

and garnering interest in law enforcement while serving and protecting the entire Mauldin community.

TRIBUTE TO DONALD ROTCH,
LONGTIME PRINCIPAL AND
COACH AT T.R. MILLER HIGH
SCHOOL, BREWTON, ALABAMA

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 16, 2010

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I join the people of Brewton and Escambia County, Alabama in mourning the loss of a beloved community leader whose life was suddenly taken during a tragic auto accident on August 11, 2010.

Donald Wayne Rotch, or "Coach Rotch," as he was affectionately known to his former players and students and many in Brewton, was an institution in Escambia County. Originally from Lake Charles, Louisiana, Coach Rotch came to Brewton in 1974 from Jackson, Alabama, joining the T.R. Miller High School coaching staff.

Coach Rotch was a fixture in Tiger athletics for the better part of 18 years as the football offensive line coach while also coaching the baseball team.

T.R. Miller is a sports powerhouse in South Alabama and Coach Rotch was a major force behind the Tiger's success. As a coach, he helped the team attain two championships in 1984 and 1991, before transitioning to the role of high school administrator in 1992. He served as assistant principal and then principal at T.R. Miller for the next 20 years.

As a school administrator, Donnie Rotch also witnessed the Tigers achieve football championships in 1994, 2000 and 2002. Just one month after his death, his beloved Tiger football program scored their 600th victory—a milestone not matched by any other Alabama high school football team.

Coach Rotch was tragically taken from his family and his students in August when his vehicle was struck by another during a police chase. Ironically, the person driving the vehicle which took Rotch's life was a former T.R. Miller student. The police officer who was pursuing the other vehicle once played baseball under Coach Rotch. In a very real sense in this wonderful, small South Alabama town, this accident was a tragedy in every imaginable way.

Coach Rotch was the friendly face who greeted T.R. Miller students each morning as they arrived at school and he was the steady hand that guided his school through many decades of excellence—urging everyone from students, teachers and parents to "do their best."

It has been reported that Coach Rotch was planning to retire from his leadership post at T.R. Miller in the coming year. His untimely passing has left T.R. Miller and all of Brewton with deep and profound sadness. There was no bigger believer in his students and no bigger role model to his school than Coach Donnie Rotch.

Madam Speaker, I offer my heartfelt condolences to the family of Coach Rotch and to the people of Brewton and Escambia County who were all influenced by his remarkable pres-

ence. Our prayers especially go out to his wonderful wife, Jane; his daughter, Jayme; his son, Richard; his mother, Jean Rotch Bonneau; his three brothers, Greg, Ray and David; two sisters, Kathy and Connie, and other family. You are all in our prayers.

CONGRATULATING GREGORY
APPLEGATE

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 16, 2010

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gregory Applegate on his retirement from his position as city administrator of Sonora, California, where he has served since 1990. His work and service has made a permanent mark on the community and he will be missed.

Greg has been married to his wife, Deborah, for 31 years, and they have 2 children, Caleb and Cassie. Prior to his service as city administrator in Sonora, Greg worked for the city of Dos Palos and the city of Merced in his successful career in public administration. Greg was involved in many local and federal associations such as the Tuolumne County Economic Development Board, the Historic Downtown Chamber of Commerce, the League of California Cities, the California Redevelopment Association, and the Central San Joaquin Valley Risk Management, where he was past president.

Aside from industry and municipal organizations, Greg spends much of his time and energy serving the community through school initiatives, measures to improve children's health, Rotary Club, and mentoring youth at his church. Greg was involved in the Tuolumne County Healthy Children's Project as well as served on the Summerville High School Bond Committee.

You don't have to walk far through the streets of Sonora to see for yourself the hard work and tireless effort that Greg has put into the city. He has played a pivotal role in the following projects: the Sonora Opera Hall, creating the Sonora Redevelopment Agency, the Rother's Corner Fire Museum, the new fire station, the renovations of City Hall, the Mono Way Pedestrian Facility, the Sonora Crossroads Project, among countless other valuable projects.

Greg has been awarded a number of accolades throughout his time as a city administrator. These include the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Government Award, which he received in both 1991 and 2006, the Tuolumne County "Top Hand" award in 2002, and was named President of the city managers section of the League of California Cities, Central Division. He was also President of the Central San Joaquin Valley Risk Management Authority from 2004–2006.

After a long and full career of helping communities by developing and managing cities in the Central Valley, Greg is leaving the world of city administration, but his legacy will forever stay with the city of Sonora through the continuation and development of projects he has worked on and implemented through his 30-plus years of service. I rise today to thank Greg Applegate for his hard work and congratulate him on his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MCGOVERN

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 16, 2010

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize John McGovern, a Vietnam War Army Ranger and Studies and Observations Group veteran from Boone County, Iowa, and to express my appreciation for his dedication and commitment to his country.

The Boone News Republican is currently running a series of articles that honors one Boone County veteran every Tuesday from Memorial Day to Veterans Day. John McGovern was recognized on Tuesday, August 31. Below is the article in its entirety:

BOONE COUNTY VETERANS: JOHN MCGOVERN

(By Greg Eckstrom)

John McGovern worries about sounding like he's bragging when he talks about his time in the military.

After all, with a resume of experiences like McGovern's, it's hard to share them without this concern crossing your head.

The man once briefed John Wayne. He's been part of the handful of graduates from some of the most difficult military training in the country. He's seen shrapnel come within inches of hitting him, walked through an ambush by himself and cheated death more than half a dozen times.

And so he recalls these experiences in a quiet, modest voice. He's proud of his time in the military, but quickly dismisses any comments that even tread on being complimentary with a quick statement.

"I've been lucky," he said. "That's all."

Coming from a large military family, McGovern was born in Oceanside, Calif., and raised in several states around the country—Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Alaska—as his father was in the military.

The decision to join the military was made by the young McGovern when he was 16 years old.

"I was ready to get out on my own," he said. "I told [my father] I wanted to join, and he told me he'd sign for me. I took all my tests and everything and when I had my 17th birthday, they flew me out for Fort Carson, Colo."

McGovern originally wanted to enter the infantry, but was given the offer to become an Army Ranger and jumped on the chance.

Once in Florida, McGovern ran into two sergeants—Pierre and Lehw—who took him under their wing.

"I ran patrols with him for six months at night, and then doing my job in the daytime. Finally they said I was ready," he said. "So I put in for Ranger school, passed it, and then they kept me as an instructor. Oh, it was rough. That's actually probably one of the roughest schools other than Special Forces."

Ranger school started with 275, graduated 70, and only 57 had enough points to receive the tab.

After passing Ranger school, the three went to Scuba school, then Airborne school, then Special Forces school.

Around 50 people were enrolled in Special Forces school. After its completion, only McGovern, Lehw and one other person remained.

"I've been lucky," he said. "I would pick out the worst man, and I'd say, 'I'm going to be here longer than him.' And if he failed out, then I picked the next one. The main thing with all these hard schools . . . if you set your mind that you're going to pass it,

you'll pass it. But if you have any doubts, you're going to fail."

After training, McGovern went to the 7th Special Forces group and Lehw, the 5th.

Stationed in Vietnam, at one point, McGovern's unit was having problems with ambushes, so they called up an additional force to help. Among them was Lehw.

"Naturally, I wanted to go out with him, but my team sergeant told me no," McGovern said. "They wanted to keep me on the airfield with the reserve company."

A while later, they got a radio call that the team had walked into an ambush and had one American and a couple Vietnamese wounded. McGovern asked if they wanted him to come out, but they declined, saying they were coming back in.

A couple hours later, they received another radio message that another ambush had hit them, this time with casualties. McGovern asked again if they wanted him, but they declined, and asked him to call in helicopters to transport the dead and wounded.

When the dead and wounded arrived back via helicopter, McGovern helped unload. Reaching up to grab a boot, he pulled and found his comrade, Lehw, was one of the dead. After helping load Lehw into the helicopter, the team sergeant ordered McGovern to round his company up and go escort the team back to camp.

That was during his first tour in Vietnam, which lasted about 13½ months. Upon returning to the U.S., he became an instructor in the Special Forces course before volunteering to go back. This time, he ended up in the Studies and Observations Group, or SOG.

"The main mission for SOG was . . . you take two or three Americans and about three

or four Vietnamese or Montagnards and they'd drop us off in North Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia," he said. "And we'd sneak around out there and try and gather intel or call in air strikes or whatever."

During his second tour, McGovern shared his wife's, Janet McGovern, favorite story from his service.

Shortly before heading home, McGovern was asked if he wanted to run one more mission, which he readily accepted. He was told to gather a team together and that a helicopter would arrive in two hours.

"So I got a bunch of MCO's together and we got out there, and when the helicopters came in, we jumped on and took off," McGovern said. "Well, the target area was clouded over so we couldn't get in, so we had to turn around and come back. They told us to be ready to go the next morning when the helicopters got there."

The next day, when the helicopter arrived, a Major notified McGovern that he was taking over. He was taking out a team that was closer to the target area, so McGovern said, "OK," and stood down.

"That afternoon at 1 o'clock, we got a radio message that they had been shot down and all of them killed," McGovern said.

Following his service, McGovern had a chance to meet up again with many of the men he served with overseas in Las Vegas for an SOA reunion. When asked what it's like to see these guys again, after going through so much with them in the service, McGovern's response is short and to the point.

"Oh God," he laughed. "Great."

For those joining the military, McGovern heartily endorses going through jump school and entering Special Forces . . . based on one condition.

"If possible, put in for jump school and special forces. If you're single," he said. "Married men do it, but we had a 95 percent divorce rate and a 100 percent re-enlistment rate."

McGovern's loyalty to his service, and his country, is unquestionable. Would he do anything differently if he could go back? "No." What's been his favorite part of his military career? "All of it." Do you ever miss it? "Oh yeah."

He's not being evasive in the questions . . . for McGovern, the shortest answer is the most accurate one. And he absolutely means it.

"You have to really experience it to understand it," he said. "Unless you're in combat, the rest of it's just like having a job here in civilian life. You've got your job to do."

Dedication . . . it's what's required for military service, and it's what McGovern has in spades. If he was called up today, Janet McGovern summed up what the response would be.

"If they called him today and said, 'Can you report tomorrow to do something?' he'd be gone," she said. "And I'd have to let him go, because that's who he is. That's just what would happen. That's who he is. He loves his country more than anything."

And that's not bragging . . . for McGovern, just like with his stories, that's just the truth.

I commend John McGovern for his many years of loyalty and service to our great Nation. It is an immense honor to represent him in the United States Congress, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.