

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING STATION MENEMSHA
AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE SUMNER I. KIMBALL AWARD

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2008

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor United States Coast Guard Station Menemsha, of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, as the recipient of the prestigious Sumner I. Kimball Readiness Award.

The Kimball Award is a rarity in the United States Coast Guard, as very few units attain this level of outstanding performance. It demands a grade of 90 percent or higher during a rigorous week-long inspection, requiring a combination of exemplary test scores, crew proficiency, superb vessel condition, excellent performance in drills, a successful and progressive unit training program, survival systems readiness and good administrative work by all members.

This award actually marks the second time that Menemsha has been given this prestigious honor—they won it for the first time in 2004.

This award is named after the Maine native who introduced training, performance standards and accountability into the life saving organization that eventually became the Coast Guard. This honor is extremely difficult to achieve, and even more noteworthy considering the high-tech vessel the crew must master and maintain, the 47-foot Motor Lifeboat. Of the 200 Coast Guard stations throughout the country, only a handful receive the Kimball Award, and only two stations that operate the 47-foot MLB were so honored.

The Menemsha Coast Guard station has come a long way. In the early 1990s it was in danger of closing, but the people of Martha's Vineyard rallied to save it. For a brief period it was used by the Town of Chilmark, and then it became a substation of the Woods Hole station. In recent years, it became a full-time station and—time and time again—has proven its importance. This award is not just a testament to the station, but it is a tribute to the hard-working men and women who serve our Coast Guard and who are willing to put their life on the line to protect the safety of mariners and the integrity of our coast.

On the Vineyard, the Coast Guard is an important part of the community. Those who first served as life savers came from the island, and are part of a very proud tradition that began here years ago. Today, those who serve in Station Menemsha are not just representing a Federal agency, but are very much members of the community, honoring the proud tradition of service that the people of Martha's Vineyard hold dear.

Station Menemsha's remarkable achievement is not just about receiving an award; it is a testament to the professionalism and dedication that each member of the station brings to the job. In their line of work, readiness and

competence is the difference between life and death.

I would like to congratulate and recognize Station Chief Steve Barr and the men and women stationed at Menemsha for their exemplary service:

BM3 Dustin Shaw, BM2 Matthew Sponable, BM2 Bill Robertson, SK2 Rachel Glade, MK3 Christopher Guice, FN Julie Lopatka, BMCM Jack Downey, BMC Chris Bobrowski, FN Shannon Heintzelman, BM3 Rajeah Wilson, BM2 Lance Nelligan, MK3 Greg Lockwood, SN Derek Perendy, BM3 Daniel Carrillo, MK1 Mike Micucci, MK2 Nicholas Prescott, SN Jarrett Dube, RADM Timothy Sullivan, MK3 Andrew Chace, BM2 Patrick Bryant, BM3 Andrew Leblanc, BM3 Joe Pancotti, CAPT Raymond Perry, and BM3 Mark Chaknis.

[From the Martha's Vineyard Times, Jan. 31, 2008]

STATION MENEMSHA WINS RARE READINESS AWARD

(by Steve Myrick)

Last summer, a fishing boat in a dangerous stretch of water off Aquinnah was taking on water. The call for help came to United States Coast Guard Station Menemsha.

Petty Officer Second Class Lance Nelligan scrambled his crew, and guided the station's 47-foot motor lifeboat to the distressed vessel, where the fishing crew was moments away from abandoning their sinking boat.

"They came across Devil's Bridge," said Petty Officer Nelligan, "bounced a couple of rocks, split a whole bunch of big cracks in the bottom of their hull. We were able to get out there, we put two people on board to rig a pump and get the boat pumped."

Petty Officer Nelligan recounts the story of his day's work the way most people mention writing a sales report, replacing a fan belt, or waiting on a customer. The skill, training, and preparation of his crew saved a valuable boat and got two very grateful fishermen safely back to port. But to him, it's no big deal.

But the Sumner I. Kimball Award? Now that's a big deal to Petty Officer Nelligan. "To have somebody come in and say the job that you're doing is award worthy, is a really big deal," he said. "The things that we're tested on, it's absolutely everything you can think of. It takes a lot, a lot, a lot of work to keep those boats ready, and keep the crew ready."

"In my mind," adds Petty Officer Second Class Bill Robertson, "this is almost the Super Bowl of the Coast Guard."

BOAT OF NOTE

The Kimball Award is named for the Maine native who introduced training, performance standards, and accountability into the life saving organization that eventually became the Coast Guard.

The honor is extremely difficult to achieve, and even more noteworthy considering the high-tech vessel the crew must master and maintain. It is a test of readiness, including the condition of the vessel, along with the skill and training of the crew, administered by inspectors so tough that they inspire awe among the enlisted men and women.

"This isn't flag football, everybody gets a trophy sort of a deal," said Rear Admiral

Tim Sullivan, who flew to the Island to present the honor to station personnel this past Friday. Admiral Sullivan commands the Coast Guard's First District, which includes eight northeast states and 2000 miles of coastline from the Maine to northern New Jersey.

Of more than 200 Coast Guard stations throughout the country, only a handful receive the Kimball Award, and only two stations that operate the 47-foot motor lifeboat were so honored.

"It's the most complicated boat we have, it's a beast of a machine," said Lieutenant Commander Chris Cederholm, who represented Coast Guard Group Woods Hole at the ceremony.

"This award will become a benchmark," Admiral Sullivan said. "You guys really set a benchmark as a crew. Your outstanding performance is really your gift to a lot of future generations. A lot of folks will follow behind you, they will have to stand on a lot of big blue shoulders. People are going to be standing on your shoulders. This is a day you'll look back on, maybe when you're an old grey admiral. Think about that legacy, of people that will follow behind you."

Coast Guard Petty Officers (left to right) BM2 Bill Robertson and BM2 Lance Nelligan were all smiles, holding the pennant they will fly aboard Station Menemsha's 47-foot motor lifeboat. The pennant symbolizes the Kimball Award, earned by only one other boat of this kind in the entire Coast Guard this year. Click photo for larger version.

TOUGH TEST

Seven months after the grueling evaluation, MK First Class Mike Micucci, the head engineer, still scolds himself about one of the most serious faults the inspectors found in the material condition of his vessel: a missing screw in a plastic cover. It was nothing that would have interfered in the boat's operation, but it cost him a precious point in the rating system.

"I can't believe I missed that," said Petty Officer Micucci. "The guys that come and do the inspections, they know what to look for, you have to be one step ahead of them."

Senior Station Chief Steve Barr was unable to attend the ceremony. At the moment his station personnel received the award, he was welcoming newborn son Isaac into the world.

"He's got a good excuse," said Admiral Sullivan. "Another little Coastie coming along."

"I wish I could have been there, absolutely," said Chief Barr. "It's a joy for me that my crew got this award, with or without me. The fact that we got this Kimball with the 47-foot motor lifeboat is just amazing. It's a big deal, and we have a lot of junior people there. They did exceptionally well. I'm very proud of all their hard work."

READY AND ABLE

As difficult as the Kimball Award is to get, it is not difficult to understand how the station achieved the honor. Speaking to the personnel offers a glimpse of the professionalism, pride, and dedication which courses through the ranks. They understand that the award represents more than passing an exam on a specific day. They know an engine leak, a poorly maintained pump, or a navigation error may mean points deducted from the Kimball award grade sheet. "They

• 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.

watch us plot position, lay down courses," said Petty Officer Nelligan. "How we organize the crew, how we get our boat set up, how we're going to respond. They're pretty much testing everything that could possibly go wrong."

The unit also realizes these things can mean life or death when it's not a drill. "We are a search and rescue station," said Petty Officer Nelligan. "It's the middle of the night, it's the middle of the day, during a meal, those are the times you really have to snap to and get the boats ready."

Petty Officer Nelligan joined the Coast Guard shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. "I wanted to be involved in some branch of the service that I knew was going to protect my family, and this country," said the Dennis native.

Petty Officer Robertson, who grew up in Wrentham, is a six-year veteran of the Coast Guard. He flashes a broad grin when recalling the day Chief Barr told the assembled crew that they had won the Kimball Award. "Definitely a lot of big smiles and high fives," he said.

Petty Officer Robertson likes the Menemsha assignment so much, he asked to extend his duty an extra year. "I like the whole Island vibe, the whole atmosphere," he said. "We have a blast in the summer, we have a really tight-knit crew here. We work hard and play hard."

The pride carries over to the town of Chilmark, which has come to think of the station as its own. "They are an integral part of our community," said Chilmark selectman Frank Fenner Jr., who along with selectman Riggs Parker, and a large contingent of town officers, police officers, residents, attended the morning ceremony. "I'm proud that this station is doing so well."

HORRIFIC ATTACK ON BAGHDAD MARKET

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2008

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. On February 1, 2008, two young women with developmental disabilities walked into a Baghdad market, most likely unaware that they were being used as walking bombs, about to be remotely detonated.

In a horrific and coordinated attack, these vulnerable women lost their lives, along with more than 70 other innocent bystanders.

As the godfather of a young boy who has developmental disabilities and as a strong advocate for that community, it is my hope that we continue to fight against the exploitation of these heroic people anywhere in the world.

This horrific attack is the latest demonstration of the kind of uncivilized evil that we are confronting in the war on terror. We have even heard rumors this week that young children are being used by these terrorists. What kind of human being would stoop to this level to achieve their aims?

Madam Speaker, this event should serve as an example why our Nation must continue to protect the rights of the innocent and to continue to preserve freedom for everyone.

TRIBUTE TO DEBBIE HALEY

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2008

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a longtime civic and political leader from East Houston—Debbie Haley of Terrell—who died recently at the age of 72. Mrs. Haley was an outstanding citizen who devoted a lifetime to helping those in her community, and she will be missed by all those who knew her.

Leona Deborah Penn Haley was born on February 24, 1935, in Queens, a borough of New York City, the daughter of Edward and Rella Penn. She was a graduate of Queens College. From 1958 to 1966, Mrs. Haley taught in elementary schools in New York and Nashville, TN. In 1968, Haley and her husband, a physician, moved to Houston.

Mrs. Haley emphasized education as the key to advancing minority interests. Founder of the Texas Black Caucus, in 1976, she was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

Debbie Haley was also a president of the Cultural Arts Council of Houston and Harris County. For years, she also was a board member of the United Negro College Fund.

Madam Speaker, Debbie Haley's commitment to her community, her legacy of generosity, and her selflessness serve as an example to all Americans. It is people like Debbie, working together in communities in Texas that make our Nation so great. We can celebrate the power of one individual, Debbie Haley, by bringing the best out of all us in our neighbors, our community, and our Nation.

In addition to her son Anthony, survivors include her husband, Ronald Haley of Houston; two other sons, Sean Haley of Pearland and Kyle Haley of North Hollywood, Calif.; and a daughter, Rhonda Sewell of Sugar Land.

She was well-loved and well-respected in Houston and Texas, and she will be missed by all those who knew her. Madam Speaker, I am honored today to pay a final tribute to this outstanding community leader, Debbie Haley.

HONORING MR. VIC TRUJILLO

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Vic Trujillo for receiving the "7-Everyday Hero" award. I am pleased to recognize his service and the many contributions he has made to our community.

For the last 12 years, Lions Club member Vic Trujillo and his wife Ida volunteered side by side. Their dedication to the community blossomed into a program to prevent neighbors from going hungry while empowering youth to help others. Mr. Trujillo has continued the family's commitment to community service even after his wife's passing.

Partnering with schools in the tri-town area of Firestone, Frederick, and Dacono, the Trujillos have created a canned-good competition in which area schools compete to collect the

most canned goods. Prairie Ridge Elementary School won the most recent competition—collecting well over 4,000 canned food items. With the cans from other schools, this program fills the tri-town food closets each year—providing about 60 families with donated food every month. For people who do not have homes or food, this service is life-saving. To augment the canned resources, Mr. Trujillo has also encouraged these schools to sponsor a community bingo game.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Mr. Vic Trujillo for his exceptional community work and to express our appreciation for his efforts. I'm proud to acknowledge his reception of the "7-Everyday Hero" award and wish him good health, happiness, and success in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2008

Mr. HULSHOF. Madam Speaker, on February 12, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and missed votes. Listed below are the votes I missed and how I would have voted had I been there.

H. Res. 954, rollcall No. 43—Honoring the life of senior Border Patrol agent Luis A. Aguilar, who lost his life in the line of duty near Yuma, Arizona, on January 19, 2008. Had I been here, I would have voted "yes."

H. Res. 909, rollcall No. 44—Commemorating the courage of the Haitian soldiers that fought for American independence in the "Siege of Savannah" and for Haiti's independence and renunciation of slavery. Had I been here, I would have voted "yes."

H. Con. Res. 281, rollcall No. 45—Celebrating the birth of Abraham Lincoln and recognizing the prominence the Declaration of Independence played in the development of Abraham Lincoln's beliefs. Had I been here, I would have voted "yes."

HONORING JOHN MIKOLAJCIK, OF AMERICAN CANYON, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2008

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Mikolajcik in honor of his service to the city and people of American Canyon, California.

Mr. Mikolajcik was born in Cohoes, New York, on April 30, 1921. He received his call of duty a day after Pearl Harbor. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, where he served 4½ years as a mess sergeant. In 1954 he built and opened the Mid City Nursery in American Canyon, a nursery which has continued to flourish throughout the years. He began his career of public service when he was appointed to the American Canyon School Board, which was consolidated into the Napa Valley Unified School District, serving a total of 22 years. Thanks to the guidance of Mr. Mikolajcik, American Canyon now has three