

Fresh vegetables were grown in the family garden behind the small frame house, and his mother made sandwiches for school out of homemade bread. Store-bought bread was for the rich. He grew up belonging to the Boy Scouts, playing the trumpet in high school band, raising rabbits and bees, and he went to church on most Sundays.

In 1944, this 18-year-old country boy who had never been more than 50 miles from home finally found himself going through basic training in the United States Army at Camp Wolters, Texas. After that, he rode the train with hundreds of other American GIs—mostly teenagers, really—to New York City for an ocean trip on a cramped Liberty ship to fight in the great World War II.

As a soldier in the Seventh Army, he went from France on to survive the Battle of the Bulge and through the cities of Aachen, Stuttgart, Cologne, and Bonn.

As a teenager, he saw the concentration camps and the victims of the Nazis. He saw incredible numbers of other teenage Americans buried in graves throughout France, a sobering monument to those soldiers at Normandy.

After Germany surrendered, Tech Sergeant Virgil Poe went back to Fort Hood, Texas, to be reequipped for the invasion of Japan. He was put on a train going to Seattle from where he was supposed to be sent to the South Pacific; but he learned when he arrived in Seattle that Japan had surrendered, so he was ordered back to Fort Hood, Texas. It was there that he met Mom at a Wednesday night prayer meeting service at the Church of Christ.

It has only been in the last 10 or 15 years that this GI, my father, began to talk about World War II. He still would not say much, except he does say that young Americans are still buried in France and they are the heroes.

After the war, he opened a DX service station, where he pumped gas, sold tires, fixed cars, and began a family. Deciding he needed to go to college, he moved to west Texas and enrolled in a small Christian college called Abilene Christian College.

He and his wife and two small children lived in an old converted Army barracks with other such families, and he supported us by working nights at KRBC Radio and climbing telephone poles for Ma Bell, later known as Southwestern Bell.

He finished college, became an engineer, and worked over 40 years at Southwestern Bell Telephone Company in Houston, Texas. He turned down a promotion to transfer to New York City because it wasn't Texas, and he said "it was no place to raise a family."

Dad instilled in my sister and me the values of being a neighbor, loving our country, loving our heritage, and trusting in the Good Lord. He still gets mad at the East Coast media. He flies the flag on holidays. He goes to church on

Sunday, and he takes Mom out to eat almost every Friday night.

He stands in the front yard and talks to his neighbors, and he can still fix anything. He mowed his own grass until he was 90 years of age, and you better believe he has a strong opinion on politics and world events. He gives plenty of advice to all people, including me, usually at 5:30 in the morning. He has two computers in his home office. He sends emails to hundreds of his buddies all over the world.

Dad and Mom still live in Houston not far from where I grew up.

As we recognize those who served our country this week, we honor not only my dad, but all of those American heroes. Dad is now 93 years of age, and he was one of those individuals. He is the best man I ever met, one of the charter members of the Greatest Generation. I hope I turn out like him, the man I admire the most.

Virgil Poe: a good man, good soldier, good father, and that is plenty for one life.

And that is just the way it is.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK AND WOMEN IN APPRENTICE- SHIP DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, it is National Apprenticeship Week and Women in Apprenticeship Day, and I want to highlight the potential for apprenticeships to get people into good-paying jobs.

When I visit communities across northwest Oregon, I hear from many Oregonians who feel left behind and left out of the economic recovery. Far too many families are still struggling to make ends meet.

Their wages are stagnant, and they feel overwhelmed by rising rent prices, barriers to transportation, and skyrocketing costs of childcare. They can't save for retirement or for their kids to go to college. They need access to good-paying jobs so they can support themselves and their families.

Workforce development programs can assist them, particularly assisting those who have barriers to employment. Good workforce policies can help them access the education, training, credentials, and support services they need to secure living-wage jobs. Good workforce policies create opportunities for employers to align training with the skills they need.

As we recognize National Apprenticeship Week and Women in Apprenticeship Day, we must commit to strengthening apprenticeships and work-based learning programs. Investing in these programs will help more people access better-paying, stable careers and provide our businesses with a workforce that will improve productivity and efficiency.

In the district I represent, the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center,

or OMIC, is bringing together industry leaders like Boeing with local colleges, including Portland Community College, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, and Portland State University, to develop a registered apprenticeship program. This collaboration will result in growth, innovation, and efficiency in advanced manufacturing and a more skilled workforce.

OMIC is a tremendous opportunity for Oregonians and exactly the kind of partnership that brings value to our communities and to our economy. I was proud to help secure funding for OMIC through the Economic Development Administration, and I look forward to seeing its continued growth and the opportunities it will bring to northwest Oregon and our region and our future manufacturing workforce.

Although some employers recognize the importance of recruiting and training all working people, across the country, the representation of women in the trades remains quite low. In Oregon, we are leading the way. Women's participation in registered apprenticeship programs is more than double the national average, demonstrating the value of organizations like Oregon Tradeswomen, with the mission dedicated to promoting success for women in the trades through education, leadership, and mentorship.

We can help increase the presence of programs like Oregon Tradeswomen across the country by increasing funding for the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations grants, and, of course, by supporting the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

To help Oregonians and many other Americans who still face job insecurity, we must expand work-based learning to industries that lack established apprenticeship programs, like healthcare and technology, especially in startups.

Unfortunately, small- and medium-sized businesses often do not have the resources to establish work-based learning programs on their own. Industry partnerships like those at OMIC solve this challenge by bringing together employers, educational institutions, training providers, and local organizations to support the creation and expansion of work-based learning programs that benefit workers and the economy as a whole.

I have worked with my colleague from Georgia, Congressman DREW FERGUSON, to introduce the Promoting Apprenticeships through Regional Training Networks for Employers' Required Skills, or PARTNERS, Act.

This bipartisan bill would use existing dollars to invest in industry partnerships to help businesses recruit workers, develop training curriculums, and provide workers with access to tools, work attire, transportation, childcare services, and mentorship support. These support services help businesses retain employees and help workers balance caring for and providing for

their families while they are learning new skills.

The PARTNERS Act and funding for the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act are two pieces of the greater need to invest in apprenticeships and other paid on-the-job training programs.

During National Apprenticeship Week, I stand ready to continue the fight for policies that can help more people access better-paying jobs and meet the demands of our local employers.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAMON P. NELSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank my colleagues who are here to pay tribute to the staff director of the House Intelligence Committee, Damon Nelson, who passed away on Saturday.

As you see from the tributes that have already poured in and those to come today, Damon worked closely with many Members of Congress for a long time. He served 12 years in my personal office as my legislative director, later as deputy chief of staff, and then almost 4 years on the House Intelligence Committee as senior adviser, deputy staff director, and, finally, staff director.

These testimonies reflect Damon's hard work and his enthusiasm for helping others. He showed immense respect for the institution of Congress and felt deeply honored to assist the people's Representatives and to participate in the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for coming today to speak on the House floor about Damon. He will be deeply missed both inside and outside these halls, and especially by his wife, Dana.

At this time, I am honored to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), my great friend and chairman of the Republican delegation from California.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor my friend Damon Nelson, who led the House Intelligence Committee staff on the committee very well. He passed away unexpectedly, as mentioned by Congressman NUNES, this past Saturday at the age of 46.

As many have known, Damon was a long-time friend and staff member of Congressman DEVIN NUNES. Over time, Damon became close with many us here. I got to know Damon through my work on California water policy.

There is a saying, "Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting," and that certainly was true when it comes to water in the West, and it continues to be. However, Damon showed a unique talent for mediating complex water issues, keeping the confidence of the stakeholders involved.

He became an expert on California water, mentoring staff and Members on the issue. Without a doubt, he was one of the most gifted, intelligent, articulate negotiators on a very complex issue that transcended political parties, regions, and, oftentimes, common sense.

He took this rare set of skills to his next role as staff director for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. As one of the appropriators assigned to HPSCI, I was fortunate to be able to continue to work with Damon. Just as he demonstrated on California water, Damon took the helm of the committee with ease and guided it through some of the most challenging times the committee has faced. He did all of this with a smile and the confidence that he was working toward something greater than himself.

His presence will be deeply missed on the committee and in Congress. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife, Dana, and to his entire family, including my good friend, DEVIN.

Damon served his country honorably in the United States Air Force, was a veteran of the Gulf War, and was an American patriot. He came to D.C. to make a difference, and he did.

Godspeed, Damon. We are grateful for your service, and we will honor your memory.

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to someone I have gotten to know over the last few years pretty well.

Damon Nelson became an immediate friend, an ally, and a mentor. There are so many different words to describe what Damon was to a lot of us.

When I came in as a freshman, I still remember his help setting up offices, helping me interview potential staff, and giving me direction on every decision that we had to make. It was amazing to watch, as an incoming Member with brand-new staff, the way that he would take his time to mentor every single one of them from top to bottom.

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Damon treated everyone as an equal. He treated people with respect and dignity. He truly loved this country, loved this institution, and loved the process of helping others be successful here. He never, ever looked down on another person. He had a sense of humor even until the very end. Every chance I could, I would get down into the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and just spend some time with him in the office talking and laughing about whatever topic was going on that day.

He is going to be truly missed by a lot of us. He was truly a great guy who really added a lot to this institution. He made my time here in Congress much, much better, and even helped set us up for as much success as we have had over the last 6 years, and it is all

because of guys like Damon. I am grateful to have known him and grateful to have served with him. I really do wish his family the best.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAMON P. NELSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and honor to an individual who made a difference, Damon Nelson. When I think of Damon I think of the quintessential staff person, and I think of three words: duty, honor, and country.

Like a lot of us who grew up in the San Joaquin Valley, he was always in touch with his roots. Damon was a person who obviously loved our country and dedicated his entire career to serving, first in the American military in the Air Force, and then later coming to our Nation's Capitol to try to make a difference.

He was a problem solver. He understood that oftentimes cooler heads prevail in bringing people together and that the efforts to bring the art of the political compromise ultimately served the people not only of our valley, but the people of our Nation.

He will sorely be missed in terms of his contributions, and we wish him and his family Godspeed during this time of mourning. We thank him for his service to our country.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARJAREE MASON'S PASSING

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this month marks the 40th anniversary of the tragic death of Marjaree Mason, a woman whose life was filled with so much promise and purpose.

In 1978, Marjaree was soon approaching graduation from Fresno State. She had a job she enjoyed, working for the National Economic Development Association. She was committed to serving others and surrounded herself with the support of family and friends.

That was until her life was cut short by a brutal death. At the age of 36, Marjaree was heinously kidnapped, abused, and murdered by her ex-boyfriend at his Fresno home.

To celebrate her life and continued legacy, the folks in Fresno dedicated the Marjaree Mason Center, which was founded in 1979, to provide victims and survivors of domestic violence a safe and supportive environment. The center offers long-term safe housing, legal assistance, educational opportunities, crisis support, and counseling to victims and their families. It is in constant need. The center offers long-term safe housing.

For decades, I have been working hard to end these horrific crimes plaguing our community and the Nation. Over 10 years ago, Congressman TED POE and I founded the bipartisan Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus in the House of Representatives to give a