

sang “. . . Lord, there’s just one favor I ask of you, see that my grave is kept clean.” In 2007 the name of the cemetery was changed to Blind Lemon Memorial Cemetery.

So Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in recognizing the good work of Director and Choreographer Akin Babatunde and Producer Alan Govenar for such a magnificent rendition of the life of Blind Lemon Jefferson and those Blind Lemon Blues.

HONORING THE FLINT CENTRAL
HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1959

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the Flint Central High School Class of 1959 as they celebrate their 50th Class Reunion. A party was held in my hometown of Flint, Michigan, on September 4 in honor of this milestone. I am proud to say that I was their teacher.

Over 1,000 students graduated from Flint Central High School in 1959 and their senior year was highlighted by outstanding academic and athletic programs. The football team won the State Championship, the cross-country team won the State Championship, the basketball team won the Regional Championship, and the track team won the State Championship.

The Class of 1959 boasted six Valedictorians. Many students accepted college scholarships and military academy appointments. Over 350 students participated in the 33rd Annual Kaleidoscope and the theatrical production that year was “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court.”

The graduates spanned all walks of life and went on to careers in law, research, education, medicine, the fine arts and manufacturing. The surviving 700 classmates live in almost every state in the United States. Members of the Class of 1959 spread out over the globe and currently can be found in Scotland, Japan, and Mexico.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in commending the achievements of the Flint Central High School Class of 1959. As their former teacher, I take deep pride in helping to shape the minds and abilities of these graduates and I congratulate them on their talents, accomplishments, and triumphs.

CONGRATULATING TED AND VEE
STUBAN ON THEIR 60TH WED-
DING ANNIVERSARY

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Ted Stuban of Berwick, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary that was celebrated on September 3.

Throughout their remarkable lives, Ted and Vee Stuban have exemplified what it means to be personal and community role models.

As lifelong residents of northeastern Pennsylvania, Ted was associated with the excavation business and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation before starting an auction business which he and Vee operated for about 25 years.

Ted was also deeply involved in his community, initially as a member of the Berwick Council, then as mayor of Briar Creek and, later, as a member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly as State Representative of the 109th District for eight successive terms, from 1976 to 1992.

In his capacity as State Representative, Ted was instrumental in crafting legislation and serving constituents in a manner that earned him much respect among his colleagues in Harrisburg and among the thousands of citizens in his district whom he represented so well.

Ted was also deeply involved in civic activities over the years. He was a member of the West End Fire Company, the Knights of Columbus, the Bloomsburg Elks Lodge, past president of the Columbia Montour Aging Board, the Columbia-Montour Visiting Nurses Association board of directors, the PPL Advisory Commission and Ss. Cyril and Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Vee Stuban is the former Charlotte Hetler, of Berwick. Formerly employed by the Wise Potato Chip Company in Berwick, Vee has been active in Democrat political circles for many years. She is a member of the Columbia County Democratic Women’s Club and the Columbia County Democratic Caucus. She has also been active over the years as a 4H leader and as a member of the Calvary United Methodist Church in Berwick.

Ted and Vee are the parents of a daughter, Mrs. Joseph R., Kathy, Duda.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Ted and Vee Stuban on this very special occasion. Not only has this remarkable couple contributed greatly to the quality of life in their community, but they have also been an inspiration to their peers and to future generations as they illustrated, through their actions as well as their words, how to live lives focused on community service to others as a means of deriving personal happiness and contentment.

JARED C. MONTI: AMERICAN HERO

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, the hardest part of our job is attending the funerals of those young men and women who have given their lives in the service of our country. Having voted to send American military forces into war in Afghanistan, I was profoundly moved—and troubled—when I attend the funeral of Sergeant Jared C. Monti of Raynham, Massachusetts, who lost his life in a brave effort to save a comrade in that country. These occasions are for us an important reminder that voting to send people to war is a last resort done only after the most thorough and thoughtful consideration, and

only when no alternative is consistent with our security.

But Madam Speaker, to talk about the difficulty of our jobs in the context of the death in battle of this brave young man is an example of grave disproportion. For me, this was a sad day. For the family of Jared Monti, it was part of a period of deep and enduring sadness, and of course with Sergeant Monti himself it was the ultimate tragedy—a promising young life lost.

Madam Speaker, in the Boston Globe for Sunday, September 6, Bryan Bender of the Globe staff wrote a moving, eloquent article about Sergeant Monti, describing the battle in which he was killed as he with no regard for his own safety tried to save a wounded comrade. Next week I will be at the White House when Sergeant Monti’s family receives the Medal of Honor that was posthumously awarded to him. Madam Speaker, as a tribute to an extraordinary young man, whose dedication to his comrades was unlimited, and as a reminder of what war really means to those who must fight it, I ask that Mr. Bender’s excellent, sad article be printed here.

[From the Boston Globe, Sept. 6, 2009]

HE COULD NOT LEAVE A COMRADE BEHIND

(By Bryan Bender)

The sound of feet shuffling in the woods, high on a ridge in remote Afghanistan, was the only warning that Sergeant Jared C. Monti and the 15 men under his command were about to be attacked. Before they could even react, they were bombarded with rocket-propelled grenades and machine-gun fire.

The ambush by mountain tribesmen allied with the Taliban came so suddenly and with such ferocity that some members of Monti’s unit “had their weapons literally shot out of their hands,” according to an Army report.

Monti, a 30-year-old staff sergeant from Raynham, shouted orders and radioed for support as he found cover behind some large rocks. An officer a few miles away asked whether he could pinpoint the enemy’s position.

“Sir, I can’t give you a better read or I’m gonna eat an RPG,” Monti replied.

But later, when one of his men was wounded and lying in the open, Monti braved intense fire to try to rescue him—not once, but three times. It cost him his life.

Three years later, after an Army review of Monti’s actions that day, President Obama will award him the Medal of Honor, the highest recognition for valor in the US military. When Monti’s parents, Paul and Janet, accept the award in a White House ceremony on Sept. 17, it will be only the sixth time the Medal of Honor has been awarded since Sept. 11, 2001, and the first time someone from Massachusetts has earned it since the Vietnam War.

Monti’s story reveals not just the courageous actions of a 12-year Army veteran. It also illustrates the extreme conditions of combat in Afghanistan, where increasing numbers of US forces are dying, and the sheer chaos of the war.

Everything went wrong for Monti and his patrol. The unit was left on that narrow ridge longer than intended, exposing it to a much larger enemy. And while Monti’s display of “extreme personal courage and extraordinary self-sacrifice,” as the Army described it, helped turn the tide, disaster struck again when the soldier Monti tried to save was killed in a freak accident while being airlifted out. Including Monti, four soldiers died.

“True valor is not defined so much by results,” an Army general wrote in recommending Monti for the medal, “as it is by

the depth of conviction that inspires its expression. On rare occasions, the actions of men are so extraordinary that the nobility rests, not in their outcome, but in the courage of their undertaking."

"HE WAS VERY HUMBLE"

When Charlie Witkus learned his buddy Jared had been killed, he organized a "Viking" funeral.

After his burial at the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, Monti's friends collected cards, letters, and other mementos of him and set them ablaze on a makeshift pyre floating on a Taunton pond.

It was a fitting tribute, Witkus felt, for a guy who once organized a "survival style" canoe trip down the Taunton River, with no food or water.

"I was devastated," said Witkus, who last spoke with his friend about three weeks before he died. "He was the most stand-up guy I ever knew."

Monti was born in Abington and grew up in Raynham, 35 miles south of Boston, the son of a schoolteacher and a nurse.

Stories of his generous spirit abound: As a youngster he made lunches for his brother and sister to help his mom get to nursing school on time. During his high school years, he once cut down a spruce tree in their yard to give to a single mother who could not afford a Christmas tree for her kids. He even collected enough money for gifts.

But he rarely took credit for his deeds, relatives and friends said. Only after he died did his father, Paul, find a 3-foot tall trophy Jared won in a weight-lifting championship.

"That is the way he was," said Paul Monti. "He was very humble. He believed in doing things for other people."

To honor his son's memory, Paul Monti has established an annual scholarship fund for a Raynham senior headed to college.

He also finds comfort driving Jared's pickup, still covered with stickers from his beloved 10th Mountain Division.

Jared set his sights on the military early, inspired by an uncle in the Navy. He joined the Massachusetts National Guard's delayed entry program in 11th grade at Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School, attending weekend drills at the recruiting station in Taunton until he graduated.

"I wanted to be that same person," he later wrote of how the image of his uncle's crisp uniform captured his imagination.

A STEADY HAND

Monti was not a perfect soldier, but he proved that he could earn the trust and respect of those he led; he called them his "boys," and some of them called him "grandpa."

When he left for basic training in Missouri in 1993, barely 18 years old, he had never been out of Massachusetts. Army life was tough, he recalled, but he adjusted quickly and eventually decided to enlist full time. He was disappointed other soldiers didn't take it as seriously—a feeling he later expressed in his own words in a journal his family found on his computer after his death.

"I wanted to fight for my country at a time when everybody else was smoking weed and or just there to earn a couple of bucks toward college," he wrote.

He got into several bar fights, including with one of his sergeants in Kansas who ridiculed him by calling him "Rambo," and he did 14 days of hard labor for violating a weekend pass when he was stationed in South Korea in the 1990s. "I drank till there was no tomorrow," he wrote of the incident.

But as he rose through the enlisted ranks, his superiors quickly saw he had a steadiness and maturity that others didn't. Monti was one of the first enlisted soldiers in the 82nd Airborne Division selected to be trained to

call in air strikes on enemy positions, an enormous responsibility that brought the risk of civilian casualties.

"If a lot of guys were just sitting around, he was always willing to teach us something," recalled Sergeant Clifford Baird, who first met Monti, with his ever-present chewing tobacco tucked under his lip, when they were posted together at Fort Drum, N.Y. "He'd sit there and give us a class. He was very respected around here."

Monti also had a special bond with junior soldiers. While soldiers are required to shave every day, even in the field, Monti would let his beard grow and shave only before returning to base. The new guys loved that he would bend the rules like that.

And he was as loyal to his men as they were to him. He once gave up his leave to fill in for a soldier who hadn't seen his family in two years. When stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, he gave his new kitchen set to a soldier whose kids were eating on the floor. When his girlfriend, Sherri, sent care packages with his favorite cigars, he would promptly hand them out to his unit.

"One of the things that sets him apart was that he had a great deal of compassion," said Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Abbott, the operations officer for Monti's squadron in Afghanistan.

A HEAVY BURDEN

He earned a chestful of medals, but Monti agonized over all the killing war required, his family said. He returned from Afghanistan in 2003 with a Bronze Star for valor, but his mother recalled: "He didn't like talking about it. Most of the time he just liked to be left alone. He'd say, 'Don't tell anybody I am here.' He wasn't proud of it."

When he was pressed about how he earned it, Janet Monti said, he'd finally blurt out something like, "I had to kill someone's brother, or father, or sister."

Monti described his private anxieties in an undated entry, titled "My story," that his father recently found on his personal computer. "We are not fighting in World War II," Monti wrote. "We don't have the ability to justify any means to our end. Wars of today are not black and white."

Monti's job to call in air strikes "weighed heavily on him," said Jon Krakauer, a mountaineer and author of the best-seller "Into Thin Air" who, while working on a book, spent nearly five weeks with Monti's unit.

"It was always this tough call," Krakauer said. "He was conservative about it."

Krakauer recalled a patrol with Monti when a Toyota Corolla came barreling down the road. Fearing the driver was a suicide bomber, a soldier prepared to open fire. But Monti stopped him just in time. It turned out the driver was just a local in a hurry.

"A split-second later it would have been really bad," said Krakauer.

It was Monti's humanity that also helped him get along especially well with the locals, Krakauer said. He was called on frequently to negotiate, through an interpreter, with tribal leaders, who liked him so much they gave him a Muslim name.

"He was only 30-years-old but he was an old soul," said Krakauer.

"WORST-CASE SCENARIO"

The nearly 300 members of the 3rd Squadron, 71st Calvary Regiment had a grueling mission; they lost an average of 15 to 20 percent of their body weight, pulling 16- to 18-hour days, seven days a week, often in 100-plus degree temperatures.

In one of the longest maneuvers in recent US military history, they trekked by Humvee along dirt paths and steep mountain passes from a US base in southern Afghanistan to remote Nuristan province in the northeast, about the distance between New York and Washington, D.C.

"We moved into unknown terrain," recalled Abbott, the squadron's operations officer, noting even the Soviet army did not venture there during its brutal occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

"Sergeant Monti went out with reconnaissance teams to learn the people," he said, "to learn the populace, and to gain knowledge of a terrain that nobody had ever been employed in before."

Monti's last mission was to scout Taliban positions near infiltration routes from neighboring Pakistan—mainly goat trails thousands of feet up—and gather targeting data for a larger offensive, dubbed Operation Gowardesh after the nearby town, to take place a few days later.

On the evening of June 17, 2006, the patrol was ferried by helicopter a few miles from the town. To avoid detection and the sweltering heat, they moved mostly in the dark, using night-vision equipment to navigate the rugged terrain.

On June 20, they stopped on a narrow ridge overlooking the Gremen Valley, with steep inclines on both sides, that commanded a view of several enemy positions.

The 16 soldiers set up their observation post on a sloping patch of ground, about 165 feet long and 65 feet wide, with a tree line at the top end and a few large rocks, a portion of an old stone wall, and a few small trees at the lower end, according to the Army's recreation of the battle.

The next morning Monti was informed that the larger US assault would be delayed for three days—the helicopters and troops were needed elsewhere—leaving them low on food and water. The plan had been to use the cover of the US assault to resupply them by helicopter; now the resupply could expose them to the enemy.

At about 1:30 p.m., Monti took most of the patrol to meet a resupply helicopter about 500 feet away. A small group stayed behind. They soon spotted a local man down in the valley using military-style binoculars to look up toward their position before he picked up a satchel and disappeared.

"It was the worst-case scenario," said former Army Captain Ross A. Berkoff, the squadron's intelligence officer, who was monitoring the situation from about 6 miles away. "We stirred up a hornet's nest."

WELL-COORDINATED ATTACK

When the enemy fighters opened fire on the patrol just before nightfall, the two soldiers nearest the woods bolted down the slope to seek cover behind rocks.

Sergeant Patrick Lybert, 28, of Ladysmith, Wis., was crouched behind a low stone wall, in the best position to fire back. The others could barely raise their heads to aim.

The patrol faced between 60 and 80 fighters, most of them members of Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, a local tribal militia aligned with the Taliban, according to Berkoff.

Monti calmly reported over the radio that the patrol was at risk of being overrun, according to officers in the operations center a few miles away. As shoulder-launched RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) skipped off the rocks right above his head, he began plotting grid coordinates for another group of soldiers on another ridge to fire mortar shells at the advancing fighters.

Within minutes, Lybert, who had been holding off the enemy from behind the stone wall, slumped forward, blood coming out of his ears.

The tribal militia split into two groups to try to encircle the patrol. Soldiers who still had weapons passed them back and forth to the one in the best position to fire back.

The enemy "had one goal in mind," said Abbott, who was monitoring the battle from the command post. "To overrun and kill everybody in Monti's squad."

Monti saw a group of fighters closing in fast. When they came within 30 feet, he threw a grenade in their path. He then took a head count. Private Brian Bradbury, who had been near the tree line, was missing.

A DARK ENDING

Monti called out for him over the din of the battle. He called again. Finally, the 22-year-old from Lowville, N.Y., replied weakly that he was badly injured and couldn't move. He was lying about 30 feet away, where Monti couldn't see him, but directly in the enemy's sights.

Monti told Bradbury he was coming to get him. He handed off his radio, tightened the chin strap of his helmet, and ran out into the open. The woods, about 100 feet past Bradbury, immediately erupted with more gunfire and RPGs.

Moving low and fast, according to the testimony of his fellow soldiers, Monti got within less than a dozen feet of Bradbury before he had to dive behind the low stone wall where Lybert lay dead. After a brief pause, he made another attempt but the shooting was even more intense. He scrambled back behind the low wall.

He prepared to make another attempt to save Bradbury, this time asking some of his men to cover him with more gun fire trained on the woods. But as he lunged toward Bradbury the third time, an RPG exploded in his path.

The blast blew off his legs, but Monti struggled to get back to the stone wall, his men calling out in encouragement. With his last breaths, his soldiers later reported, Monti said he made his peace with God. And right before he died he asked them to tell his family he loved them.

As darkness fell over the valley, the mortar rounds Monti called for began to hit the enemy positions. US aircraft also dropped several bombs into the woods.

"Monti's selfless act of courage rallied the patrol to defeat the enemy attack," the Army concluded.

It was dark by the time Bradbury was pulled to safety and treated by the medic. A helicopter arrived but couldn't land because of the rough terrain. Staff Sergeant Heath Craig, 28, a medic from Severn, Md., was lowered to Bradbury, who had a team of doctors waiting to treat him back at the base. But as they were being hoisted up, the winch broke. Both fell to their deaths.

Berkoff remembered standing in front of the field hospital and thinking, "Could anything possibly go right today?"

Monti was posthumously promoted to sergeant first class.

As she prepares to accept the Medal of Honor from the president for her son's sacrifice, Janet Monti says she can't help but wonder what Jared would think about it. "He would say this medal isn't just for me. He would want to share this medal with everybody who died that day."

HONORING RICHARD KUCKENBECKER

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Richard Kuckenbecker upon being named by the Madera District Chamber of Commerce as a 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award Honoree. Mr. Kuckenbecker will be recognized on Wednesday, August 26, 2009 at the Fifth An-

nual Lifetime Achievement Awards and Installation Dinner.

Richard Kuckenbecker was born in Sanger, California. At the age of five, he began to spend time in his father's business, Kuckenbecker Tractor Company. As a young man, he would assist by sweeping the floors, cleaning the lavatory and completing tasks that needed to be done around the shop. Upon graduating from high school, Mr. Kuckenbecker attended Fresno State, where he played baseball. Just shy of completing his Bachelor's Degree, he left school and returned to the family business. Mr. Kuckenbecker was twenty-one years old when he took over Kuckenbecker Tractor Company, he was the youngest tractor dealer in the nation. During college he met Lynn Bashian, and in May 1964 they were married and promptly moved to Madera from Fresno. Kuckenbecker Trucking Company has been in the family for sixty-five years. Since Mr. Kuckenbecker took the reigns the business has changed locations and expanded to include a dealership in Fresno in 1982.

Mr. Kuckenbecker has always been dedicated to his community. He is a founding member and President of the Madera County Ag Boosters, serves on the board of the California State University, Fresno Ag One. He is a member of the Far West Equipment Dealers Association, National Association of Farm Equipment Dealers, Ford Motor Company Dealer Council, Madera Historical Society. Mr. Kuckenbecker served as a judge for the Fresno Bee Excellence in Business award. He has also won the Madera District Fair Blue Ribbon award. For his civic duty, he served on the Madera Planning Commission. For all that he has done for the community, Mr. Kuckenbecker was selected as the first Madera District Chamber of Commerce Agribusiness Person of the Year. He has received the Fresno County Farm Bureau Distinguished Service award and the Fresno Bee Excellence in Business Award for Agriculture.

Mr. Kuckenbecker and his wife Lynn have three children and five grandchildren, with another grandchild on the way. He continues to own and operate Kuckenbecker Trucking Company in Madera and Fresno.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Richard Kuckenbecker upon being honored as the Madera Chamber of Commerce 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Kuckenbecker many years of continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHASE SIMMONS

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to thank a member of my staff who is leaving us to move back to "our" home state of Texas. After earning a degree in Psychology from Texas A&M University, Chase Simmons came to Washington and spent the last 4 years here on Capitol Hill. He served as a Senior Staff Assistant for the Committee on Energy and Commerce and joined the Committee on Science and Technology in 2007 as

our Committee Clerk. Chase first came to Capitol Hill in 2005 serving as an intern in my office.

Chase has worked hard to help me serve the people of the 4th District of Texas and assisted the Members of Congress serving on the Committee on Science and Technology.

I thank him for his efforts and wish him well in the future.

AGAINST THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE OTEEN POST OFFICE IN ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, as the son of a rural postal carrier, I was raised with the United States Postal Service as an integral part of my community, my family, and my life. I grew up understanding the vital role a rural post office can play in terms of jobs, small businesses, and local economies. Today the Postal Service is in jeopardy. With increasing reliance on electronic communication, fewer and fewer citizens are using standard mail to send and receive correspondence.

To counter the reduction in usage and their enormous deficit, the United States Postal Service has been forced to implement difficult cost-cutting measures. Among these measures is the consolidation of numerous post office branches throughout the country. In my postal region alone, the Mid-Carolinas District, 6 of the 80 post offices that service the area have been closed in the past year. The Post Master General estimates that over the next year, approximately 300 post offices nationwide will be forced to shut their doors. This will result in job losses and reduced community access to postal services for individuals and businesses.

I am particularly concerned about the Oteen Post Office in Asheville, which is currently under review for consolidation in my district. There has been tremendous local resistance to the possible closing of the Oteen Post Office, especially because the facility is located directly across the street from the Charles George Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The VA hospital is reliant on the Oteen Post Office to meet the correspondence needs of its patients, as well as the critical administrative needs of the medical center staff. For example, the Oteen facility provides fee-based presorting services to 18 different departments of the VA hospital and early mail pick-up to expedite the delivery of vital medical paperwork. Should the facility close, employees of the VA hospital and citizens in the area would have to drive almost 14 miles roundtrip to access the nearest retail postal facility.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that many elderly and rural citizens, poor people and people without permanent residences rely solely on post office boxes to receive their mail. By closing the Oteen Post Office, as with many post offices around the country, we are complicating access to these post office boxes and putting further strain on our veterans, senior citizens, and those with limited means.

Consolidation of post offices is not the best solution to this crisis. In many instances, it is detrimental. Rather than shutting post office