

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 696 IN OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 696 in Owensboro, Kentucky continue to do to improve their community. Post 696 has exemplified the mission of the VFW: Honor the dead by helping the living.

The post has donated over \$22,000 to local and State organizations in the past year. Beneficiaries of their generosity have included local schools, the Boy Scouts, shelters, and churches. Their generosity has also been extended to organizations such as the Wendell Foster Center, Shriners Hospitals, the Children's Wish Foundation, the Disabled American Veterans, and JEVCO.

Post 696 recently sponsored a going-away picnic for the members of Ft. Campbell's Alpha Troop and their families being deployed to Iraq. The city of Owensboro adopted Alpha Troop through the Americans Supporting Americans' Adopt-a-Unit-Program. I thank the members of the troop for their service and the city of Owensboro for this commitment to these brave soldiers.

The VFW Post 696 Honor/Color Guard has been busy serving the community as well. Since 2001, they have participated in over 400 veteran funerals and 50 community events in Daviess County.

I want to recognize the leaders of Post 696, Commander Richard "Ike" Eisenmenger, Jr., Ladies Auxiliary President Marilu Goodsell, and Color/Honor Guard Commander Joseph Hayden. They have worked tirelessly to serve veterans and improve their community.

It is my privilege to honor the members of VFW Post 696 today, before the entire United States House of Representatives, for their past service to our country and continued dedication to serving their community.

RECOGNIZING USO MARINE OF THE YEAR—SGT. JUSTIN CLOUGH

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the military service of Sgt. Justin Clough, the most recent recipient of the USO's Marine of the Year award.

Although Justin is only 22, he has demonstrated bravery and leadership beyond his years. Since joining the U.S. Marine Corps, Justin has served two tours of duty and led more than 100 combat missions in Iraq as the squad leader of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine

Regiment. During these missions, his squad was frequently attacked by direct and indirect fire. His dedication to leadership and training would ensure the safety of his fellow marines and ultimately prove to save his own life. On December 26, 2006, Justin was wounded by an insurgent sniper while on a routine patrol in Fallujah. Following the attack, his comrades, which included Justin's twin brother Nathaniel Clough, swiftly brought him to safety.

On September 20, the USA recognized Justin with one of its most prestigious honors, the Marine of the Year award at the 66th annual USO World Gala. In addition to the Marine of the Year award, Justin was chosen as the top marine in his company and battalion, awarded with the Purple Heart, and recommended for the Bronze Star with Combat "V" for valor.

Since returning to Stonington, CT, Justin has balanced physical therapy and volunteer work with the local high school football team. Upon receiving his medical discharge papers, he hopes to attend a university or work on a military base as a civilian.

While his presence will certainly be missed in the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, his leadership will undoubtedly yield success in future academic and work endeavors. I ask my colleagues to join with me and my constituents in saluting Justin's service to the Marines and our Nation.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE DOCUMENTARY FILM, "THE BORINQUENEERS"

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month to introduce the documentary film "The Borinqueneers." This compelling film chronicles the never-before-told story of the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in United States Army history.

El Pozo Productions, in collaboration with Raquel Ortiz, acclaimed producer of "Mi Puerto Rico," released "The Borinqueneers," the first major documentary to chronicle the story of the 65th Infantry Regiment.

Narrated by Hector Elizondo, the documentary explores the fascinating stories of courage, triumph, and struggle of the men of the 65th through rare archival materials and compelling interviews with veterans, commanding officers, and historians.

The 65th Infantry Regiment was created in 1899 by the U.S. Congress as a segregated unit composed primarily of Puerto Ricans with mostly continental officers. It went on to serve meritoriously in three wars: World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. The unit was nicknamed after "Borinquen," the word given to Puerto Rico by its original inhabitants, the Taino Indians, meaning, "land of the brave lord."

When they were finally called to the front lines in the Korean War, the men of the 65th performed impressively, earning praise from General MacArthur. They performed a critical role containing the Chinese advance and supporting the U.S. Marines in the aftermath of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Sent to every corner of the peninsula, they showed outstanding resilience and a legendary fierceness as combatants, even as they faced discrimination within the Army. But in the fall of 1952 the regiment was at the center of a series of dramatic events that would threaten its very existence.

Puerto Ricans occupy a special place in the history of the U.S. Army. Because of the island's commonwealth status, they don't have the right to vote in U.S. elections, and yet they serve in the military and can be drafted. For many of the veterans of the 65th, this paradox became an incentive to be even more patriotic, to prove themselves in battle 200 percent.

Although thousands of Puerto Ricans have served courageously in the Armed Forces since World War I, their contribution and sacrifices have gone largely unnoticed in the silver screen, until now.

As a testament to the legacy of the Borinqueneers, I submit into the RECORD an article from the New York Times-Metro Section regarding the film, that illustrates the rich history of this unique regiment and recognizes the Puerto Rican commitment to the United States Military.

[From the New York Times, Oct. 2, 2007]

BLOODY IN BATTLE, NOW GETTING THEIR DUE

(By David Gonzalez)

Among the lamps, the religious cards and the knickknacks in Eugenio Quevedo's Upper West Side apartment is a worn and creased Banco Popular envelope. Tucked neatly inside, tiny black-and-white photos taken more than half a century ago show a rifle-toting soldier against a backdrop of hills and mountains.

"Korea was an ocean of mountains," Mr. Quevedo said. "We'd push forward and the enemy pushed us back. It was that kind of war."

He sounded tranquil, which in many ways he is at 81, though his eyes betrayed his emotions. In one corner of his living room, a poster shows the Puerto Rican flag, a nod to where he was born.

"We lost so many," he said. "The American people don't know the sacrifices of so many Puerto Ricans who died in Korea. It was the bloodiest war for Puerto Rico."

It is also a forgotten war for many Americans. Yet in recent months, veterans of a once-storied Puerto Rican regiment, the 65th Infantry Regiment—including Mr. Quevedo—have gotten their due in a documentary called "The Borinqueneers," which was first televised in New York over the summer and continues to be broadcast on public television nationally.

In a way, it is a passionate rejoinder to Ken Burns, whose World War II documentary drew sharp criticism from Latino and American Indian groups for initially ignoring their contributions during that war.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Noemi Figueroa Soulet, a New York actress who produced “The Borinqueneers,” understands why people were upset with Mr. Burns. But she set her sights on a different battle, in more ways than one.

“Why should we be begging Ken Burns for a few minutes in his series?” she said. “We have other guys we can cover ourselves. I really felt there was enough there to tell our story in a full program.”

The idea came to Ms. Figueroa Soulet in the late 1990s, after she saw the film “Saving Private Ryan” and around the time she learned that her husband’s uncle had been wounded in Korea.

“I started thinking, what about the Puerto Rican experience?” she said. “I would see a war movie or documentary and I would look for the Latino faces. I always want to see how we are represented. Historically, I knew we served in the military, but you wouldn’t know it.”

Though she had never made a documentary before, she set out to chronicle the Puerto Rican military experience. In time, she zeroed in on the 65th Infantry’s campaigns in Korea.

The regiment, she said, was founded in 1899 as an essentially Puerto Rican unit, including a fair share of island-born officers, led by mainland, or “continental,” officers. The group also served in both world wars, though it was in Korea where it was hardest hit.

The regiment’s bravery earned the admiration of no less than Gen. Douglas MacArthur, as well as a disproportionate share of casualties when compared with mainland regiments.

One of its continental officers said the unit “got every dirty job that came up,” while another said it was so feared by the enemy that “I was very glad the Puerto Ricans were on my side.”

But in 1952, scores of soldiers in the regiment were arrested and court-martialed after refusing to fight in battles where untested and poorly led replacement troops were sent to take hills without artillery or medical support. The refusals came after a battle that left hundreds wounded or dead. In another case, they would not follow an officer they knew had no clue where he was trying to lead them.

Some of the men were sentenced to 10 or more years in prison. Outcry over the trials eventually resulted in the Army pardoning them and commuting sentences.

Ms. Figueroa Soulet set out to tell a story that placed the regiment’s history in context, rather than let it either be forgotten or reduced to the ignominy of the trials. She said that some Latino organizations that she had thought would be natural allies in her quest to finance and make the film were turned off by the inclusion of the trials and did not support her, while some veterans groups declined to back a project about Puerto Ricans.

She persisted, and was joined by Raquel Ortiz, a producer with many years working in public broadcasting who had produced “Mi Puerto Rico,” a well-received documentary on Puerto Rican cultural and political identity.

“Not very many people would have given a first-time producer the amount of time I gave her,” Ms. Ortiz said. “I did it because the subject was important to me. She was so committed, too. When I saw the interviews, stock footage and photos, I said ‘Wow!’”

The film took nine years to complete and involved interviewing 275 veterans. Ms. Figueroa Soulet has had special showings in various cities, often sponsored by local Puerto Rican and veterans organizations, which have helped spread the word despite the lack of an advertising budget.

It has struck a deep chord in men like Jose Cintron, a retired longshoreman and a Viet-

nam veteran, who was moved to tears when he saw it.

“I was so proud,” he said. “For the first time, I did not have to hear about John Wayne. My people took part in this. For once, we get recognized.”

Members of the regiment hold on to vivid memories of those who served with them on freezing hillsides, dodging bullets and mortars. Mr. Quevedo still talks about Master Sgt. Angel Ocasio. At the start of an enemy offensive, the sergeant was killed after he had gone around distributing ammunition to Mr. Quevedo and his comrades. Another sergeant—Iglesias was all he could recall—was shot dead when he went searching for Sergeant Ocasio.

“Those two were sent by God,” Mr. Quevedo said. “You think of him and the others. They died young. They never had the chance to get married. To be grandfathers. To get to my age. We are the ones who are left.”

His friend, Jaime Lopez, sat with him in the living room. He, too, served in the regiment, though they became friends stateside. Mr. Lopez is trim at 77, with a swagger to his step and an unfiltered cigarette in his hand. Mr. Quevedo jokingly calls him “Lee Marvin,” which only fuels Mr. Lopez’s eagerness to banter.

Mr. Lopez enlisted after high school, saying the military was one of the few options he had as a small-town boy with no money. In Korea, he earned two Bronze Stars, including one for risking his life to wade into a river and rescue wounded comrades while under fire.

He recalled one fierce encounter, when they took a hill, only to find themselves under attack for 12 hours.

“There were dead and wounded everywhere,” he said. “Everything was destroyed. Everything. Boy.”

He bolted up from his chair, turned away and sobbed. He steadied himself against the dinner table. The only other sound was a clock chiming “Twinkle, Twinkle” at the hour.

“Korea was not easy,” was all he said, slowly composing himself.

Since the documentary’s completion, the two men have made public appearances together, talking to audiences about their experiences. After years of being footnotes to a forgotten war, they are glad to let others know they were there when they were needed.

“This documentary is something historic,” Mr. Lopez said. “You see it from beginning to end and learn that Puerto Ricans fought in World War I, World War II and Korea. The truth is there.”

The support of the old veterans, men who came home and settled into uneventful, but blessed, lives is what helped Ms. Figueroa Soulet stick with her project when others would not even return her calls.

“Those guys are my troops,” she said. “I look at the long list of organizations who protested the Ken Burns thing and say, ‘Gee, none of them contributed to my project.’ Some of them would not give me the time of day.”

She paused. Being an actress, she knows a thing or two about timing.

“Now,” she said, “they’re all calling.”

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ANTHONY TERESI

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Anthony Teresi, a life-

long public servant of Chautauqua County, New York, and a truly remarkable man. Mr. Teresi is one individual who truly touched the lives of everyone he met. The impact he made in the city of Jamestown and the county of Chautauqua will forever bear his name and legacy. This article found in the Jamestown Post Journal demonstrates what an amazing man Anthony Teresi was. We will forever feel his presence through the lives of his family.

ANTHONY TERESI DEAD AT 84

(By Patrick Fanelli)

OCT. 10, 2007.—Shortly after hearing the news that his old friend Anthony Teresi died early Tuesday at WCA Hospital, County Legislator Joe Trusso Jr. evoked the Marine Corps motto, “Semper Fidelis,” or “Always Faithful.”

From Teresi’s service in the Pacific theater of World War II to his 16-year career on the Chautauqua County Legislature, Trusso remembers his old friend as someone who was always faithful to his loved ones and to the county he called home for nearly all his 84 years of life.

But considering his role as patriarch of the city’s most prominent Democratic family and his long career as one of Jamestown’s elected representatives on the County Legislature, Teresi for the most part stayed out of the spotlight, Trusso recalls.

“Tony was never in it for the glory,” said Trusso, a Democrat who represents District 16 in the city and served beside Teresi for 16 years. “He was in it to serve.”

Teresi’s health had been deteriorating the last couple years, but it took a turn for the worst in recent days and spent the past week or so at WCA Hospital in and out of the intensive care unit. As of Monday, his son, Mayor Sam Teresi, expressed his concern that his father would not recover as he had done in the past.

“I couldn’t believe it,” said Trusso, who heard the news during an Audit and Control Committee meeting in Mayville early Tuesday. “I don’t know what happened. That’s just the way it goes, I guess.”

Teresi’s death has brought with it a brief pause in his son’s re-election campaign against Republican candidate and former city clerk Shirley Sanfilippo, who offered her condolences to the Teresi family Tuesday and canceled a news conference scheduled for today out of respect for their loss.

In addition, the mayor delayed the meeting scheduled for Tuesday at which his 2008 budget proposal was to have been unveiled, though he says he plans to go forward with it today.

A MAN OF CHARACTER

According to County Legislator Fred Croscut, R-Sherman, the elder Teresi can best be remembered as “a man of character” and “a sincere individual.” Croscut also remembers him as a politician whose friends and admirers were not limited to members of the Democratic Party to which he belonged.

“He was a man I don’t even think planned on getting into politics,” said Croscut, who served with Teresi for eight years. “He was a person who was admired on both sides of the aisle.”

Teresi had only just retired after a long career managing various local supermarkets when he was chosen in 1989 to run for the seat long held by former legislator Joseph Nalbone. In turn, he held onto that seat for 16 years until he lost the 2005 election against Conservative Party challenger Tina Hallquist.

Democrats differ on why Teresi lost his 2005 re-election bid. James Ventura, a retiring City Council member who is hoping to replace Trusso in District 16, believes Teresi