

fielded that day calmed my families. They were getting some bad news, but from a familiar voice . . . someone that they know and have spoken to . . . this does not necessarily make the news better but certainly more palatable.”

Many of the families of the sailors and marines aboard the USS New Orleans responded to the ship’s ombudsman about the valuable service he provided. One family member wrote, “Thank you so much for the updates. Having you as a connection to information to our loved ones has been critical and really important. My parents and I are incredibly grateful as we have been very worried about my sister.”

Another family member wrote and said, “Thank you. You have been helpful through this difficult time. I appreciate the phone call and the reassurance that everything was okay.”

Thanks to the work of this ombudsman, families at home had the right information at the right time. This is the invaluable role family readiness volunteers play and will continue to play as long as our military is at war.

Before I yield back, Mr. Speaker, I would like to strongly encourage all of my colleagues who have not yet had the opportunity to meet with these men and women to reach out to the family readiness volunteers and ombudsmen in their districts or States. I hope that they will do that. I also hope my colleagues will help me recognize the important role readiness volunteers and ombudsmen play in helping military families and honor their enormous contribution to our Nation’s defense by supporting this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to rise today in support of resolution 408 and thank the author, Representative DAVIS of California, for putting this resolution forward.

This resolution commends a large group of selfless and dedicated people, the vast majority of whom are volunteers, in organizations that provide support to the families and children of deployed members of the Armed Forces as well as to the servicemembers themselves.

Because these organizations go by various names and work quietly and effectively behind the scenes, it’s important today that we acknowledge them explicitly. They are the Army Readiness Volunteers, the Navy Ombudsmen, the Coast Guard Ombudsmen, the Air Force Key Spouse Volunteers, and the Marine Corps Key Volunteers.

Our military families face extraordinary demands, stresses and challenges related to the service of their loved ones. To ease these burdens, family readiness groups unselfishly step in to connect military families with the community and with local military installations.

Among the approximately 2.9 million family members of those serving in the Active and Reserve components, the

needs are many, and supporting these needs is a matter of military readiness. The support challenge is made more complex because virtually all the families of National Guard troops and Reservists reside in civilian communities spread across this Nation. Yet the family readiness groups have taken on that challenge to provide help and support, particularly during extended periods of mobilization and deployment.

Our military forces could not have sustained the stress related to repeated deployments and combat without the assistance, dedication, and outstanding work over the years of these family readiness groups. Today’s resolution is a fitting way to celebrate and thank such dedicated volunteers.

Again, I want to thank Representative DAVIS for putting this resolution forward, and I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 408.

I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 408.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE 56TH BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 754) honoring the citizen-soldiers of the National Guard of the State of Pennsylvania, including the 56th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker) of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard on its return to the United States from deployment in Iraq.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 754

Whereas the members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard of the State of Pennsylvania reside throughout the State and come from various communities, backgrounds, and professions;

Whereas units and members of the Pennsylvania National Guard have been deployed, and are continuously being deployed, in support of United States military operations at home and overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and dozens of other countries;

Whereas one such unit, the 56th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker) of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, is composed of approximately 4,000 citizen-soldiers from throughout the State of Pennsylvania;

Whereas the 56th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker), following a mobilization and de-

ployment to Kosovo in 2003, was placed on Federal active duty for a second overseas mobilization on September 19, 2008, and deployed to Iraq on January 15, 2009;

Whereas during the deployment of the 56th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker) in Iraq, the brigade was primarily engaged in convoy security, force protection, provincial reconstruction, and base operations missions; and

Whereas the 56th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker) returned to the United States and demobilized in September 2009, upon completion of one year of service in support of military operations in Iraq; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its gratitude to the members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard of the State of Pennsylvania and their families for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States;

(2) commends the members of the 56th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker) of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard on the completion of their most-recent deployment to Iraq; and

(3) recognizes the achievements of the members of the 56th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker), and all other formerly and presently deployed Pennsylvania Army National Guard and Air National Guard units and members, for their exemplary service.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have legislative 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN).

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding me the time.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 754, Mr. Speaker, to honor and say “thank you” to the members of the Pennsylvania National Guard from the 56th Stryker Brigade on their return home from Iraq and “a job well done.” And I want to commend and thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and all the members of the Pennsylvania delegation for being co-sponsors of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, during the deployment of the 56th Stryker Brigade, I had the opportunity to travel to Mississippi and Louisiana with Congressman SHUSTER, Congressman GERLACH and Congressman DENT, and then we had the opportunity, along with Congresswoman DAHLKEMPER, to travel over to Iraq to see our citizen-soldiers in action. And I can tell you that we, as members of the Pennsylvania delegation and the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, are very proud of our

citizen-soldiers' performance, as I believe the entire country is.

They have returned home with the job well done. As a matter of fact, when we had the opportunity to be in Iraq and meet with General Odierno and General Jacoby and talk about the performance of General Wright's soldiers under the command of Colonel Ferraro, they expressed how proud they were as commanders in theater for the job that was well done.

The Pennsylvania National Guard is the only National Guard who hosts a Stryker Brigade. And, Mr. Speaker, that did not happen by a lottery held at the Pentagon. It happened because of the strong professionalism, the training and the work that this brigade has done previously in their deployment. They are the second-most deployed National Guard unit of any in the country. And the reason is because of the job that they do when they are asked and they are called upon to serve our country and to serve the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

During their deployment, they served with distinction. The awards that were granted to the 56th Stryker Brigade include four Bronze Star Medal for Valor, 10 Army Commendation Medal for Valor, 33 Purple Hearts, and unfortunately they had two tragic deaths during their deployment, Staff Sergeant Mark Baum and Specialist Chad Edmundson. And certainly our prayers and thoughts go out to the families of those two who made the supreme sacrifice during their deployment.

Again, as a member of the Pennsylvania delegation speaking in concert with the other members of the delegation and on behalf of this entire body, I want to congratulate and commend the 56th Stryker Brigade on their performance.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield such time as he might consume to my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise today as an original cosponsor and strong supporter of House Resolution 754, and I would like to thank Congressman TIM HOLDEN of Schuylkill County for introducing this resolution.

The United States National Guard is the oldest component of our Armed Forces, dating back to pre-Revolutionary War times. Over the past 8 years, we have witnessed thousands of Guard members answer the call as they are asked to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Approximately 4,000 members of the Pennsylvania Guard were deployed to Iraq last fall, the largest deployment of the Pennsylvania National Guard since the Korean war. Prior to the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team's deployment to Iraq, I, along with some of my colleagues, TIM HOLDEN, BILL SHUSTER and JIM GERLACH, visited the Pennsylvania Stryker Brigade in Mississippi and Louisiana at Camp Shelby and Fort Polk as they prepared for their mobilization overseas.

In June 2009, I traveled to Iraq to meet with the Pennsylvania National Guard 56th Stryker Brigade and other Pennsylvania troops, accompanied by many Members who are here in the Chamber today, including Representative DAHLKEMPER.

During my visit to Iraq, I saw a significant improvement in the security conditions on the ground. And the fact that we were able to safely drive through the bustling streets of Baghdad was an encouraging and welcome development. I know, without a doubt, it is the sacrifice, perseverance and bravery of these young men and women that enabled such progress.

I am pleased that just 1 year later, the 56th Stryker Brigade is returning home. As of late September, most of the brigade has returned home. I am honored to be standing here today to pay tribute to these heroes. Our military families demonstrate tremendous bravery as they watch their loved ones go overseas to fight in harm's way for the freedoms we experience every day in this great Nation. We say "thank you" to the entire Pennsylvania National Guard for protecting the families and communities of our great Commonwealth and standing at the ready to defend our homeland.

I urge Members to support House Resolution 754.

Mr. SHUSTER. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Mrs. DAHLKEMPER).

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for recognizing me.

I want to rise today in proud and enthusiastic support to House Resolution 754, honoring the citizen-soldiers of the Pennsylvania National Guard, including the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, known as the Stryker Brigade of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, on its return to the United States from deployment in Iraq.

On January 15, 2009, the 56th Stryker Brigade was deployed to Taji, Iraq. Just last month, this extraordinary combat team, 4,000 strong, returned to their families in Pennsylvania after an incredibly successful deployment. They were welcomed home with proud, open arms throughout our State.

In June, I was grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to visit Iraq and to meet personally with members of the 56th Stryker Brigade from the Third District of Pennsylvania. These brave Pennsylvanians embodied the fire of patriotism and the humility of sacrifice. I was in awe of their accomplishments and the high standard of excellence by which they executed their mission.

Just yesterday, I was on a plane ride back to Washington sitting next to a general whose son's division from Fort Hood took the place of our 56th Stryker Brigade from Pennsylvania, and he mentioned to me how honored

his son was to take over from such an excellent group of soldiers. It was certainly a joy and an honor to greet our troops as they returned to Cambridge Springs just last month, the division out of my district.

Never had I felt such intense pride in our country as I did when meeting these extraordinary soldiers and witnessing the sacrifices they have made so that we may live in freedom and prosperity.

Our Pennsylvania National Guard has answered the call to defend these United States of America and ensure the security of our people and our way of life. Today, we honor these Guardsmen and thank them for their service. In doing so, we also renew our pledge to provide our men and women in uniform with the highest quality of care and benefits they have earned. In doing so, we show our intense gratitude and enormous respect for our soldiers who so rightly deserve it.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my unwavering support of House Resolution 754. I thank Congressman HOLDEN for bringing this resolution forward. Our Pennsylvania National Guard and our 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team certainly deserve this recognition. May God bless our troops.

Mr. SHUSTER. At this time, I would like to yield such time as he might consume to my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, my colleague from Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise today in support of House Resolution 754, a resolution commending the members of the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard on the completion of their most recent deployment to Iraq. And I thank all of my Pennsylvania colleagues for their support of this resolution.

The Stryker is a combat vehicle similar to a tank but operates on wheels rather than on tracks. And the vehicle is essential to protecting our soldiers' lives and is vital to the Army's Interim Brigade Combat Teams. The 56th Stryker is a special unit not just to my home State, but my home. My son, Logan, served with the 56th Stryker Brigade before changing to Active Duty, and a number of my former Eagle Scouts from my scout troop serve currently with the 56th Brigade and serve proudly in Iraq.

The 56th Stryker Brigade was deployed in February of this year to Iraq and returned home this past summer. And while in Iraq, they captured some 80 hidden supply dumps, which caused severe shortages and disrupted enemy operations. Their service in Iraq and Afghanistan has not gone unnoticed and has saved many lives.

Upon arriving home last month, these heroes were finally embraced by their families, their friends and their loved ones. From Venango County to Lycoming County, many constituents from my district bravely and honorably served on this brigade. We say

“thank you, welcome home,” and “God bless you” for your selfless service. Your actions will never be forgotten.

I urge my colleagues to support our troops and vote in the affirmative for the underlying resolution.

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Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to rise today in support of House Resolution 754, which honors the citizen-soldiers of the Pennsylvania National Guard, including the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, on its return to the United States from a deployment in Iraq. I am proud to have authored this resolution with my colleague, Mr. HOLDEN from Pennsylvania. It is an honor, as I said, to speak in favor of this resolution and to have the support and cosponsorship of the entire Pennsylvania delegation.

The men and women being honored today are not only brave soldiers; they are also our neighbors, friends, and relatives. Their mission in Iraq was vital to our national security, and they served with honor and distinction.

In November of last year, I was joined by my colleagues, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. GERLACH and Mr. DENT, to visit the members of the 56th Stryker Brigade when they were training at Camp Shelby in Mississippi and at Fort Polk in Louisiana in preparation for their deployment.

In June of this year, Mr. HOLDEN and I, along with Mr. DENT and Mrs. DAHLKEMPER, visited Iraq to meet with our deployed troops from Pennsylvania to thank them for their service. We also met with troops at Camp Liberty outside of Baghdad, and in Taji. While there, we also were able to meet with General Odierno, the commander of the Multinational Force in Iraq. And General Odierno spoke in glowing terms of the Pennsylvania Guard and told us that our soldiers are doing an outstanding job bringing security to Iraq.

I also had the opportunity to meet with many of my constituents, and there were dozens and dozens. And they truly are citizen-soldiers. I just want to highlight three of them. Lieutenant Colonel Sam Hayes, who is a native of Tyrone, Pennsylvania. His father also happened to be the former Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary. Sergeant Buchanan, a resident of Altoona, Pennsylvania, and is employed by McAleers Plumbing and Heating. He is my plumber and spent time in my basement trying to fix leaky plumbing. So it is good to have Sergeant Buchanan home. And, finally, Sergeant Gibbons, another neighbor, a friend. His son plays on the Hollysburgh High School soccer team with my son. In fact, I will be on the sidelines tonight talking to Sergeant Gibbons.

I also wanted to thank and to remember Chad Edmundson, one of my constituents who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Our thoughts and our prayers

continue to go out to his family and, again, to thank him for his service and his sacrifice to this Nation.

The text of this resolution speaks for itself. It is my pleasure to express our gratitude and commend our soldiers on their most recent deployment and recognize their achievements. I hope to be participating on November 8 in a major parade in Tyrone, Pennsylvania, welcoming home our soldiers.

I would also like to thank my staff for their work on this resolution, in particular my Army fellow, Lieutenant Colonel Eric Estep, for his great work and late hours in putting this together.

I urge all Members of the House to support this important resolution.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 754, which honors the Pennsylvania National Guard's 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team on its return to the United States from its deployment to Iraq.

The 56th Stryker Brigade is comprised of more than 4,000 citizen soldiers from across the Commonwealth.

The 56th served North of Baghdad and conducted more than 800 operations with the Iraqi Security Forces.

These soldiers served their country with great distinction, and it is my great honor to represent them in Congress.

I would also ask the House of Representatives to extend its deepest condolences to the families of two members of the 56th who gave the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Mark C. Baum, 32, of Quakertown, was killed when hit by small arms fire on Feb. 21 and

Specialist Chad A. Edmondson, 20, of Williamsburg, was killed by an improvised bomb explosion on May 27.

Passing this resolution today honors the memory of these brave soldiers of the 56th Stryker Brigade and marks the significant contribution that this unit has made to defend our Nation.

Mr. SHUSTER. With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 754.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING 100 YEARS OF MILITARY AVIATION

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 445) recognizing 100 years of military aviation and expressing continued support for military aviators of the United States Armed Forces, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 445

Whereas Orville and Wilbur Wright secured the patent for their powered airplane in 1906, affording them the opportunity to compete for contracts with the Army;

Whereas the United States Army Signal Corps made its first purchase of an airplane, the Wright Military Flyer, in 1909 at a cost of \$30,000;

Whereas the Wright Military Flyer carried a passenger over a distance of 125 miles;

Whereas today's military aircraft can travel around the world without landing;

Whereas the importance of military aviation and air superiority in battle was first demonstrated in World War I;

Whereas, during World War II, United States Naval aviation was decisive in reversing the Japanese advance and winning the war in the Pacific;

Whereas United States Army Air Corps played a crucial role in executing strategic bombing campaigns in both the European and Pacific theaters;

Whereas the National Security Act of 1947 established the United States Army Air Corps as a separate military branch, the United States Air Force;

Whereas the Vietnam War brought about new, more modern fighter jets and bombers, including the F-105 Thunderchief and the F-4 Phantom;

Whereas military aviators continue to provide invaluable offensive, defensive, logistical, and intelligence support to the Armed Forces;

Whereas military aviators have been on the front lines of combat and humanitarian missions in Iraq and Afghanistan;

Whereas the increase in technology over the last century has made military aircraft an essential component in the safety and security of the United States homeland; and

Whereas the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution will commemorate the centennial of military aviation with programs and exhibits throughout 2009: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes 100 years of military aviation and expresses its continued support for military aviators of the United States Armed Forces.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I rise to support House Resolution 445 and thank my colleague from Texas (Mr. OLSON) for introducing this measure.

This resolution recognizes 100 years of military aviation and expresses continued support for military aviators of the United States Armed Forces.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am privileged to