

bad—sending the soldiers off to a set-up by the enemy. Sometimes, the helicopters were under intense fire, and one would go down or an American B-52 bomber would appear and drop napalm.

"It was organized insanity," Flores said. "People you are defending are shooting at you."

A lot of the guys, like Flores, were high school drop-outs. But blacks, whites and Latinos discovered among the rag-tag, chain-smoking, beer-drinking fearless ranks a brotherhood free from racism and filled with pure faith, courage and valor.

"When we see each other, we say, 'I love you, brother,' and we really mean that," Flores said. "I was proud to be there. We did not choose the war; they sent us."

The wall which memorializes the dead from a war that once divided the nation has become a source of comfort, a place for mending.

"It is a healing thing," Palmeri said.

Hurst, who views his brother's death as a waste of a life that had so much promise, said he has found a peace at the monument.

"My personal comfort came from the reaction the country had to the wall," Hurst said. "The wall brought a resolution to the whole Vietnam thing."

Oklahoma resident Tommy Kellogg was steps behind Springfield teenager Army Pfc. James A. Messer when Messer was caught in an ambush.

Messer, 18, a parachuter, had been recently recruited from B Company of the 1st 327 Infantry Battalion of the 101st Airborne to join Tiger Force. It was a fierce band of 45 soldiers on a new assignment with loose orders concerning search and destroy missions in the jungle.

Kellogg has not seen the wall. Nor has Hank Trickey.

James Austreng, of Wisconsin, also hasn't been able to make a visit to the wall. Yet, after all these years, he still holds the memory of a 21-year-old from Westfield, James D. Zebert.

It was Zebert who provided cover for his squad—including Austreng—only to be shot dead minutes later in Tay Ninh, South Vietnam, on June 27, 1979. His tour had begun just 18 days earlier.

The Army private who served under Capt. Steven J. Popkin, of Springfield, still can visualize the Mohawk helicopter pilot wearing his hat slightly askew.

"Capt. Popkin was one of the nicest guys all around. He was a damn fine aviator," said Bruce Gaylord, who grew up in Michigan. "He didn't lord his rank over anyone. He would never make a joke about someone else. He had a rich sense of humor and a wonderful laugh."

"He was a good officer, the kind of guy you would follow into hell," Gaylord said.

But not to the nation's capital.

"I could never bring myself to it," Gaylord said.

[From the Republican, May 28, 2007]

VIETNAM GREEN BERET MADE CHICOPEE
PROUD

(By Jo-Ann Moriarty)

What can you say about a 24-year-old man whose name is among 58,256 on the Vietnam War Memorial?

That he was the platoon leader in Bravo Company.

That every day he assigned someone from the squad to watch over "Mouse."

That he and his grunts, strapped with M-16s, trailed a jungle maze for weeks and fought for their lives as the young lieutenant tried to pick their battles.

Mark C. Rivest, of Chicopee, was an officer and gentleman.

He was one of the famed "Green Berets" in the Army's Special Forces, and he completed

two tours in Vietnam as the leader of a platoon which, for the most part, was composed of draftees, many of whom were high-school dropouts.

A couple of guys in the band of 30 men should probably have never been in the Army, let alone assigned into the deadly terrain around Hue, a battle-scarred city just below the North Vietnam border.

"He is a very hard person to forget," recalled Manhattan businessman Anthony Loiero, who turned 21 in Vietnam and served under Rivest between 1969 and 1970.

"One of the things I remember the most about him was that he tried to keep us out of trouble," Loiero said. And, when they went in for the fight, "he would make sure that we were all protected. He was concerned about the guys he was responsible for. The jobs we were doing, he wanted to make sure we were there to do them the next day."

The year before Rivest and most of his men arrived in country, the Tet Offensive in 1968 ramped up the carnage and particularly bloody was the battle for Hue.

When Communist forces seized the city, they held the city for 25 days "committing ghastly atrocities during the initial phase of their occupation," wrote Stanley Karnow in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book: "Vietnam. A History."

Back home, America was violent, too. Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. were assassinated within months of each other. America was at war with itself. That summer, anti-war protesters were beaten by Chicago police as they stormed the Democratic Convention.

By 1969, when Rivest, who left behind his parents, Paul and Catherine, two brothers and a sister in the Aldenville section of Chicopee, and Loiero, an only child, who grew up in the Italian enclave of West New York, N.J., where he still lives, got to Vietnam, the death toll of American soldiers and civilians—both in the North and South—was staggering.

Before they met, Rivest had completed a six-month tour as platoon leader and, instead of alternating to the rear, "he transferred into the field again at his request," Loiero said.

Rivest earned the confidence of the soldiers in his new platoon almost immediately. Even-tempered, without bluster, he was approachable and ruled by a shot from his dark eyes.

He was college educated. He smoked Chesterfields, played the piano and had something about him that Loiero still associates with Louis Armstrong's song, "What a Wonderful World."

It took Loiero 13 years before he went to "the wall" in Washington, D.C., to take in the full measure of the Vietnam War's toll and tragedy, his delay mostly attributable to seeing the actual engraving of his platoon leader's name.

Now, middle-aged, Rivest's covenant to keep the men in his platoon safe with his good judgment and keen skills is even more precious to Loiero who came home, got a college degree, has a successful graphic arts business and is happily married with two children.

"We were a rag-tag bunch of good guys living every day hoping that every one of us would live to go home that day," Loiero said, adding that he still thinks "about the way he treated us. How he protected us. How his main objective was to watch his gaggle of geese and to make sure we did the right thing."

"If we were in harm's way, he would be the first one out there clearing the path," he added.

Rivest made his platoon a band of brothers. And, he did it in many ways, Loiero said.

There were, for instance, specific orders that someone in the squad watch over a guy nicknamed "Mouse," and a couple of other grunts, who Loiero said, "should never have been in the Army. Should never have been sent to Vietnam. And never should have been in the infantry with the rest of us."

Rivest instilled a discipline for constant movement.

The checklist was drilled into his men: Rifles cleaned. Gear together. Who's got the gun flares. Teeth brushed. Boots tied up. Who's watching "Mouse" today? Who's sleeping first.

"Then you'd start all over," Loiero said. "You make a commitment to the guys next to you and they make it to you. It is a brotherhood."

After their tour ended, Loiero went home. And Rivest, from what Loiero has been able to piece together, returned to Special Forces duty. The next assignment he accepted took him into Laos where he was killed in ground combat on June 4, 1970.

These days, Palmer resident Josh R. Morin, who once lived across from the Rivest home on McKinstry Avenue in Chicopee, carries the green beret of his boyhood friend to schools in Western Massachusetts as he talks to students about U.S. history and the Vietnam War.

As boys, they played Army together with their younger brothers.

Morin had been to Vietnam and back before Rivest went, and he warned his buddy against going because the terrain had gotten so dangerous. Morin's combat buddy had been shot dead inches from him.

When Rivest was killed, Morin, married at the time but living on the same street, said he couldn't go to the funeral.

"I couldn't go to his funeral and face his mother and father, the idea that I made it and he hadn't. I couldn't deal with it and now I regret that," Morin said. "I never saw them again."

Someone in the family later entrusted Morin with Rivest's green beret and his medals.

AUTHORIZING USE OF ROTUNDA
TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL
GOLD MEDAL TO DR. NORMAN E.
BORLAUG

SPEECH OF

HON. LEONARD L. BOSWELL

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 12, 2007

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend and Colleague Mr. TOM LATHAM for his leadership on H. Con. Res. 164, which authorizes the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Norman Borlaug.

I am honored to know Dr. Borlaug. He is a great humanitarian who is credited with saving over a billion lives. No small task but for Dr. Borlaug it was all in a days work.

In 1944, Dr. Borlaug participated in Rockefeller Foundation's pioneering technical assistance program in Mexico. He was a research scientist and worked on high-yield and disease resistance cereal grains.

His work changed production agriculture, as we know it today. Dr. Borlaug is also credited with beginning the 'Green Revolution' in Mexico, Asia, and Latin America.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his groundbreaking work in world agriculture

and his work to end world hunger. Through this he envisioned a prize that would honor others who had made contributions to helping feed the world.

Dr. Borlaug's life is marked with accomplishments; one such accomplishment was founding the World Food Prize, which is now located in Des Moines, Iowa. The World Food Prize recognizes contributions by individuals who have worked to improve the quality, quantity and availability of the world food supply.

Dr. Borlaug is an amazing man and because of him billions of lives have been saved. The implications of his life's work will be felt for years to come. I again thank Mr. LATHAM for helping to ensure this true American hero is properly honored.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I was on official leave of absence due to a health matter in my family. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 483, 491, 497, and 498 and "no" on rollcall votes 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 492, 493, 494, 495, and 496.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 15, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Homeland Security Appropriations bill, and to congratulate Chairman PRICE on crafting an excellent bill. As the new Chairman of this subcommittee, Congressman PRICE worked hard to adequately fund programs that would enhance the security of all Americans while still maintaining a fiscally responsible budget. He has been a true champion and advocate for real and effective security for our Nation. This bill is a testament to the Chairman's leadership.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the subcommittee staff for their hard work and dedication both throughout the extended hearing process and in preparing the bill and committee report.

Chairman PRICE and our subcommittee based this bill on careful consideration of expert testimony given before our committee on the many serious security concerns facing our Nation. Over and over again we heard that another terrorist attack against our country was not a question of if, but of when.

This bill helps to address these concerns by giving long overdue and sorely needed additional financial support to agencies and programs with major responsibility to protect our country.

I would like to highlight several of these programs and their importance to our national security.

This Homeland Security bill strengthens port facilities and infrastructures that remain vulnerable to a terrorist attack by increasing badly needed funding for port security grants.

This is important, for example, because an attack on our Nation's largest container port complex at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach would negatively affect our entire national economy to the tune of \$1 billion a day.

Passage of this bill will also make available to our first responders increased Firefighter Assistance Grants and Safer Grants to purchase critical equipment and hire and train additional firefighters.

This will help address the outstanding issues that impair our first responders' ability to safely respond to a major disaster, as was identified by the events of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina.

The Homeland Security bill also makes border security a top priority by providing funds for 3,000 additional Border Patrol agents.

Finally, following the 9/11 Commission's recommendation to improve the explosive screening of checked baggage, this Homeland Security bill increases funding for the procurement, installation and maintenance of the latest explosive detection systems at our airports.

Experts agree that the cargo hold of the passenger airplanes is the "soft underbelly" of our aviation system.

Providing this equipment for our airports will help harden that potential target, which is critical to the safety of thousands of passengers who travel not only through the Los Angeles World Airports, but airports throughout our country.

Mr. Chairman, these are a just a few of the key improvements this legislation makes to better protect our Nation. I strongly support the bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BILL DEARMAN

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of Bill Dearman of Alexandria, Virginia. Bill Dearman's retirement will mark the conclusion of 10 years of extraordinary and dedicated leadership and service to the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Mr. Dearman's skilled leadership and devotion to Alexandria have led to a number of great accomplishments. Among these as the challenge of redeveloping the Samuel Madden Housing Project into what is now the nationally recognized award-winning Chatham Square. In addition he oversaw the development of various site replacements at Braddock Road, and the rehabilitation and refinancing of Jefferson Village, Quaker Hill and Cameron Valley projects.

Through his dedication to the Citizens of Alexandria, he helped ensure housing needed to Alexandria's neediest. His creativity led to effective reorganization of the authority and expansion of services to residents. Through his tireless efforts, Mr. Dearman has improved the general appearance and maintenance of all Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority properties.

In closing I wish to commend Mr. Dearman for his years of service to the City of Alexandria. I wish all the best to him on his retirement with his family in Atlanta.

INTRODUCTION OF BIRTHDAY RESOLUTION FOR WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, today, along with my friend and colleague from New York, Representative NITA LOWEY, I am introducing a resolution to recognize President Clinton's 61st birthday, which we will celebrate this August 19th. President Clinton has had a long and distinguished career in public service including serving as Governor of Arkansas and President of the United States. During Clinton's two terms in the White House, this country experienced unprecedented economic expansion including the creation of 22 million jobs. He worked with our NATO allies to end the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, and played a fundamental role in bringing peace to Northern Ireland. Since leaving office in 2001, President Clinton has continued to dedicate his life to public service through the Clinton Foundation, which serves to strengthen the capacity of people throughout the world to meet the challenges of global interdependence. Notably, the Clinton Foundation has worked to make HIV/AIDS medication more accessible in poor and middle income countries and develop sustainable economic growth in Africa. Most recently, President Clinton launched the Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI) to help in the fight against global climate change.

I am honored today to recognize President Clinton's birthday as he has dedicated and continues to dedicate his life to serving the American people and noble causes around the world. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

NICS IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support of H.R. 2640, the McCarthy-Dingell National Instant Criminal Background Check Improvement Act. It is high time Congress acted to strengthen the gun laws in this country and implement common sense policies to ensure that guns are not ending up in the wrong hands.

H.R. 2640 will strengthen the National Instant Background Check System (NICS) by creating incentives for states to submit legal records about individuals who are not eligible to purchase guns.

This bill also permits Federal law enforcement grants to be cut for states that do not submit such records to the electronic database and requires greater information-sharing among Federal agencies.