

Abe served honorably during World War II as an officer of the United States Army Air Force in the 747th Squadron of the 456th Heavy Bombardment Group, stationed in Stornara, Italy. Abe flew 49 missions before being shot down on his 50th over Germany. The pilot managed to glide the plane into Switzerland, where the crew parachuted and were subsequently interned. Abe escaped into France after 73 days and made his way to American forces in Lyon.

After he was discharged, Abe raised his family in Yonkers, NY. He then moved to Huntington in the 1970s, after which he earned his law degree at the age of 73. He was an active member of the community, including serving as president of the local AARP chapter as well as a founding member and serving as Commander of the Nassau/Suffolk Long Island Chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Abe was the loving husband of the late Bertha Gordon Thompson; devoted companion of Rita DeLuise and her family; adored father of Carole and Steven Roberts, Robert and Rosalie Thompson, and the late Phyllis Gordon; the cherished grandfather of Jennifer and Michael, Adam, Alison and Clark, and Jill and Jim; and the loving great-grandfather of Ned and Grace.

I am so proud that Abe was a member of the 2nd District of New York and I know that he will be missed by the many people whose lives he impacted.

FAREWELL REMARKS

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, in just a few short weeks, my 8th term as Representative for the Fourth Congressional District of Kansas will come to an end, and I want to thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to serve them these past 16 years. It has been a profound honor to represent Kansas in our Nation's Capital and to be a Member of this Institution.

Much has changed since I first walked onto the House floor in January 1995 following the historic Republican Revolution of 1994. We have witnessed the impeachment of a U.S. president, four years of balanced budgets, the end and beginning of a new millennium, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, an ongoing global war against terror, and the collapse of established financial and business institutions world-wide.

Other things have changed very little. We are still fighting against run-away federal deficit spending. The false notion that new government programs will solve our greatest problems continues to plague Washington despite attempts at cutting waste.

Thanks to the Tea Party movement, a new wave of fiscally conservative Representatives will take office in January, and I am hopeful we will see renewed progress in putting Washington on a diet.

One of the privileges of serving Kansas has been to achieve real results for our communities. During my Congressional tenure, we were successful in repealing the Wright amendment to help lower air fares, return millions of tax dollars back to Kansas to help build dozens of important infrastructure

projects, protect the rights of the unborn through the 1998 Tiahrt amendment, secure over \$90 million in funding for the National Institute for Aviation Research at Wichita State University and place a statue of General Dwight D. Eisenhower in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it will remain permanently.

Working with Sen. BROWNBACK and Sen. ROBERTS, we successfully fought back attempts to procure a European refueling tanker and have made the case for purchasing an American tanker made by an American company with American workers. It is my continued hope that the Air Force will make the right decision and select the KC-767 that will employ thousands of skilled engineers and workers in Kansas.

Mr. Speaker, as I reflect on my service in the House, I want to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Vicki, and my children who have supported me and walked with me on this 16-year journey. Serving in Congress is often most difficult on a member's family. We purposefully chose to serve these 16 years together. My wife and children were part of every term. I was blessed to have them with me to roam the marble halls of Congress, meet America's leaders, and get to know the citizens we served. Watching history unfold with my family by my side gave me many memories I will forever cherish.

Throughout my time as a Member of Congress, I have remembered my family is a gift from God and will always be my greatest accomplishment. Their work on numerous projects throughout Kansas has made our state and country a better place to live, and their love and encouragement continue to inspire me. I am so glad to be finishing this chapter of my life with Vicki, Jessica and John by my side, and we would give anything if Luke were here, too.

Many of the difficult tasks here in Congress could not be done without the hard work of staff. I have been blessed with committed staffers who stood with me as I fought for our Kansas values and a limited government.

My staff, past and present, worked tirelessly, not only for me, but for the people of Kansas and for our country.

Robert Noland has been with me since day one. He has been a loyal and faithful friend and has shown tremendous wisdom in managing my district office. I will never forget his years of hard work and dedication to me and to our state.

Jeff Kahrs has been with me since my first term in office, and I am grateful for his friendship, leadership and counsel over the years. His perception and vision have helped me focus on what's important.

Connie Voss has also been with me since my first term in office. Connie and her husband Joe have been a gift from God to Vicki and me throughout the years, and we deeply appreciate their prayer and faithful support.

Amy Claire Brusch has been with me for nearly 11 years and has served with stellar performance providing leadership on numerous legislative initiatives in my Washington office. Her knowledge of how Capital Hill works has helped me navigate complex legislative and political issues.

Linda Arensdorf has been on my official staff for more than 10 years and has been instrumental in helping manage the district office and working to make sure our constituent service projects are carried out with excellence.

Sam Sackett has also served on my staff for more than a decade and has contributed to several legislative initiatives in Washington and has helped me effectively and clearly communicate my message across the state of Kansas.

Melissa James has been responsible for managing my appointments and has done a tremendous job keeping impeccable schedules. Melissa's attention to detail and her dedication to her job have played an important role in making sure I manage my time wisely.

Chuck Knapp has played a critical role advising me on numerous issues related to policies and district matters. I appreciate his friendship and value his advice that has helped me better serve my constituents.

Josh Bell has served on my staff in several important roles, including as part of my legislative team in Washington as well as in my district office managing special projects for constituents. His faithful dedication and hard work have served me well for many years.

Jeremy Wisdom has provided valuable assistance to countless veterans and other constituents needing help with a federal agency. His knowledge of the federal system and thoughtful approach to problem solving has helped resolve numerous constituent problems.

Jim Richardson has a thorough knowledge of military and defense issues that has been an enormous asset to my legislative office. He has provided critical insight and a thoughtful approach to helping me deal with issues related to our national defense.

Laurel Scott has greeted thousands of Kansans visiting my Washington office over the years. Her warm smile, welcoming personality, and prayers for my family have meant so much to Vicki and me.

Wendy Knox has helped me disseminate our legislative message to the public by working with national media in Washington as well as state and local reporters. Her communication skills and commitment to the conservative cause has helped clarify and focus our messages.

Matthew Stroia has served on my staff focusing on several issues related to the aerospace and energy industries. I appreciate the way he applied his skills and knowledge of the legislative process to help ensure Kansans' interests were made a top priority.

Richard Henkle has been a committed legislative staffer who has helped me focus on several issues impacting Kansas. His work on agriculture, bio-security and pro-life issues has made a real difference to our state.

Sarah Osborn has served in my Washington office helping me with the House Economic Competitiveness Caucus agenda as well as ensuring constituent responses were fully addressed. I am grateful for the countless tasks she has done to help make our legislative office run successfully.

Jill Craven has dedicated a meticulous attention to detail and put her talents to work helping constituents receive prompt and informative responses to concerns with government agencies. Her never-quit attitude has benefitted constituents across the state of Kansas.

Mark Dugan has performed admirably in ensuring my office remained responsive to constituents, and he was instrumental in several of my efforts to reach constituents with information about what was happening in Washington.

Joel Katz has served in my Washington office helping the legislative staff meet its deadlines and achieve our goals. His hard-work, commitment to getting the job done and dependability made a huge difference to me and to the constituents he served.

Kenya Cox has an incredible dedication to many causes that have benefitted our district and the entire state. I appreciate her dogged and persistent work ethic in response to constituent requests. Her commitment to resolving problems and her tenacity in getting the job done well is admirable.

Andy Purath has served me in Washington for the last year as a congressional military fellow. I appreciate his hard work in the legislative office and his willingness to serve our country.

Mariam Bell has helped us complete the archive process on deadline and has been a blessing to Vicki and me for many years. I am thankful for her thoughtful approach to handling an enormous task.

I want to also recognize staff who have previously worked for me: Dave Hanna, Matthew Schlapp, Ruth Richman, Karen Casto, Tamara Baker, Gwendolyn Caldwell, Ardena Schienbein, Cindy Gustafson, Pam Porvaznik, Russ Yost, Scott Margolius, Judy Patton, Melissa Beall, Matt Rowden, Brad Ayers, Hannah Woody, Kevin Bruce, Amy Skeen, Amy Butler, Jennilee Browning, Jamie Sauser, Scott Plecs, Timon Oujiri, Aaron Weiss, John Howland, John Brady, Elias Voces, Joan Smutko, Trisha Reagan, Monica Green, Cindy Black, Emily Wellman, Jason Moshier, Courtney English, Joey Rathbone, Chris Israel, Joe Cramer, Sarah Key Sunday, Doddie Bowman, Terry Horton, Amy Lorenzini, Cheryl Arensdorf, Katie Steers, Jenni Schallenkamp, Tiffany Keeler, Nicole Noble, Don Boleski and Arsalan Arif. Without the years of service these people gave, I would not have been able to accomplish so much.

I would like to thank the staff on the House Appropriations Committee that have aided me tremendously through the years: Jeff Shockey, Debbie Weatherly, Dave LesStrang, Steve Crane, Stephanie Meyers, Kevin Jones, Stephen Sepp, Liz Dawson, David Gibbons, Mike Ringler, Ben Nicholson, John Martens, Martin Delgado, Allison Deter, Jennifer Hing, Jenny Kisiah, Frank Cushing, Letitia White, John Shank, Tom Rice, Michelle Mrdozza, Migo Micconi, Ben Nicholson, Jennifer Miller, Dena Baron, Michael Stephens, Delia Scott, Chris Topik, Greg Knadle, Beth Houser, Rob Nabors, Cheryl Smith, David Reich, Nicole Kunko, John Bartrum, Tammy Hughes and Sandy Farrows.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the staff I have worked with on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Mike Meermans, John Stopher, Kathleen Reilly, Meghann Courter, Fred Fleitz and Courtney Littig.

To all of my Congressional colleagues I have worked with over the years: it has been an honor to serve alongside you. Thank you for your friendship and your dedication to our great country.

My family and I deeply appreciate all our supporters and friends who have lifted us up in prayer and those who have given so much to make the impossible happen. For the past 16 years as I traveled to work and saw the Capital dome in the morning, I would pray, "Lord, help me do the right thing."

God has answered that prayer by surrounding me with a family and staff who, along with thousands of friends and supporters, have helped me faithfully carry out my responsibilities.

In the coming months and years, many tough decisions will be made in terms of what we do as a country. The success of our nation depends on engaged citizens who believe, as our Founding Fathers did, that the government should be by the people and for the people. We must all remain in the fight to help make Kansas and our country stronger, more prosperous and an even better place to raise a family.

Vicki and I look forward to continuing that journey with all those who have so faithfully walked with us.

While there are numerous other people that could be mentioned, I again want to say what an honor it has been to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives on behalf of the people of Kansas who sent me here these past 16 years.

May God continue to bless the Great State of Kansas, and may God bless America.

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL REPEAL ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2965, the Don't Ask Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010. This will be the second time this year that the House votes to repeal the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Opponents of repeal are out of touch with the American people, out of touch with the American military, and out of excuses. For years, Republicans in the House and Senate have claimed that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would threaten unit cohesion. America's troops and military leaders disagree. In the Pentagon's comprehensive review of this issue, 70 percent of service members surveyed believed that repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" would have no negative effect on the performance of their units. The military's top leaders, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen—both appointed by President Bush—have strongly advocated for repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

At a time when our military is fighting two wars, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is hampering our Armed Forces, and harming our national security. According to a GAO report, the military had discharged over 750 mission-critical service members by 2003 because of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," including over 320 service members with language skills—such as Arabic and Pashto—that are critical to our success in Iraq and Afghanistan. As reported by the Washington Post, there are an estimated 66,000 gay Americans currently serving in the military; that's 66,000 American troops who could be discharged tomorrow simply because they are gay.

Mr. Speaker, today I will vote to end a policy of open discrimination against a group of courageous Americans—men and women who

proudly serve in the Armed Forces and put their lives on the line to defend our country. For thousands of gay and lesbian veterans who have been discharged from the military over the years, Congress has acted too late. Nonetheless, it is time to honor their service by providing a new generation of patriotic gay and lesbian Americans the opportunity to serve our country proudly and openly.

I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2965, and I call upon Members of the Senate to do the right thing by repealing this destructive policy once and for all.

HONORING BLAKE GOETZ

HON. MARY BONO MACK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mrs. BONO MACK. Madam Speaker I rise today to honor a very distinguished member of my community, Fire Chief Blake Goetz.

Today I wish to recognize Fire Chief Blake Goetz, who has dedicated 33 years of service to the City of Palm Springs and over 29 years to the Palm Springs Fire Department. He will retire from his position as Fire Chief on December 31, 2010, and I am pleased to rise to make a few remarks on his impressive accomplishments and many contributions to the City of Palm Springs.

Chief Goetz started his career with the Palm Springs Fire Department in 1981. Over the years, Chief Goetz has remained committed to safeguarding our community and has greatly increased the Coachella Valley's preparedness for fires, earthquakes and floods. Goetz initiated the Palm Springs Fire Department's Fire Prevention Safety Program to spread awareness of the dangers of fire and fire-related hazards to local grade schools during Fire Protection Week. His work in developing the Palm Springs Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) brought this critically important program to our area, and has greatly enhanced our local community's ability to respond to disaster. Goetz was appointed Fire Chief in 2004, and has continued to be an outstanding public safety official and well-respected leader in the community.

In addition to his time at the Palm Springs Fire Department, Chief Goetz has committed himself to the safety and well-being of the people of the Coachella Valley in many other areas. As a certified emergency manager with the International Association of Emergency Managers from 1998 to 2008, Chief Goetz played an essential role in bringing the Coachella Valley Emergency Managers Association to our community. Goetz has served as a member of the board of directors of Southern California Emergency Services Association and is currently chair of the board of directors of the Palm Springs Federal Credit Union. Goetz holds a lifetime instructor credential in fire science for California Community Colleges, and I am confident that he will continue his efforts towards promoting safety and protecting others after his retirement.

Today I stand proud to honor the admirable accomplishments of Fire Chief Blake Goetz, and extend my sincere appreciation for his distinguished service to the Palm Springs Fire Department and the Coachella Valley.