

but amidst those stories of horror lurks absolutely no seething need for revenge. They know full well that there is no time or place for revenge and recrimination. They live with the horror of yesterday and look to the future with optimism and eternal thanks for the help and support of the American people in helping them gain their total freedom. Thank you and welcome are part of every conversation. From Harbor Gate to Mosul to Tikrit to Baghdad back to Tikrit, with a honored stop at Diyala, to Mosul and then finally back to Erbil I have been simultaneously overwhelmed, stunned and awe struck by the extraordinary professionalism of every soldier I personally meet and those I only had the opportunity to observe without them ever knowing that I was watching. I learned of an organization that cares deeply, profoundly and personally for the well being of every individual within its ranks, while every individual member is willing to sacrifice their very being for every other individual member. That is why they go about what they call their job but what I refer to as their passion with a clarity of purpose that humbles you to your knees. In this organization everyone and I mean everyone knows that they are first and foremost a soldier who is fully trained and prepared to go into battle should the need occur but they likewise perform a multitude of vast ranging tasks that they have been highly trained for to highest possible professional standards. They completely understand their specific task and perform it superbly for they know full well that every individual soldier is equal in their value and importance to the successful completion of the mission.

The words COMPLEXITY and PROFESSIONALISM scream at you as you begin to understand all that is going on all about you. From the formation of a huge truck convoy, to the logistical requirements of a division, to the combat readiness of squadrons of Blackhawks to the coordination of the divergent aspects of public affairs one can not help but be stunned the complexity of our effort in Iraq and most importantly the professionalism in which the effort is carried out.

Accompanying that professionalism is the humanity of these Soldiers who have sacrificed so much for us and of which we sadly know so little. Their stories should be told and retold for they are the heroes that we should be emulating. In Baghdad I was fortunate to be allowed to stay in visitors quarters and was escorted by a National Guard Unit from Kentucky. I like most people had a somewhat diminished view of the National Guard. I got to know these individuals quite well and dramatically experienced that same level of professionalism first hand. I was learning the history of the county in Kentucky where my escort was from when a fire fight broke out across the lake. After a number of minutes of continuous fighting the Sgt's unit was notified that they would be joining the fight. In an instant the calm of the mess was transformed as these soldiers prepared for combat. Three vehicles and 15 men would be heading out to the streets of Baghdad. Everyone knew their job precisely. The guns were mounted as the computers were spun up. Communications were checked and every individual soldier completed their own mental checklist. As if in a heart beat I watched as men did what I initially thought was a transformation from escort to Soldier but what I watched was in fact was a Soldier performing one job and then another, both to the highest professional standards.

Over the next few weeks Americans will argue over and eventually vote for their choice as to who is going to get the title of "AMERICAN IDOL". They will watch transfixed as young athletes perform at the highest possible level to gain the title of Na-

tional Champion of College Basketball. Millions will flock to the baseball stadiums of America to watch in awe as their teams begin their long journey to be named as The World Champions of Baseball. All that should pale before your eyes for those Wondrous Warriors who seek not the accolades but unselfishly protect your very freedoms have already earned the right to be crowned as World and National Champions and are in fact "THE TRUE AMERICAN IDOLS" for everyday they place their lives on the line for us.

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**"CONGRATULATING THE NATIONAL JROTC MIDDLE SCHOOL CHAMPIONS OF T.C. MARSH JUNIOR HIGH"**

**HON. PETE SESSIONS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to proudly recognize T.C. Marsh Junior High School as the home to the National Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Middle School Champions. Thirty-five of the school's 217 unit members qualified for the competition which was held on March 31 in Dallas. Under the guidance of teacher David Bates, the students competed against units from all over the country. Bates served for the army as a corporal in the First Calvary. As a former Florida Gator football player, Bates coaches W.T. White varsity softball and football teams and until this year, coached 8th grade football, basketball and baseball at T. C. Marsh. I congratulate David Bates and the students of T.C. Marsh Junior High School for their well-deserved victory and wish them all the best in future endeavors.

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**HONORING HISPANIC VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II**

**HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I proudly join my colleagues today to pay tribute to the contributions of Latinos who served in our Armed Forces during World War II. As we were painfully reminded by the complete omission of Hispanics from a PBS documentary on World War II, the important contributions of Latinos, native born, as well as immigrants, are too often overlooked and forgotten.

From the American Revolution, a victory that established our Nation; to the Civil War, a victory that preserved our Nation; to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Hispanics have played an instrumental role.

From Hispanic business owners to day laborers to the growing number of Hispanics in executive level positions, Hispanics are ingrained in the fabric of our strong Nation. As the largest and fastest growing minority in the United States, Hispanic participation in all segments of society is not only essential but apparent. It should not be surprising, then, that Hispanics also serve our nation in one of its most patriotic duties—the heroic defense of our country.

During World War II, Hispanics served in greater proportions than any other minority in the U.S. Armed Forces with the number of Hispanics serving likely peaking at well over 400,000. Although proper record keeping of Hispanics in the armed forces was not kept until after World War II, we have a multitude of accounts of Hispanic participation. One famous example is Company E of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Texas Infantry Division, which was made up entirely of Spanish-speaking Americans. For their notable service they were awarded 1,685 Bronze Stars, 492 Silver Stars, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legends of Merit, and 11 Soldier's Medals.

One individual example is Staff Sergeant Ysmael R. Villegas. A California native, he served in the United States Army during World War II. At the Battle of Luzon in the Philippines, he stepped up to lead his squad in a counterattack of the enemy and single-handedly cleared five installations of heavy machineguns. Upon taking the sixth and final area of firing, and at only twenty-one years old, Staff Sergeant Villegas was killed in action. For his bravery, President Harry Truman posthumously awarded him the Medal of Honor.

There are countless stories of heroism like Staff Sergeant Villegas'. Hispanics disproportionately earned more Medals of Honor in the 20th Century than any other major subgroup. From the Civil War to the Vietnam War, there have been thirty-nine Hispanic Americans who have received the Medal of Honor. Twenty-two of them sacrificed their lives in combat in service to the United States Navy, Army, and Marines.

According to the latest Census, there are over 1.1 million living Hispanic veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. And this number is expanding. Since November 2006, 25,300 Hispanics have been deployed for service. According to the Department of Defense, Hispanics have endured the most deaths for a minority group in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Our country honors their service as well as those who have served in the past.

I encourage all Americans to take the opportunity to recognize and continue to learn about the role Hispanics played in World War II and throughout our nation's history. It is an integral part of the American story. Without these contributions and sacrifices, America would not be what it is today.

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**TRIBUTE TO MRS. CINDY CARLSON**

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand before you today to honor Mrs. Cindy Carlson upon her retirement from her position as Secretary for Sub-District 5, District 7 of the United Steelworkers. I have known Cindy for many years, and she is one of the most involved citizens I have ever known, especially when it comes to her service to the United Steelworkers. Cindy has been a member of the staff at District 7 for an astonishing 31 years, and her contributions to the organization are immeasurable. For her efforts and many contributions to Sub-District 5,

District 7 and the United Steelworkers, there will be a retirement celebration in Cindy's honor on Friday, April 20, 2007, at Andorra Banquets in Schererville, Indiana.

Cindy Carlson was born and raised in Saint John, Indiana. She began her career with the United Steelworkers of America in 1976 as Staff Secretary in what was then Sub-District 2 of District 31. From there, Cindy moved up to become the Secretary for the SubDistrict 2 Director, a position she held from 1981–1988. Then in 1988, recognizing Cindy's skills and abilities, Director Jack Parton assigned Cindy to the position of Secretary for the Assistant Director and the Civil Rights/Safety and Health Coordinator. Though these new responsibilities would have been enough for most people, Cindy also took on the position of Secretary for the District 31 Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR). From there, Cindy went on to become Executive Secretary to the Director of District 31 in 1995. After redistricting took place in 1996, and District 31 changed to District 7, Cindy was reassigned to the Organizing Department. During this time, her experience and expertise was fully utilized, as she served in many secretarial capacities with District 7. Finally, in 2004, Cindy was awarded the position of SubDistrict 5 Secretary, which she held until her retirement on March 1, 2007. During this time, she also served as Secretary for the District 7 Women of Steel and for the Contracting-Out Coordinator, Mike Mezo.

In addition to the impressive career Cindy has had with District 7, she has also served as a dedicated member of the International United Steelworkers Clerical Union, Local 3657, where she once again utilized her many talents as a member of several committees. Cindy's knowledge of the Union and her field, along with her complete commitment to improving conditions for the steelworkers in her district, has made her one of the most well-respected individuals the First Congressional District has produced. While she will remain in contact with those with whom she has worked, her daily presence will surely be missed by all of her colleagues.

Now retired, Cindy is committed to spending her time with those closest to her, her family. A devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, Cindy's commitment to the United Steelworkers and its members is surpassed only by her dedication to her family. Cindy and her husband, Lyle, remain in Northwest Indiana. They have been blessed with one daughter, Heather, and her husband Chad, as well as Cindy's loving grandson, Alex, whom she truly adores. While Cindy will be enjoying her retirement with them, and with her mother, Ellen Hogan, there is no doubt that Cindy will remain committed to several organizations, including the Tri-Town Labor/Democratic Organization, which she founded in 2005, the Saint John Junior Women's Club, the VFW Post 717 Ladies' Auxiliary, and of course, SOAR.

Madam Speaker, Cindy Carlson has given her time and efforts selflessly to the members of the United Steelworkers for the past 31 years. At this time, I ask that you and all of my distinguished colleagues join me in wishing her the best upon her retirement and commending her for her lifetime of service and dedication.

RECOGNIZING KEVIN AARON LEWIS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Kevin Aaron Lewis, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 264, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Kevin has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Kevin has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Kevin Aaron Lewis for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. TOM FEENEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Mr. FEENEY. Madam Speaker, I would like to express my regret for missing votes on the House floor on Monday, March 26, 2007. I was delayed in my district as a result of a canceled flight.

### TRIBUTE TO MR. DAVID J. LYNCH

### HON. BILL SALI

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor and express appreciation for Mr. David J. Lynch of Meridian, Idaho. Mr. Lynch is not only a great Idahoan, he is also a great American. He served our country as an enlisted member of the U.S. Navy and served in World War II on the USS *Tappahannock*. His life of service did not end with the war. He has continued to give his time and energy freely up until this very day as a grassroots volunteer for the Jade Bar-Shalom Books for Israel Project.

As Rena Cohen, a co-founder of the Project has said: Mr. Lynch "is a most extraordinary citizen of the United States and has done much to extend the hand of friendship and solidarity of the people of the United States to the children of Israel threatened by terrorism, and sadly, deprived of basic learning materials as funding for Israel's public school system has of necessity been diverted to defense during the last few years."

Jade Bar-Shalom Books for Israel Project provides used English books that are still in good condition to school libraries in Israel and is an excellent example of what can be done when committed individuals sacrifice time and energy for the sake of a cause greater than themselves.

Mr. Lynch should be honored for a lifetime of service not only to Idaho and the United States, but also to those in need in a very troubled part of the world. It is for that reason that I rise to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this fine American.

RECOGNIZING EVAN WRIGHT FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Evan Wright, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 264, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Evan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Evan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Evan Wright for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF GERALD A. ESPOSITO

### HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to recognize Gerald (Gerry) A. Esposito, District Manager of Community Board 1 in Brooklyn, leader within our community, and lifetime resident of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg community, for 30 years of public service.

Born on March 7, 1954 at St. Catherine's Hospital on Bushwick Avenue, Gerald is a product of Brooklyn Public Schools. As he moved on in his academic career, receiving a bachelors of science from the C.U.N.Y. Graduate Center, and a masters degree in public administration at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Gerry remained loyal to the city of New York and later he successfully graduated from the city's Executive Training "Top Forty Program".

While in college, Gerry became interested in community and public service. Volunteering with the Boy Scouts of America, VISTA, and the Peace Corps, his dedication to improving the community was obvious to all. After gaining employment in the nonprofit and local government sectors, in 1977 he was hired by the Community Board No. 1—the youngest district manager in the city of New York. Thirty years later, there is no aspect of that board that has not been enriched by his guidance. A strong advocate for the delivery of city services to the community, he has successfully addressed a complex range of matters relating to the public welfare, the district, and its residents.