heroism on the battlefield not only helped to defeat oppression in Europe but also helped to push their own nation to confront its crimes of oppression.

The Tuskegee airmen also known as the "Red Tails", because of the bright red spinners and tails they painted on their planes, are national heroes and therefore deserve the thanks and gratitude of this nation. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Tuskegee Airmen.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 26, honoring the Tuskegee Airmen, a courageous and pioneering group of Americans who are appropriately being remembered, and their contribution celebrated, today by the House of Representatives.

Before 1940, African-Americans were barred from flying for the U.S. military. However, the great threat posed by the Nazi's, and the demands of Black Americans for full citizenship, including the right to fight for their country as patriots, persuaded the American Government to provide an opportunity for African-Americans to serve, even though in segregated units.

Soon, hundreds of young men from around the country were signing up to become Airmen in the 332nd, the Black-only air wing created for them. Barred from restaurants, theaters, and libraries in their hometowns, these young men found in the skies the freedom that eluded them on land.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II. In so doing, they brought the racist conceptions of their time crashing to the ground.

Under the able command of COL Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who himself became the first African-American Air Force General, the Airmen of the 332nd established themselves over the skies of Sicily, the Mediterranean, and North Africa, fighting and dying for freedom just as their white brethren.

The Germans feared and respected the 332nd, referring to them as the Black Birdmen. Their respect was warranted. The Airmen completed 15,500 missions, destroyed 260 enemy aircraft, sank one enemy destroyer, and demolished numerous enemy installations.

They were also known as the "Red Tail Angels" by American bomber crews because of the red paint on their planes' tails, and the outstanding aerial protection they provided to these crews. Indeed, the Tuskegee Airmen would have the WWII distinction of never losing a bomber under their escort, despite flying in some of the enemies' most heavily defended areas.

Through their World War II service, the Airmen would earn 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 8 Purple Hearts, and 14 Bronze Stars. At the war's end they had not only helped to defeat the Germans, they helped to set in motion the eventual desegregation of the Armed Services a few years later—the first real victory of the civil rights movement.

The Tuskegee Airmen belong to a group of African-American military heroes whose belief in themselves, and in their country, gave them the strength to overcome incredible obstacles and reach unprecedented heights. In so doing they have given hope and pride to the generations that have followed them. They also gave hope to a young kid from Harlem, as he set out to fight in Korea. The example they left served me well in that war, and in life.

I would personally like to honor three individuals from the 15th district of New York: Percy Sutton, Roscoe Brown, and Lee Archer. They all served their country as Tuskegee Airmen, and they have all gone on to make tremendous contributions to the community of Harlem.

I sincerely thank Congressman ROGERS for this resolution because the Tuskegee Airmen are a group especially deserving of our praise. John F. Kennedy once said that, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also the men it honors, the men it remembers." The Tuskegee Airmen are products of America. We honor them to today, and we will remember them forever.

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 26 honoring the Tuskegee Airmen.

When Tuskegee's first school officially opened on July 4, 1881, Booker T. Washington became the first principal and was the first of many Tuskegee leaders. Due to the rigid racial segregation in the United States during World War II, over 966 Black military aviators were trained at Tuskegee. One of these men, I am proud to say, was my uncle, the Reverend LeRoy Cleaver, Jr.

My Uncle LeRoy and others serving in North Africa, Sicily, and Europe proved that they were not only some of the Air Force's best men, but the Military's best men.

On October 9, 1943, Tuskegee's 99th Pursuit Squadron was paired with the all-White 79th Fighter Group. These groups were integrated and no longer restricted to being escorts; instead, they were assigned to the hugely hazardous duty of bombing key German strongholds.

Tuskegee Airmen destroyed over 1,000 German aircraft and received some of our Nation's most prestigious military honors, including: 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 8 Purple Hearts, and 14 Bronze Stars.

In January 1948, President Harry S. Truman, favorite son of Independence, Missouri and Missouri's Fifth District, decided to end segregation in the Armed Forces and civil service, due in part to the tremendous successes of groups like the Tuskegee Airmen. President Truman issued Executive Order 9981, calling for "all persons in armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin."

On February 2, 1948, President Truman did what no previous President had dared, he announced, courageously, in a special message to Congress, that he had "instructed the Sec-

retary of Defense to take steps to have the remaining instances of discrimination in the armed services eliminated as rapidly as possible."

The Tuskegee Airmen helped our Nation walk forward toward equality. Today, we honor them, including my Uncle Reverend LeRoy Cleaver, Jr., because they remain among the best advocates, soldiers, and examples in our Nation's history in that noble pursuit.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 26.

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. ROGERS of Alabama. 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.

SUPPORTING GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 30) supporting the goals and ideals of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 30

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") has stated that, at the end of 2003, over 172,000 African Americans were living with AIDS, representing 42 percent of all cases in the United States;

Whereas the CDC has further stated that, in 2003, African Americans accounted for 50 percent of all new HIV infections, despite representing only about 12.3 percent of the population (according to the 2000 Census);

Whereas the CDC estimates that, in 2003, African American women represented 67 percent of all new AIDS cases among women, and were 23 times more likely to be infected than white women;

Whereas the CDC estimates that 69 percent of all children born to HIV infected mothers in 2003 were African American;

Whereas the CDC has determined that the leading cause of HIV infection among African American men is sexual contact with other men, followed by intravenous drug use and heterosexual contact;

Whereas the CDC has determined that the leading cause of HIV infection among African American women is heterosexual contact, followed by intravenous drug use;

Whereas, in 2000, AIDS was among the top three causes of death for African American men in the age group 25 through 54, and African American women in the age group 35 through 44;

Whereas the CDC estimates that, since 1994, African Americans have the poorest survival rates of any racial or ethnic group