

kinds of policies that are appropriate and the kinds of policies that will result in the greatest amount of prosperity and freedom for future generations of Americans.

REMEMBERING VICTIMS AT VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY AND HONORING HISPANIC WORLD WAR II VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASITOR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for half the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, tonight we will be highlighting the courage and honor of our Hispanic World War II veterans.

But before we begin tonight, I would like to take this moment to honor the victims of the unbelievable tragedy at Virginia Tech University. We have only just begun to hear the incredible stories of the heroism and tragedy, and begun to learn the names and faces of those who died and those whose survived, but whose lives will forever be changed.

Today we have also seen how remarkable and how resilient they are. To the Virginia Tech University community, the students, the staff, the family members and the loved ones who are suffering today, please know that you are in our prayers and thoughts tonight.

I ask for a brief moment of silence.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order tonight.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening, joined by my colleagues, to honor and pay respect and tribute to the contributions of the Latino and Hispanic soldiers who served so valiantly during World War II.

World War II was a major turning point for the United States Latinos, changing the world views of an entire generation. Approximately half a million Hispanics served in the Armed Forces during World War II. Unfortunately, many Latino soldiers who returned home found the same discrimination they had left behind, a system that held Latinos to a lower status.

Latinos and Latinas who worked in military installations and in other jobs previously denied them also questioned the status quo.

Understanding the importance of getting an education to better adapt after their tour of duty, many veterans used the GI bill to earn college degrees. In the years following World War II, those

men and women made astonishing civil rights advancements for their people through school desegregation, in voting rights, and in basic civil rights.

Powerful organizations grew out of this era, including the American GI Forum founded by Dr. Hector Garcia of Corpus Christi in 1948 to advocate for veterans' rights.

Another organization that came out of the World War II generation of Latinos was the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund in 1968. This came about after Mexican American World War II veterans, including people such as Pete Tijerina; Gregory Luna, a Senator from Texas; Ed Idar and Albert Armendariz, among others, found that their clients, mostly low-income Mexican Americans, were being denied justice in the legal system.

For Puerto Ricans, World War II brought new questions in which the United States came to appreciate Puerto Rico's military importance in the Caribbean. The United States maintained that it needed to keep its sovereign power over the islands for reasons of national security, and World War II strengthened that position. However, over 53,000 Puerto Ricans served within the United States military with dignity. Soldiers from the island, serving in the 65th Infantry Regiment, participated in combat in the European theater in Germany and central Europe.

World War II was also the first conflict in which women other than nurses were allowed to serve in the United States Armed Forces. However, when the United States entered World War II, Puerto Rican nurses volunteered for service, but were not accepted into the Army or the Navy Nurse Corps, and it was not until 1944 that the Army Nurse Corps decided to activate and recruit Puerto Rican nurses so the Army hospitals would not have to deal with language barriers.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, the stories of these men and women have been virtually untold either in the mass media or in the scholarly writings, and that is why my colleagues and I are here this evening to begin sharing the stories of the Hispanic and Latino World War II veterans, so all Americans can learn about and appreciate their contributions.

Within our own body of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus I am proud to honor, to recognize the service of four of our own who have served the military with dignity: Chairman SILVESTRE REYES, Chairman SOLOMON ORTIZ, the Honorable JOHN SALAZAR, and the honorable chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, JOE BACA.

Chairman JOE BACA, who represents the 43rd District of California, was drafted in 1966 and served in the Army as a paratrooper with both the 101st and the 82nd Airborne Divisions from 1966 through 1968.

I want to take this opportunity to yield to our chairman, and I thank him for being here tonight.

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank our Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on Veterans Affairs for addressing this important issue of those men and women who served during World War II, and that is our chairman, Ciro Rodriguez. It is important that people realize the contributions of many of our Hispanics who served during that period of time, that we are visible and that we were not invisible during that period of time and that we made many contributions to this country during that period of time.

So I rise today in honor of the over 500,000 Hispanics who bravely served our country during World War II with honor and with integrity and were proud to wear the uniform. And for those of us who wore that uniform, men and women who were willing to ultimately sacrifice for this country, it is an honor for us and our family members when we put on that uniform and fight for this country.

Madam Speaker, 65,000 Puerto Ricans also served during that period of time. Thirteen Medals of Honor were given out, 11 were Mexican American, two were Puerto Ricans. So when you can look at the contributions of these individuals and many others, as a veteran, I am proud of our heritage and our long history of continuing to fight for this country.

More Hispanics fought for this country's freedom and security during World War II, and I state that is an important fact to understand, and it is important that it be included in part of our history of the contributions that Hispanics have made. More Hispanics than any other minority group have served this country with distinction.

Just one example is Company E of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Texas Infantry Division. This company was made up entirely of Hispanics, bilingual individuals who were willing to serve for this country. After 361 days of combat in Italy and France, the 141st Infantry Regiment sustained 1,126 casualties, 5,000 wounded and more than 500 missing in action.

In recognizing their extended service and valor, the members of the 141st were awarded three Medals of Honor, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legions of Merit, 492 Silver Stars, 11 Soldier's Medals, and 1,685 Bronze Stars. We were, and are, visible and participated and gave our lives during World War II. And that is an important fact for many of our children and others to know the contributions of many of our men and women who served us, who sacrificed for this country.

Hispanic women also made a huge contribution to the American war effort. Madam Speaker, 200 Puertoriquenas served during the Women's Army Corps, which was one of the first service opportunities for women in American history.

□ 2230

Bilingual Hispanic women also worked in important positions within

the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in areas like communications and interpretation. They also worked as specialized bilingual nurses and logistics specialists all over the world, providing the United States military the services vital to the war effort and to this country.

Hispanic veterans have made huge contributions to American society after serving our country in this war.

Dr. Hector P. Garcia of Corpus Christi founded the American GI Forum in 1948 to advocate on behalf of veterans rights, and as our chairman indicated, many veterans who came back home, who served this country, were trying to buy homes and trying to receive the same benefits that many other individuals were given in this country but yet were denied those same rights, whether to buy a home, obtain an education, have the same rights as others. I know because I experienced the same thing when I returned back after serving this country and was trying to rent a home, and they would not rent to me, and of course, they rented to my wife. In doing so, the GI Forum became an important civil rights organization for Mexican Americans.

Another organization that came out of the World War II generation of Latinos was the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, or MALDEF, in 1968. Mexican American World War II veterans, such as Pete Tijerina, Ed Idar and Albert Armendariz, came together to advocate for low-income Mexican Americans who needed fair treatment within the American legal system.

As a Hispanic, a veteran and as chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I cannot tell you how humbled I am by the sacrifice of these brave men and women who came before me, who ultimately gave the sacrifice, who believed in this country and continue to believe in this country and will continue to fight for this country because we know it is an honor to serve for the United States and its principles and what it stands for.

I am particularly honored to know of a dear friend of mine who served during World War II, David Guerra Galvan, who recently passed away on March 23 when I went back to the district. He was born in my district and was a resident of Rialto, my hometown, for 50 years.

David served his country in the Army during World War II as a paratrooper and in the 101st Airborne Division. During his European tour, David was also transferred to the 82nd Airborne Division as part of a detachment for the personal protection of General Dwight Eisenhower. After his military service, David continued to serve his country as a data communications operator at Norton Air Force Base. He retired after 40 years of outstanding service to the Armed Forces in 1990.

David was a dear friend of mine, and he is a perfect example of the hundreds of thousands of veterans that we are

honoring today who have served our country and will continue to serve our country.

David Galvan was a Hispanic, he was an American and a proud American, and he loved this country. He spent his entire life serving our Nation and his community and his family; as well as my brother Abilio Baca who served in the Armed Forces in the Army during the Korean conflict; as well as my brother-in-law, Ted Dominguez, who served during World War II.

I feel honored to have followed in David's footsteps by serving in the 101st and 82nd Airborne during my military service, and I thank him and I thank all of the many men and women who served during World War II. They are our heroes. They are our role models. They have paved the way for generations of proud Hispanics. They are the ones who ultimately paid the sacrifices so that we can enjoy the freedoms that we have here today because they were willing to step up to the plate. They stepped up to the plate and were willing to die for this country. That is why we have the freedoms that we have today, and we must not forget the legacy of what they have left for us. They have opened the door. They paved the way. They provided that for us. Let us remember those veterans who have served this country.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, let me take this opportunity also to congratulate Congressman BACA not only as chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus but for his service to his country, and he continues to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. I thank Congressman BACA.

Let me take this opportunity also to just share with you that also I mentioned earlier Chairman Sylvestre Reyes, who also served in the military, now chairman of the Intelligence Committee, who represents the 16th District of Texas. He is a Vietnam combat veteran, and he was stationed in Marble Mountain in DaNang, and he served as a helicopter crew chief within the 282nd Combat Assault Helicopter Company from March 1967 to April 1968. I know that he was unable to be here tonight, but I know that he also cherishes and recognizes those individuals who served our country.

Let me take this opportunity to recognize a friend from San Antonio, Texas, which represents a community that has multitude and is known as Military U.S.A., San Antonio, because of the support that we have for our military with Lackland Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base, Fort Sam Houston, Brooks that used to be here, and the military support and all the families there, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I want to express my thanks of course to my colleague Ciro Rodriguez, my neighbor and fellow San Antonian for his great service in this Congress and, of course, as past chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

I first would like to digress from the remarks that I have had here prepared to highlight the life of a great man. The individual that I will be highlighting taught me as a very young man and as a young lawyer that if you have something to say, say it; if you believe in something stand up and state it.

While we were awaiting our call to have our Special Order, some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle were representing certain figures and facts, demonstrating that the practices of the Democratic party and Democratic leaders simply resulted in deficit spending, not having a balanced budget, runaway spending and so on. The only problem with those facts and those figures is that the Republicans have been in the majority since 1995. It was only last year in 2006 that we were able to take back the majority. So, if there was too much spending, if there was irresponsibility in the way of fiscal policy, they had the majority.

Let us talk about the expiration of certain tax programs that were passed back in 2005. Was it truly necessary to say they would expire in 2005? Now, I understand that we do things in 5-year increments often enough, but they had the majority. Make them permanent; they never did. Extend them; they never did. You wonder why.

It is complaining that this bus is being driven in an erratic manner and the wrong destination. The problem is you were driving it. They controlled Congress and nothing was done.

The last time we had a balanced budget was under the Clinton administration, and it was because of President Clinton's leadership that we were able to balance the budget because of good, solid economic policy and tax policies that really were fair to all Americans.

I leave you with a couple of thoughts here. First of all, what we are proposing in the first few months of being in the majority is to maintain and make sure that we still have the child tax credit that would not expire, that we make sure that the marriage penalty relief would not expire. Why? Because that truly is just. That truly is fair.

What is not fair is what I am going to read to you now that appeared back in 2005. Back on the 8th day of December 2005, the Republican tax reconciliation bill, the Tax Policy Center, run jointly by the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute has concluded that the bottom 80 percent of households would receive 15.5 percent of the House tax cuts. The top 20 percent would receive 84.2 percent of the benefit. Households earning more than \$1 million would get 40 percent of the tax cut relief, or an average reduction of nearly \$51,000. If you believe that is fair tax policy, something is truly, truly wrong, and we are going to correct that as we assume the majority.

Now, who taught me that? I will go now into my remarks because we are

here to honor and to spotlight the service of Hispanics and especially in World War II.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to participate in this Special Order honoring Hispanic veterans of the Second World War. As we have already heard, the contributions made by Hispanic Americans to the war effort against the Axis Powers were significant. A half million Hispanics served, and I fear that their contributions are often forgotten.

It is important that all Americans, including Hispanics, enjoy recognition and our historical dialogues commensurate with the contributions they made to our Nation. When we fail to be inclusive, our histories are incomplete. They are only half-truths. We owe it to past and future generations to make our histories whole. When history is complete, it is also fair and it is just.

Today, I am honored to make a small contribution to our country's World War II dialogue on behalf of the war's Hispanic veterans in hopes that their stories come to occupy a place in history proportionate to their service and to their sacrifice.

Like their African American brothers-in-arms, Hispanic Americans served the United States in World War II with honor and distinction, despite the fact that they had yet to enjoy the full fruits of the liberty they defended.

Back in the 1940s, in the late 1940s also, most of the services offered to the American public by our national, State and local governments were segregated between whites and minorities, including Hispanics. But despite the fact that the services to which they were entitled were often withheld or inferior, Hispanics did not withhold their service to the American people. They fought for our country even as schools they attended, jobs they worked, wages they earned, and living conditions they tolerated reflected systematic inequality that denied them full rights of citizenship. Despite the inequality endured by Hispanic veterans before and after World War II, their stories of courage and heroism during that troubling time are the equal of any that can be told.

I regret that I have time to share with you the story of but one of the hundreds of thousands of Hispanic veterans who so courageously defended the liberty of humankind during those darkest hours.

The Honorable Mike Machado enjoyed a lengthy career of public service to the United States, to the State of Texas and to the residence of his beloved home city of San Antonio. He was born in San Antonio on September 4, 1923, and attended Sydney Lanier High School where he excelled as a student athlete.

Like so many young men of his generation, Mike Machado entered service to his country during the earliest days of his adulthood by enlisting in the United States Army Air Corps at 17. He became a nose gunner on a B-24, battling the Germans over the skies of

Nazi-occupied Europe. By the summer of 1944, he had flown over 40 missions.

On June 13, 1944, Mike Machado's B-24 was heavily damaged over Munich. Despite the desperate nature of their situation, the crew stayed with their aircraft rather than parachute into enemy hands.

□ 2245

Mike Machado and his comrades crossed the border into northern Italy before they were forced to make a crash landing. Upon impact, fire engulfed the B-24. Mike Machado carried two of his fellow airmen to safety that day, saving them from the flames. In the process, he received severe burns to his upper body and arms that would limit the use of his hands for the rest of his life.

My personal observation that I would like to make is that even I practiced before Judge Machado. It was obvious that this is someone who had suffered horrific, disfiguring and incapacitating injuries.

The French Underground provided sanctuary for Mike over the following months, hiding him from Nazi forces and eventually securing his return to the United States Army. His strength and his resilience, combined with the rudimentary medical care provided by his French companions, allowed him to survive his injuries from the fire and the flack.

After his return to the United States Army, he began a 36-month long recuperation at Beaumont General Hospital in El Paso. The ordeal included 23 skin graft operations that only partially repaired the injuries incurred during his heroic rescue efforts. Mike Machado's story of heroism does not end with his discharge from the Army. His injuries did not deter him from his pursuit of an education, in law, especially, and a career of public service, as a city attorney and as a judge at the municipal and State district court levels.

Judge Machado used the GI Bill to enroll at Saint Mary's University and graduated from Saint Mary's University Law School in 1952. He soon became a prosecutor. In 1957, he was appointed as a municipal court judge where he served for 20 years. In 1977, he became a judge for the newly created 227th State district court. That same year he was honored by Pope Paul VI with a knighthood in the Pontifical Order of Saint Gregory the Great. He served as a district judge for 21 years until the time of his death.

When he died on July 29, 1998, Judge Machado had amassed over a half century of public service to our country, as an airman, and as an assistant DA, and a municipal and district court judge. He was just shy of his 75th birthday and would have been retired from the bench, as Texas law requires, on September 4 of that year.

While Texas law mandated his retirement from the judicial branch, it could not squelch Judge Machado's desire to serve the public, knowing that mandatory retirement was fast approaching.

What did he do? Well, prior to the brain aneurysm that took his life, he had announced at the age of 74 his candidacy for district attorney in Bexar County on the Democratic ticket. Judge Machado was highly regarded in the community, as evidenced by the over 1,000 mourners that attended his funeral.

As a judge, he performed marriage ceremonies for thousands of San Antonio couples. He welcomed the public into his chambers with open arms, often quite literally. What I mean by that, it was a big giant bear hug that he would give you, and he made himself available to individuals in need of help.

Believe it or not, even ex-convicts that he had sentenced would seek his advice at times. He was a man of the people and a man who befriended everyone. I am honored to have had the opportunity to share with you the story of Judge Mike Machado, a courageous man and a servant of his country.

My colleague, Congressman RODRIGUEZ, who organized this opportunity to recount the bravery of Hispanic veterans of World War II, should be commended for his efforts today and in the past, because this is not the first time that Congressman RODRIGUEZ has risen to the defense of the Hispanic warrior in recognizing and remembering these servicemen, including Judge Mike Machado.

As I indicated earlier, we did not offer these comments tonight solely to highlight the virtues of specific individuals. We realized as Judge Machado's son has said of his dad, "My father and many more of his generation would be embarrassed at the prospect of receiving special attention for doing what they consider to be a privilege, that is, serving this great country." When we honor individuals like Judge Mike Machado, we honor a symbol really of something much more. We honor them because their courage symbolizes the courage and sacrifice to which the Hispanic community and the Nation at large aspire.

We honor the service of Hispanic veterans of World War II specifically today in order to solidify their place in World War II history and ensure that their patriotic virtues receive the appreciation they deserve, that Judge Machado and hundreds of thousands of his fellow World War II veterans, Hispanic and non-Hispanic alike, look back on their valiant service to our country as a privilege and an honor, and should be an inspiration to all Americans.

Let our recognition of their sacrifices motivate us to a greater appreciation of the contributions made during World War II by Americans, regardless of their racial or ethnic backgrounds. None of their brave soldiers will ever be forgotten.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Congressman CHARLIE GONZALEZ, I want to personally thank you tonight for bringing the story of Judge Machado, a great leader

in San Antonio. I also want to thank you for your comments as you regressed and talked a little bit in terms of the deficit. You have talked in eloquence, and I couldn't help but remember your dad, Henry B. Gonzalez, as he spoke in this House about the important issues that confront us.

I know that previous groups had talked about the deficit, knowing full well that this particular administration went into office with a surplus, one of the largest surpluses in recorded history. Now we find ourselves without that surplus and find ourselves in an \$8.9 trillion debt.

That being said, let me also take this opportunity to mention a little bit about some of our own veterans here on the House, Chairman SOLOMON ORTIZ, who sits on the Armed Services Committee, represents the 27th District of Texas.

As a result of his father's death at the age of 16, Chairman ORTIZ dropped out of school to find a job to assist his mother in paying the family bills. Shortly thereafter, Chairman ORTIZ joined the Army, because, as he put it, it was the one place that would give him free room and board and let me send my check back home to my mother.

It was in the Army that Mr. ORTIZ, SOLOMON, ever conscious of the needs for an education, got his GED. He received his basic training at Fort Hood, Texas, and was sent overseas to France for his tour of duty. He later found himself reassigned to the 61st Military Police Company, Criminal Investigation Office, a move that would color much of his future professional life. He remained as an investigator for the duration of his tour of duty, receiving his advanced military police training at Fort Gordon, Georgia.

Congressman JOHN SALAZAR, who represents the Third District of Colorado, graduated from Centauri High School in La Jara, Colorado. In 1973 he joined the Army. After serving in Heidelberg, Germany, SALAZAR received an honorable military discharge in 1976. Congressman SALAZAR is proud to be a veteran and proud to be both the son and father of men who have served. The Salazar family is honored to have served our country. Congressman SALAZAR tells a story of his father, a veteran of World War II, requesting to be buried in his uniform.

Today's generation of Hispanics and Latino American soldiers look to the brave men and women, veterans, who fought before them, as true inspiration. In the State of Texas alone, there are 197,173 World War II veterans who have fought so bravely and honorably to defend our beloved country. According to the 2000 census, the VA reported and recognized Texas as having 14,871,550 civilian population over the age of 18 and a total veteran civilian population of over 1.7 million.

Within the 23rd Congressional District, which is the district that I represent, a district that is one of the

largest in the country that stretches from San Antonio to El Paso through Eagle Pass and the border, has some 700 miles of the border with Mexico. I represent the VA reports in their county estimates and projections of living veterans report, that as of September 30, 2006, there are currently 53,012 living veterans within the 23rd Congressional District.

Therefore, my colleagues, I stand today, this evening, in honor of the extraordinary service these men and women should be recognized for what they do. In so recognizing their efforts, we also need to recognize them in terms of what we provide them with.

Before I do that, let me take this opportunity to also tell a story of my father-in-law. Daniel Sanchez Pena was born on January 11, 1919, as the youngest son of Manuel Pena and Catarina Sanchez Pena in Las Colonias of Karnes County, Texas. He grew up in his parents' ranchito doing all the types of farm chores that kids do in a farm. He only went to the second grade in school. He learned to play the guitar at 14 and played at community and farmhouse dances around the community. He would use his skills while in the Army to entertain himself and his fellow soldiers.

To this day, he still enjoys, at 87, playing the guitar there at home. Daniel Sanchez Pena was registered on the 16th day of October, 1940. He reported to the Local Board No. 1 in Karnes County, Texas, at the courthouse, on March 25, 1942. This was part of the 35th precinct of what is referred to as the Robstown, Texas, ward. At the age of 23, in June of 1942, he was at the headquarters of the Armed Forces Replacement Training Center in Fort Knox, Kentucky, Company A, for training. Being a farm boy, he was an expert shooter and got excellent points for marksmanship. He still talks about the beautiful mountains in Kentucky that he recalls and the green valleys.

After training, he was sent to New York to board the ship and go overseas. This was a real adventure to Daniel. Daniel had never traveled far from his home, much less across the Atlantic Ocean. He still talks about the amazement of seeing the dolphins and the whales and other large fish that he saw. He recalls how seasick they were and how at night, how he looked on that floating city of lights. Coming from a small town, that seemed like a large city.

He served in the U.S. Army for 3 years. He was a rifleman in the infantry. He remembers crawling in the sand, freezing in the snow, climbing the steep mountains and the high mountains in Italy and forever marching, dodging bullets and digging fox holes. He saw his friends from Karnes County, a young man at that point that he talks about, and always remembers him, who was killed in front of him. To this day, he still remembers that specific incident when that occurred.

He recalls the many tragedies of the war for both soldiers and civilians. He remembers having to hold his plate of food so that they would not be stolen by the starving civilians and children who appeared around the camps when they went through both Africa and into Italy. He often wondered why he got out alive.

Truly, he experienced every emotion known to man, from profound sorrow to wondrous awe. Only in the last 2 to 3 years has he started to talk about these experiences. As he talks about his experiences, he remembers parts of the comments and the language, the Italian language that he picked up and some of the words. He returned from service in 1945, receiving the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with four bronze service stars, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Honorable Service Lapel Button for World War II.

He married Dora Mansanalez in September of 1947, another young lady who lived at another farm adjoining their farm. His father had seven children, three girls and four boys. Two of the boys, Roberto and Guillermo, my brother-in-laws, served in the Army. Carolina, his daughter, is my wife.

□ 2300

And so I mention Daniel Pena because he is typical of a lot of the veterans, a lot of Hispanic veterans who have served our country, who never spoke of the war until now as he reaches 87 years of age he begins to talk about those incidents.

Let me also take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, as featured by Gebe Martinez, a longtime journalist in Washington. I would like to share with you a story which she featured of a soldier from my own 23rd District of Texas, Nick Arzola.

Nick Arzola was defined as a skinny kid from Del Rio, Texas; service in World War II was the pride of his life. He never forgot the precise time he left New York for the war, 5 p.m. on October 7, 1943. Arzola went through the choppy seas, pitched in his ship so violently that he was sick for the entire 18 days' voyage to Scotland.

On land, he went from cooking on a gas stove on the battlefield to moving grenades and bombs at a munitions depot. Arzola was a proud American from Del Rio, even if he was considered the only Mexican with a bunch of Yankees, as he used to say. He was good natured despite the stereotype. His war buddies first thought he looked Filipino. Then, they called him Pancho Villa and they called him Casanova, according to the tales.

When he returned to Texas after the war, he traveled a road that would later be named for Cleto Rodriguez, the first Hispanic to receive the Medal of Honor for his bravery in the battle in Manila.

Nick opened a barbershop in Del Rio and painted signs freehand, including billboards for rising Texas politicians

such as Lloyd Bentsen. A veteran, he never missed an election and rounded up voters to take part in freedom as he campaigned.

Until he died in 2005, he was part of the uniformed honor guard at the funeral of Del Rio's war veterans, one where to this day you have a large number of veterans there in Del Rio that continue to volunteer as their veterans pass away and do the honors of burying them.

Nick Arzola's story may not seem unlike that of other veterans, but this is a representation of part of America's history that has too often been forgotten. His story, like the stories many colleagues have shared, have not been told. Nick never missed an election and rounded up votes as he worked and will continue to do so.

So I want to take this opportunity to also mention, as I have a few minutes left, we talked the last few weeks about the situation that we find ourselves with as PBS has a 14-hour program on World War II that will be released in September. There has been a great deal of concern about the lack of Hispanic participation in that particular program. We have had meetings with Ken Burns and others and have been pleased that we have been able to make some inroads. There is still a lot of work to be done.

I do want to mention that I am also concerned that within our own population we don't know the history of the role that Mexican Americans and Hispanics have played, not only in World War II but throughout all the wars.

I want to mention a group of Mexicans, these are truly Mexicans from Mexico that played a very significant role in World War II in defense of the United States and that was referred to as Escuadron 201, the Aztec Eagles, as they were called. The 201 Escuadron was a group of 300 Mexicans that were trained in the United States and fought on behalf of the United States, with some 38 Mexican pilots that were trained in this country.

On December 8, 1941, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mexico severed its ties with Germany, Italy, and Japan. And in May 1942, the Nazis also sank a Mexican tanker, and Mexico declared war against the Axis powers. During that time, Mexico participated in the war, and one group was the Escuadron 201. This group of 300 individuals that were Mexicans were trained in this country. The 201 successfully participated in the Allied efforts to bomb Luzon and Formosa, known as Taiwan now, to attempt to push the Japanese out of the island.

Assigned to the 58th Fighter Group of the United States Fifth Air Force, the Aztec Eagles, as they were called, were also used in ground support efforts after the aerial threat from Japan weakened. During those ground assignments, the men of the squadron saw firsthand the fearlessness and war mentality of the Japanese soldiers. Japanese soldiers were often captured after

trying to come into the U.S. military campsites for food, as they recalled during the stories. Several of these soldiers such as Captain Reynaldo Gallardo and others continue to remember their efforts.

I want to mention, on Veterans Day Carlos Faustinos, a former member of the Escuadron 201, always is proud of flying not only Old Glory but the Mexican flag, because he, as a Mexican, fought on behalf of the United States against the Japanese. He was also known for being able to down six Japanese Zeros, which basically makes him an ace, and was able to get credit and receive La Cruz de Honor, the Cross of Honor, which is equivalent to the U.S. Medal of Honor award in this country.

Very few Americans know of the 201 Escuadron. Very few of them know of the Aztec Eagles, these Mexicans who fought with the U.S. troops as troopers and fought over the sea in the Pacific. They continue to engage and continue to meet, and I know the G.I. Forum has recently honored their efforts, but much more needs to be done.

Let me take this opportunity in closing to indicate that as we honor our troops, it is not just sufficient for us to honor them with our words. We have to honor them with our acts. And that is why I am extremely proud to announce that this legislation has put more money for our veterans service than any other in history. I am glad that the budget for 2008 has \$6.6 billion, and I know that the House of Representatives will be voting on that. That \$6.6 billion is the resources that are essentially needed at this present time to help.

And for 2007, I am also proud to say that we were able to take that particular piece of legislation that should have been passed last year, that was passed by this Congress, the concurrent resolution, and that we added to that bill after we struck all the line items that were placed on that bill the previous year by the previous Congress, we struck every single line item, and we added \$3.6 billion for the VA.

So I am pleased not only that we did that, but I am also pleased to announce that the supplemental that the President will hopefully eventually sign has an additional \$1.7 billion for our troops for health care. That is the way to honor our troops not only with our words but with our deeds.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, I am honored to join my colleagues in honoring the tremendous contributions of World War II Veterans.

During World War II Americans responded to a call of service that resulted in a generation of leaders that has since never been seen. As our country faced the war, all citizens stood united and ready to contribute. Without exception, Hispanic Americans were also there to seize the call their country had laid before them. Not only did Hispanic Americans serve our country during a time of war, their leadership after service resulted in huge civil rights advancements for the Hispanic community.

It is with great privilege that I take the opportunity to especially recognize the noble service and high sacrifices of the approximately 500,000 Hispanic Americans who served in the Armed Forces during World War II. One of whom was my brother-in-law, Manuel Musquiz—a bombardier.

During World War II Hispanic participation was at a higher percentage than any other minority. Of these, at least 65,000 were Puerto Rican and the majority of the Hispanics were Mexican-Americans. Thirteen Medals of Honor were awarded to Latinos in World War II, eleven to Mexican Americans, and two to Puerto Ricans. When Hispanic soldiers returned home they utilized the GI Bill to advance their education.

Unfortunately, many Latino soldiers who served during WWII also received a rude awakening as they returned home. They faced the same discrimination they had left when they heeded the call to serve. Latino soldiers returned home to exert their rights, through numerous civil rights efforts, to create greater opportunities through activism. Powerful organizations grew out of this era, including the G.I. Forum and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). A wealth of gratitude is entitled to these national heroes and their families who not only fought for democracy but fought for equality.

I would also like to recognize my fellow colleagues of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus who also have served our country: Representatives ORTIZ, REYES, BACA, and SALAZAR.

We pause to remember the noble service and high sacrifices of those who have worn our nation's uniform. We must not allow our children to forget about those who have served and the millions of living military veterans in the United States, those residing in California, and Hispanic veterans in the U.S. Our thoughts and prayers are also with tomorrow's veterans—our servicemen and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and across the world.

Let us remember the service of all our veterans, the ones that wars—and peace—cannot be won without. And let us renew our national promise to fulfill our sacred obligations to our veterans and families who have sacrificed so much so that we can live free.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I first want to express my deepest condolences to all of the families who lost loved ones in yesterday's tragedy at Virginia Tech University. This horrific event has affected Americans all over this country and we all mourn for those who were lost and pray for the swift recovery of those who were injured.

Tonight I join my colleagues from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus in paying tribute to the thousands of Hispanic veterans who have fought and died defending this country. My Congressional district has lost many young men in this most recent conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They are but the latest in a long line of patriots from South Texas who have given their lives in the defense of America.

Tonight I want to pay tribute to a young man from my district who received this Nation's highest award, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Alfredo Cantu Gonzalez, known to his friends and family as "Freddy", was born in 1946 in Edinburg, Texas in the Rio Grande Valley. His mother was a waitress, who had to raise her son alone.

Freddy worked in the cotton fields as a teenager to help his mother. He attended Edinburg High School, where he was an outstanding football star.

After graduation, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. After his initial training, he was sent to Vietnam in 1966 where he served as a rifleman and squad leader. He was quickly promoted from private to lance corporal to corporal.

He returned to the States in 1967 where he was given the task of training recruits in guerrilla warfare. Freddy told his mother and friends he did not want to return to Vietnam and would not re-enlist.

A few months after his return from Vietnam, he learned that an entire Marine platoon had been killed, including a group of men who had served under him during his first tour of duty. He was saddened by their loss and immediately volunteered for a second tour of duty.

On July 1, 1967 he was promoted to sergeant and shipped back to Vietnam.

On January 31, 1968, Sergeant Freddy Gonzalez and his men were assigned the task of protecting a truck convoy that was bringing relief to a major Vietnamese town. The truck convoy was attacked by the Viet Cong with mortars and machine gun fire.

Although Sergeant Gonzalez was wounded, he ran through heavy fire to rescue a wounded Marine who fell off the tank.

On February 3, Sergeant Gonzalez was wounded again but refused medical treatment until all of the other wounded Marines were treated.

The next day, on February 4, Sergeant Gonzalez and his Marine platoon were pinned down by the Viet Cong, who were firing at the Americans with rockets and automatic weapons from a church.

Sergeant Gonzalez, utilizing a number of light anti-tank assault weapons, fearlessly moved from position to position, firing numerous rounds at the heavily fortified enemy emplacements, almost single-handedly neutralizing the enemy.

All appeared quiet and Sergeant Gonzalez approached to make sure that the church was secure when the hidden lone enemy survivor killed him. At the age of 21, Sergeant Freddy Gonzalez had given the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

In 1969, his mother, Dolia Gonzalez, was escorted to the White House to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to her son posthumously because of his tremendous heroism in saving the men in his platoon.

He was also awarded numerous other medals including the Purple Heart, the Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with 2 bronze stars and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm.

Long after his death, his courage, his patriotism and his sacrifice are still remembered. In the Rio Grande Valley there are schools, roads and parks named after him.

In 1996, the Navy commissioned the USS *Gonzalez*, a guided-missile destroyer and the first modern destroyer named for a Mexican American. Freddie was one of 13 Hispanics who were awarded the Medal of Honor for their service in Vietnam.

Hispanics have a proud tradition of patriotism and have always been willing to answer America's call to duty, often when they were not even citizens. Freddy Gonzalez' story is

just one of the many thousands of stories that make up the heritage of our Hispanic veterans.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in thanking all of these brave men and women, as well as their families and loved ones, for their service.

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, Hispanic veterans represent our love of this nation . . . they represent the best of our community . . . and their service is a frequent path to greater opportunities for them and their families.

I am a veteran, inspired by another veteran who inspired so many of us: Dr. Hector P. Garcia who created the GI Forum, a powerful platform that represents Hispanic veterans who labor on the battlefield for our nation. Dr. Hector Garcia was a personal hero to me.

He served the nation on the battlefield . . . and he served us again by making people understand that a soldier is a soldier—that race makes no difference among Americans, particularly when they wear the uniform of the United States. If he were here today, he would have a great deal to say to PBS about the omission of Hispanics when putting together a special on WWII.

WWII was the moment in time when Hispanics found their place in U.S. society and found our voice in demanding equality among troops . . . and elsewhere in the American family. And it was Dr. Hector's audacious vision that began a decades-long march in advancing civil rights, voting rights and school desegregation for Hispanics in Texas and around the nation.

Here's how it all began . . . the family of Felix Longoria—a brave and fallen U.S. soldier from WWII—wanted his body buried at Three Rivers Cemetery in Three Rivers, Texas. Yet segregation's profound and evil roots ran deep in the heart of Texas then, reaching all the way into cemeteries, and Longoria's burial was refused; he was not white and could not be buried alongside those with whom he had fought in the war.

Dr. Hector laid bare the raw racism inherent in the U.S. after this nation fought a global war to protect democracy and our way of life, when even cemeteries were segregated. The fight to bury this war hero was successful and that effort begat the GI Forum, the very first Hispanic civil rights organization in this nation.

I was so pleased that—after the Hispanic Caucus engaged PBS in a serious conversation about the lack of inclusion of the story of Hispanics in the story of WWII—PBS understood the enormity of that decision. They will now include the extraordinary exploits of Hispanic warriors in the story of the last declared war our nation fought.

Yet, it was not only WWII in which Hispanic Americans were heroes in securing freedom; there were many examples of Hispanic war heroes throughout our history. Today we should also honor our forefathers who played a large part in making—and then keeping—the United States free and democratic; for as long as there has been a United States, Hispanics have played major roles in building our country and defending it.

From the American Revolution that freed the United States from England—to today's operation against al Qaeda—Hispanics proudly and bravely served the United States. When the Colonies on the East Coast of what is now the United States rebelled against England, Hispanics played a pivotal role.

As Governor of the Louisiana Territory, General Bernardo de Gálvez sent money, gunpowder, rifles and other supplies to General George Washington to aid in the revolution. He later served gallantly in the War for Independence by capturing both Mobile and Pensacola—at a pivotal point in the war.

Captain Jorge Farragut came to the United States to seek his fortune by fighting the British—first in the Revolution, then in the War of 1812—as part of the U.S. Navy.

Hispanics also raised special collections and taxes to aid the fight for independence. After the Revolution was won, Mexican pesos aided in the construction of St. Peter's Church in New York City to celebrate the end of the war. As in the Revolution, Hispanics served proudly in each war and conflict in which the United States participated.

In the course of that service, 38 Hispanics have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, our country's highest award for military bravery and service.

In the Civil War, David Glasgow Farragut, son of Jorge Farragut, won fame as a Union hero by blockading Southern ports, destroying Rebel ships anchored in New Orleans, and by capturing Mobile for the Union.

His contributions prompted Congress to create the title of Rear Admiral to reward him as the first man to ever hold that rank. Farragut was commissioned Vice Admiral in 1864, then Admiral in 1866.

Federico Fernández Cavada, a Lieutenant Colonel for the Union Army, fought bravely at Gettysburg. Rafael Chácon also served with the Union Army, and attained the rank of Major.

Santos Benavides—originally from Laredo—fought for the Confederacy. His rank of Colonel was the highest of any Mexican-American Army officer in the Civil War.

Major Manuel Antonio Chavez forced the Confederate Army to retreat down the Rio Grande, preventing the rebels from carrying out their plans to seize the gold mines of New Mexico and California.

Lieutenant Colonel José Francisco Chaves of the Union Army assisted in recapturing Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

One of the most interesting soldiers in the Confederacy was Loretta Janet Velázquez, who fought disguised as a man. Upon discovery and discharge, she continued her service as a Confederate spy.

In 1973, Lieutenant Colonel Mercedes Cubria retired from the Army—she was the first Hispanic woman to achieve that rank. Hispanics served bravely for the cause of freedom and democracy in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Around 500,000 Hispanics served the United States during World War II, and it is on the shoulders of these great men that the rest of us could see the future.

In the years to come, when the military service of Hispanics is viewed through the prism of history, there are certainly a number of young Hispanics whose service to this nation in this new war will distinguish themselves among great U.S. warriors in the 21st Century.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I join my colleague Representatives DEVIN NUNES in honoring the life of Mr. Louis Flores Ruiz from Dinuba, California, who passed away peacefully at his home on Sunday, April 1, 2007. Mr. Ruiz was loyal, compassionate and worked hard to make the American Dream a reality in his life.

Mr. Louis Flores Ruiz was born on October 30, 1918 in Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico. At the age of five, he and his family immigrated to the United States and after successfully serving his country by joining the U.S. Army, he was granted United States Citizenship on December 17, 1944. During his time in the Army, he served as a Military Police escorting prisoners-of-war and civilians in combat areas as well as investigating theft. His stellar service to our country made Mr. Ruiz a recipient of the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, one Bronze Service Star, an Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Stars, and a Good Conduct Medal.

Upon his return from his service, Mr. Ruiz first worked as a grocery store owner, then as an insurance salesman. After that, he joined his brothers and brother-in-law in Tulare, California and co-founded a large tortilla factory where they pioneered the automation of tortilla production. An entrepreneur and innovator at heart, Mr. Ruiz went on to co-found what has become the largest frozen food Mexican manufacturing firm in the United States, the second largest Hispanic-owned manufacturing firm in the United States, and the largest manufacturing plant in the state of California. Ruiz Foods has also helped establish programs of charitable giving within the community to many organizations that enhance the quality of life for the people of the Central Valley.

In 1983 Mr. Ruiz had the distinctive honor of meeting with President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George Bush in the Rose Garden of the White House, as he accepted the U.S. Small Business Administration's Small Business Person's of the Year Award. In 2003, Mr. Ruiz had the pleasure of hosting President George W. Bush at Ruiz Foods in Dinuba, CA. Other major highlights in Mr. Ruiz's life include, placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery at the request of President Reagan and being named the 14th person to the Tortilla Industry Association Hall of Fame—a distinction reserved for those who have made positive contributions to the tortilla industry through technical or significant innovations in products, equipment or ingredients while attaining business success.

Mr. Ruiz is survived by JoAnn, his wife; their daughter and son-in law, Shannon and Eric Weller; brother and sister-in-law, Carlos and Olga Ruiz; brother and sister-in-law, Edward Sr. and Dolores Ruiz; brother and sister-in-law, Oscar and Alice Ruiz, sister, Margaret Tarasas; and daughter-in-law, Luisa Ruiz; the mother of his four children, Rose; and their daughter and son-in-law, Rose Margaret and Paul Doherty; son and daughter-in-law, Fred and Mitzie Ruiz; daughter and son-in-law, Anna and Dennis January; and daughter Carrie Ruiz. Louis was also blessed with numerous nieces, nephews, godchildren, grandchildren, great grandchildren, a wonderful care provider and many dear friends.

Although the passing of Mr. Louis Flores Ruiz brings sadness to his family, friends, and community, we believe his legacy of hard work and kindness will forever live on, through those whose lives he so graciously lived.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to be here at this time.

#### STEM CELL RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CAS-TOR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for the time remaining until midnight.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be before my colleagues on the House floor this evening to talk about a hugely important issue that we will be dealing with once again this week in all probability.

As you know, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, I am talking about the issue of stem cell research. Last week the Senate was in session, and once again the bill that passed on the House floor in the 109th Congress, the Castle-DeGette bill, which would require Federal funding, taxpayer funding for embryonic stem cell research that was obtained by the destruction of the so-called "throwaway embryos" from infertility assisted reproductive technology clinics that couples say they did not want, that these were extras. Well, that bill that passed last year on this House floor passed the Senate last week, and, Madam Speaker, we will be seeing that bill very soon once again.

So, I want to be present tonight to talk about this very, very important issue with my colleagues and anyone that has an opportunity within ear distance of what we are speaking about tonight to help bring an understanding to this issue and to try to convince my colleagues that we can do this; that is, we can do stem cell research as we have been doing over the last several years.

Since President Bush's first term in office way back in 2001, we have been spending Federal tax dollars on stem cell research. But what the President said in August of 2001 was that he would not allow Federal tax dollars, your tax dollars, my tax dollars, those of my family, my parents, my constituents, to be used to fund stem cell research that resulted in the destruction of a human life.

What President Bush did say back then was that embryonic stem cell research that was ongoing, that was a result of cell lines developed from human embryos that had already been destroyed could continue; and Federal tax dollars could be used through the NIH to give grants to these researchers as they applied to use these existing cell lines, which indeed did come from the destruction of human life, as I believe life begins at conception, in these embryos that were taken from fertility clinics.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I want to emphasize that point because it is so important that our colleagues understand that, especially new Members on both sides of the aisle that weren't here for the debate last year, that got the impression maybe they and their constituents felt that this administration and the former leadership of this Congress in the 109th was spending nothing, was refusing to fund stem cell

research whether it was adult or embryonic.

But the facts are really brought home by this first slide, Madam Speaker, that I want to present. And this is basically what it says: Our government invested in lifesaving research. The Federal Government has spent \$161 million since 2003 on human embryonic stem cell research. As I pointed out, Madam Speaker, the President was willing to allow that funding to continue on those embryonic stem cell lines that had already been created. And there was some 60 of those stem cell lines where researchers could get a grant from the Federal Government and begin that important research on these stem cells.

Before that, no administration, no President, at no time in the 40 years that the Democrats controlled the Congress, certainly not during President Clinton's 8 years, was one dime of Federal tax dollars spent on embryonic stem cell research. Some was spent on adult stem cell research. But when it was suggested by scientists that maybe the embryonic stem cells had more potential to develop into a lot of different tissues and ultimately organs that could possibly help people with diseases, and we have all seen those television spots with celebrities in some cases, Michael J. Fox, who is suffering severely from Parkinson's disease.

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The life of Christopher Reeves, we all know about the tragic injury and the quadriplegic state that he suffered in for many years before his tragic death last year.

When you see those things, you know, you think, well, we are not doing anything. But the truth is, and it is very important for us to understand this, that under President Bush, indeed, since 2003, some \$608 million has been spent on stem cell research. And a lot of that, as I point out, because of those previous embryonic stem cell lines, a lot of it has been on embryonic stem cell research, and he is the only President that allowed that.

Now, we have great Members in both bodies and on both sides of the aisle. And I have a tremendous amount of respect, Madam Speaker, for the two Members in this body, in this House, that felt that because maybe these embryonic stem cell lines that were previously created that were being used for research would exhaust themselves, that we would use up all those stem cells. We certainly haven't, at this moment. I think there is still 20 of those stem cell lines in existence. Some were found to be contaminated. Originally, I think, back in 2001, we estimated that there were 60 of those lines, and now we are down to 20. So I can understand the concern that maybe we would exhaust that supply.

So Congressman CASTLE, a Republican Member, Congresswoman DEGETTE, a Democratic Member, along with the Senate colleagues, Senator