

impacted the State of Florida, one of which resulted in the largest mobilization of Florida guardsmen in the State's history.

It was during that time that I had the privilege of personally working extensively with General Calhoun, and I can personally attest to his commitment to excellence and to the people of the State of Florida.

Despite the rapid pace of operations over the past 4 years, General Calhoun never lost sight of his mission.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him for his selfless leadership and service, and I wish him and his wife, Sophia, the best in their retirement. A grateful State and Nation say thank you.

□ 1930

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE WORK

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to serve on the Judiciary Committee in the House and be the chairman of the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Subcommittee.

I want to report to the American people that we passed out H.R. 1 that helps clean up corruption in our government, makes our government more transparent, makes voting easier and open to more people, and does other improvements the American people want.

We also passed out H.R. 8, the first gun reform bill in over 20 years that says you have to have background checks on all sales.

This week, we will be marking up the Violence Against Women Act. Hopefully, we will have bipartisan support for that.

We will also have a hearing on renewing the Voting Rights Act that never should have been discarded by the Supreme Court. We will be having hearings to get the Voting Rights Act back on the law books in the United States.

And our subcommittee had a hearing last week on the President's powers on emergency actions. We have bipartisan agreement that we need to reform that bill and will work together in a bipartisan fashion.

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS ELIZABETH JOHNSON

(Ms. FOXX of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, during Women's History Month, we honor American women whose exemplary lives have shaped the country we love.

In 1945, Private First-Class Elizabeth Johnson of Elkin, North Carolina, answered the call to serve our country, becoming one of 855 women to form the 6888th battalion, the first and only all-female and all-Black battalion in World War II.

They were given the task of delivering, in 1 year, a backlog of 1 year's

worth of servicemembers' mail waiting to be delivered. But with their strong dedication, in just 6 months, all letters were delivered to servicemembers waiting to hear from loved ones.

After a tour of duty in England and France, Ms. Johnson became the first woman to attend Winston-Salem State University on the GI Bill and dedicated over 30 years to teaching in Virginia and North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and thank Ms. Johnson for her legacy of lifelong service to fellow Americans.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

(Mr. HAGEDORN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAGEDORN. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize National Agriculture Week.

I grew up on a grain and livestock farm just outside of Truman, Minnesota, and have a deep appreciation for agriculture and all it does for our rural communities. Our ag-based economy is so critically important to our Nation and, of course, the State of Minnesota and southern Minnesota, which is our First District.

The people in southern Minnesota really appreciate our ag producers, our ag processors, our ag equipment dealers, and all the rest. I can tell you that in Minnesota's First District, one of the top crop and livestock districts in all the country, we actually were number two for hogs in the entire Nation.

Our First District is home to nearly 20,000 farmers. Considering that each farm produces enough food to feed about 165 people, the reach of our farmers goes throughout the United States and all around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to commemorating and talking about the value of agriculture and our farmers during this week and throughout this Congress.

RECOGNIZING PATRICIA SINCAVAGE

(Mr. SMUCKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, Friday was International Women's Day and, today, I rise to recognize the service of a remarkable woman in my district: Ms. Patricia Sincavage of Lititz, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Sincavage has served as an occupational therapist at the Lebanon Veterans Affairs Medical Center since 1978. She joined the VA after graduating from Elizabethtown College. The Lebanon VA serves about 80 percent of the veterans who reside in my district.

She has spent the entirety of her professional career giving back to our veterans. Occupational therapy can assist veterans in continuing to take care of their health needs while still doing the

activities they enjoy simply by adapting or doing things differently.

Ms. Sincavage is retiring from the VA after 43 years of service. She has four children, 11 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. She has served our Nation's veterans well, and it is an honor to recognize her today.

VENEZUELA

(Mr. GAETZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, as I deliver these remarks, the people of Venezuela are without food, water, medicine, and now even electricity.

The organizing principle of American policy seems to be the need to drive Maduro from power. What if Maduro is not really in power right now? What if the people who are really calling the shots in Venezuela are a group of transnational criminal organizations that merely maintain Maduro as a figurehead? And what if their entire purpose is to draw the United States into an ill-advised war to create a massive migration of people throughout Latin America, eroding borders, jeopardizing nation-states, and ultimately leading to a permissive environment for more illicit activity to occur?

These are important questions we have to ask. My constituents have to go to Central and South America and fight these wars. And certainly, as a Congress, we need to be very critical in our thinking to not get our Nation in another ill-advised war.

MOURNING THE TRAGIC LOSS OF LIFE OF ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES CRASH

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness I rise today to mourn the tragic loss of life on Sunday morning as an Ethiopian Airlines jet carrying 157 people crashed only 6 minutes after takeoff. On board that flight were people from 35 different countries, including 8 U.S. citizens, with no survivors.

This tragedy hits close to home for those of us from northern California. Two of the eight Americans were from my own district in Shasta County.

Melvin and Bennett Riffel, two brothers from Redding, California, were embarking upon an adventure that had already taken them through Australia and Mogadishu before they arrived in Ethiopia. It has been said that this was their last trip together before Melvin was set to become a father, together with his wife Brittney, who had only recently returned home.

Our friends and neighbors in northern California share in the sadness and grief that we all feel for their families, and for all of the families who lost loved ones that day on that plane.

As we await more information on exactly what went wrong, please join me in praying for Melvin and Bennett, their families, and all the others who boarded that fateful flight that day.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF WEST POINT ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be joined by my colleagues who graduated from West Point, our alma mater, and our colleague, who represents the West Point community and the area.

Why are we talking about the academy today? Well, we are close to what we call our Founders Day, which is March 17, but this is also a special year. It is the 150th anniversary of the Association of Graduates, which keeps the alumni informed and connected with our alma mater.

The 150th anniversary will be May 22, 2019, so we thought we would come down to the floor to talk about the experience and the importance of the military academies—of course, West Point being the oldest and the best—to our Nation and its security.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY), from Hudson Valley, who represents West Point and the surrounding communities.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the West Point Association of Graduates.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the cadets, faculty, Active Duty soldiers, and the many alumni of the United States military academy at West Point in New York's Hudson Valley. In fact, I live right across the river, and I hear the cannon every morning and every night. It is a wonderful way to wake up and go to bed.

Just take a few steps on the grounds at West Point and it will be clear to you that West Point is much more than a school. It is a community of devotion made up of the best and brightest of our Nation's past, our Nation's present, and our Nation's future.

Think of the legends and heroes who have graduated from West Point. Such a pantheon clearly deserves more than a run-of-the-mill alumni association. Accordingly, the West Point Association of Graduates has fulfilled that need. It goes above and beyond, and it deserves the recognition we are giving it tonight.

I want to thank my friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), a member of the association himself, for leading this Special Order to honor the organization for the services and fellowship opportunities it provides to graduates of all ages.

Our country's premier military academy has produced generations of leaders in all fields, including 2 U.S. Presidents, 18 astronauts, 19 Rhodes scholars, 76 Medal of Honor winners, and countless numbers of the Fortune 500 CEO's list, Cabinet secretaries, Governors, Senators, and, for those who didn't do very well, Members of Congress.

These men and women are connected by "The Long Grey Line," the affectionate reference to the unique ties that bind all graduates. They are linked by their commitment to living and, at times, even dying in service of the motto "Duty, Honor, Country."

But they are also connected through the tireless work of an exemplary alumni association. For 150 years, the West Point Association of Graduates has fostered these connections by allowing generations of graduates to grip hands with one another.

In some ways, the association is like other alumni associations, but like all things West Point, it is much more. The association provides mentorship and fellowship for younger alums, but often these alums are also returning veterans who need a hand when they come back.

It supports local chapters across the country and around the world. But for a group as far-flung as West Point grads, these connections give graduates a sense of community when they are far from home.

It also helps graduates who have been hurt by hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, and other natural disasters.

And it even offers a professional memorial services coordinator to help grieving families navigate the funeral process at West Point when that difficult time arrives.

These are the kind of people who make up The Long Grey Line in the West Point Association of Graduates. They are fiercely committed to our country and to each other.

During times of division, West Point graduates still rally around their shared values and experiences to build bridges and remind all of us what it is to be an American.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the West Point Association of Graduates for 150 years of connecting distinguished alumni and providing a helping hand to folks in need. I thank them for their service, and here is to another 150 years.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for doing that great summation, because I brought my colleagues down here and they are probably going to talk a little bit more about the micro aspects of classes, friends, and experiences over the years. But I do appreciate the gentleman's work for and support of West Point and the community. And I know he will always be a good steward of the campus, the cadets, the staff, and the faculty, so I thank him for coming down.

Mr. Speaker, usually, we manage things here in the House by seniority

based upon, again, elected Congress. But at West Point, it is a very competitive institution, and our seniority is based upon the graduation class. So I am going to turn things upside down here on the floor and go by seniority, which means one of our newly elected Members of Congress will get a chance to speak first.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, in 1781, General George Washington called the fortifications at West Point the most important post in America. Holding West Point meant preventing the British from dividing the Nation along the Hudson River Valley.

Following the war, President Washington made numerous efforts to create a military academy. His actual first effort was within a year of becoming the Commander in Chief. However, it fell to Thomas Jefferson to get it done and, in 1802, the United States Military Academy at West Point was founded as the Nation's school to teach the art and science of warfare.

Since its inception, West Point graduates have served to preserve our Nation's freedom in battle. From the Mexican wars to the war on terror, West Point graduates have sacrificed their lives and their youth to win our Nation's wars.

Off the battlefield, West Point graduates have served at the very highest levels of the U.S. military as legislators, Cabinet secretaries, Governors, Presidents, and CEOs leading the development of our Nation's infrastructure and the establishment of the world's greatest economy.

□ 1945

For young people who choose West Point over a traditional education, it is truly a different path.

From the moment you start in Beast Barracks, a cadet lives by the code of conduct of the military officer, recognizing that their life becomes second to the safety of Americans.

Almost 100 West Point graduates have given their lives in this most recent war. It is that commitment to the Nation made at such a young age that makes the place so special.

What sets West Point as an institution apart is just about everything that happens there: the grueling academics; the compulsory participation in sports; the military drill; the military training; and perhaps most noteworthy, the leadership and character development. West Point even uses our math classes to teach cadets how to present themselves and to hone their military bearing.

But for me, what took my experience at West Point to the next level were the men and women who made up my class, the class of 1986.

Our motto is "Courage Never Quits, '86."

We came to West Point from all over the country, men and women from every State, nearly every religion,