

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,

every ethnic origin; and we came together as one team fighting to get through the Academy's rigorous education. Almost one-third who started our class left before graduating.

Over the years, we celebrated together, served in the Army together. Many left the military to serve elsewhere in government and business. But each of us has tried to live by that motto, "Courage Never Quits," and boy, have we.

Our class has produced 18 general officers: four 3-star generals; we have no 4-stars yet because we haven't been out of the Academy long enough; in addition, we have nine 2-stars and six 1-star generals.

Our class produced a Secretary of State, a Secretary of the Army. Two of us have served in Congress, one of whom went on to be the Director of the CIA and, of course, Secretary of State.

We have had at least two State legislators. Three judges come from our ranks, as well as at least four deans and chancellors of universities.

We have served at senior levels throughout the government, from the Department of State to the FBI, to the leadership of the Defense Logistics Agency, to consultants to Presidents of the United States.

Twenty-two-plus members of my class are presidents and CEOs of major corporations, from 7-Eleven to Mercedes-Benz USA.

And, yes, we, too, have had those in our ranks make the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Be thou at peace.

More than anything, more than just the amazing location on the Hudson River, more than the unparalleled history of the place, more than the grueling academics, more than its unbelievable place in our Nation's great story, what pushes me to serve is the knowledge of what my peers have accomplished. Their hard work reminds me to never stop reading, learning, growing, and serving. They are my motivation, and they are why I will never quit.

Rangers Lead The Way.

Night Stalkers Don't Quit.

Courage Never Quits, '86.

Go Army. Beat Navy.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, and I appreciate his service in uniform and, of course, here on the floor. We are happy to have him here.

Next, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE), almost my neighbor on the North American continent.

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

Mr. Speaker, my motto as the class of '87: Our Country We Strengthen, '87.

It is great to be here, and I want to start with a story.

After I went through the Academy, graduated from West Point, spent time in the 101st Airborne Division, I decided to do something different with my life and went into business. I went to business school. I was in New England in business school.

One time, I was driving back from a visit to Franklin Roosevelt's home on the Hudson River and was at a grocery store—Stew Leonard's, some people know from Danbury, Connecticut. I was standing outside with a kid, and a guy walks by, and he says: Well, Kentucky plates. What are you doing here in Connecticut?

I said: Well, I am up here in graduate school, and we just went to Franklin Roosevelt's home. I just love the Hudson River. The Hudson Valley is just stunningly beautiful.

The guy looked at me. He didn't know my background, didn't know who I was. So he said: Well, if you love the Hudson River, let me suggest you ought to spend a weekend at West Point. Let me suggest you go on Saturday, on a football Saturday, because you are not going to believe this, but they actually go to class on Saturday.

I said: Are you kidding me? I mean, people actually go to a school that goes to class on Saturday?

And he said: Yeah. And then they have a parade, and all the cadets are standing—and I didn't have the heart to tell them, tell him we were telling jokes to each other, and said—look pristine, you know, from 100 yards away.

But he went through the day at West Point, and he walked through it. And he said a picnic and tailgating and football, and all the great stuff and the fun times you have here. But you do have good times even though you have very difficult times.

And when he finally finished, I didn't have the heart to tell him the truth and tell him the story. So as soon as he finished, I just looked at him and said: I have always heard about West Point, and I have always heard this: "It is a great place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live there."

And the reason that you wouldn't want to live there is because it is tough. It is hard. It is not something you can do just simply. It is something you sacrifice for and you move towards.

One of my great thrills is you get to nominate people who attend our academies—all of our academies—and to call them and tell them when they have received an appointment.

I just talked to a young man this week, he is going to West Point, and a couple, unfortunately, to the Navy—but a couple at West Point and a couple at the Air Force Academy. They are deciding to do something big and different with their lives than their classmates.

But I want to talk about, just real briefly, you do run across some great people.

I always say the reason that H. R. McMaster was probably, I think, the greatest soldier of our generation is his very first challenge was teaching me how to march correctly. He was my squad leader at Beast Barracks, and I was a challenge to him, I am sure, so his first leadership challenge.

We heard my previous speaker talk about his classmates, Mark Esper, who was in my company and now Secretary of the Army; got to serve on Energy and Commerce with Mike Pompeo, now Secretary of State.

My class actually entered West Point in 1983, so I got my appointment in February of '83. In March of '83, Ronald Reagan gave his speech in Orlando, Florida, about the evil empire, and then during my time in the 101st, the Berlin Wall came down. So I literally served from the evil empire to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

A lot of my classmates—me being one of them, and this shows what a great prognosticator I am—and all of us thought the Army was going to be boring for the next 20 years. And, man, my prayers that that was absolutely—would have come true, but it wasn't.

So my commemoration today is a lot of my classmates did leave the Army in the early nineties. Those who spent time in a career—whether 20 years, 30 years, some still serving—they really have sacrificed for this country more than I could ever imagine.

My one experience with it as a Member of Congress—not as a combat soldier, but a Member of Congress—I took my first trip into a combat zone to Iraq. I remember sitting in the headquarters waiting for General Barbero to come give us a briefing, and an '06 colonel comes walking in. Some of us may know because he did congressional affairs after this.

It was Joe Simonelli, who was a big, blustery, great guy who served, just kind of a leader of our class. And he comes walking in, and it just struck me that he has been doing this for the last—then it would have been the last almost 20 years, spending half of his life going overseas to serve our country. I was just there for a day and a half and was ready to get home, and he was there for a year. It just struck me.

So my hat is off to my classmates—and not to just people who graduated from West Point, but every man and woman who has the courage and the conviction and the strength and everything about them to put on our uniform. And every single one of them, every single person serving in our uniform volunteered to do so. It is just amazing that we have young men and women like that.

So my hat is off for my classmates because we are talking about our time at West Point, those who served 20 and 30 years, who have made a difference for this country and have sacrificed like no other has over the course of time.

We have, certainly, people in more combat-type style conflicts, but I would dare say, in the history of our country, a group of people who graduated the time that we have have not spent more time in active combat back and forth.

Mr. Speaker, my hat is off to them. They are my brothers and sisters. I love them dearly, and I appreciate their service.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

I think what Congressman GUTHRIE has said, article II of the Association of Graduates Constitution, states the object of this association shall be to cherish the memories of our alma mater and to promote the social intercourse and fraternal fellowship of its graduates, and I think we are seeing that tonight.

You see some snickering and some guffawing, and I think we all get transported back in time. In fact, in preparing for this, I did like Congressman GREEN and got a list of my classmates and then started working on notes on Friday night and Saturday. I am telling you, I had nightmares on Saturday night; I had nightmares on Sunday because that experience was brought back to life for me, which I cherished.

I am now happy to yield to the gentleman from Ohio, Congressman DAVIDSON.

Before I turn it all over to him, one of the benefits that the academies do, and West Point does, is just doesn't get what they consider the brightest and the best in our secondary education system, but they make sure that they reach into our active military forces and find those young men and women who are showing to their chain of command exceptional opportunity with a chance to promote and become an officer. Congressman DAVIDSON is one of those, and that is why I yield to him, the class of '95.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank this body for the opportunity to recognize our alma mater and our Association of Graduates at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

As Mr. SHIMKUS was highlighting, I didn't come the easy way. As a friend of mine likes to say, sometimes God will bring you the easiest way you will go.

For me, my journey to West Point started in my high school guidance counselor's classroom in September of senior year. Most people realize that is kind of a late start for the path that it takes to go to one of our Nation's service academies.

And then she asked me what I wanted to do, and I said: Well, I want to be an Army ranger.

She said: Well, you know, you are pretty smart. You should go to college. You should consider college, at least.

I said: Well, you know, I thought about going to West Point. Then I could be in the Army and go to college.

She looked at me like she felt sorry for me. She said: Well, baby, that is not going to happen.

That wasn't mean; it was realistic. I had not done the work that it would take to get there.

She walked me through who normally gets in: The salutatorians, the valedictorians, the people with the high GPAs while being captain of sports, Eagle Scouts, and what not. I

recognized some of my classmates who had been on that path, and I recognized that that is not the path that I had been on. No one in my family on my dad's side had gone to college.

So she told me: You should work on some other plans.

So I did them. I enlisted in the Army. And when I got to the Army, thankfully, some of BRETT GUTHRIE's classmates, 1987 graduates Larry Bradley and Terry Finley, were platoon leaders.

Larry Bradley ended up being my platoon leader for a composite platoon that got training by the 10th Special Forces Group down in Bad Tolz, Germany. And it was there, during that platoon, that I learned that the Berlin Wall had come down, that it wasn't part of the training, it wasn't just a jazzy intro to a speech.

Some noncommissioned officers stepped up and said: Write this day down. It is going to be one of the most famous days in history, 9 November 1989.

We thought: Bold intro.

But from that, I had a chance to do something unbelievable that was the culmination not just of graduates of the United States Military Academy, but the culmination of people who had fought to win that war. So many of them West Point graduates, like Eisenhower, like Bradley, like Patton, who helped liberate a people in that continent.

But I got to see the culmination of that as the wall came down not because Mr. Gorbachev tore it down or Mr. Reagan tore it down, but because the East German people found out what was on the other side of it, and they tore their own wall down. And they found out that the fruits of our ideology had produced shockingly different results than what their ideology had produced.

□ 2000

It is shocking today to think that we might relive some of those bad choices that led to poverty and scarcity on the other side of the wall while our ideas led to abundance and flourishing, not perfectly, but far superior.

From there, I went to the prep school, and I met classmates like Ranger Bill Lynn. His first unit deployment led him to jump into Panama, and he had a combat jump there. I met classmates at the prep school who didn't make it to West Point. Indeed, one of my 1995 classmates is currently the commandant of the United States Military Academy Preparatory School.

It is a great path, but I also met people who had not been in the Army. I met people who had come there to increase the diversity objectives of the Military Academy, who needed a little more strength on their academics or maybe who needed to balance the academics with the athletics that they were going to be able to participate in. That was about half the class.

I learned about a special club at West Point shortly after I came called the

Two-Percent Club, and I met my wife. The Two-Percent Club, for those who don't know, are those who start with a girlfriend and graduate with the same girlfriend and end up marrying that girl. I am thankful today that I am married to my Lisa. People would talk about Lisa this, and Lisa that, but I would always refer to my Lisa, the girl who chose to marry me.

We experienced cadet life in a different way. We have all these memories of things like the cadet in the red sash stepping up to the line, but not on the line or over the line. We remember things like Beast Barracks in Buckner, Boodlers runs, spinning the spurs. We remember the honor code and the character that was so prominently featured there, that, "A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do."

We remember how hard it was to live with the consequences for people who made those bad decisions, who you knew to be good people, who came to be separated because it was taken very seriously there.

We saw in the cadet parades that we talked about on the parade fields The Long Gray Line for the ceremonies where they would lay a wreath for Founders Day at the statue of Colonel Sylvanus Thayer. You would see men and women in uniform, but you would see senior citizens at the front of the line.

The oldest graduate would lay the wreath—often in a wheelchair, feebly mustering every ounce of strength necessary sometimes to move from that chair to lay that wreath with pride at the statue in front of the sup's house.

We remember the million-dollar view at Trophy Point, and we remember the quarter-million-dollar education one nickel at a time as we studied.

We remember friends and classmates who helped us through the hard times. We remember the knowledge like duty, honor, country, or Schofield's Definition of Discipline.

We remember the seriousness with which nearly every one of us took the opportunity to be prepared, should the case arise that we would lead our Nation's young men and women in combat, that we would be ready to face the challenge. Many of my classmates did that.

I served 5 years in great units, the Old Guard, the 101st Airborne Division, and the 75th Ranger Regiment. I left Active Duty, which shocked many of my classmates, and I found a great sense of purpose, that to give a lifetime of service to the Nation didn't always mean in uniform. But you still look in awe at the sacrifice that so many have made who continued on in Active Duty, especially those who gave the last full measure to keep our Nation free and to bring honor to The Long Gray Line.

Today, as I look at young men and women and have the privilege of calling them and congratulating them on all of the work that it takes to do it—generally, the right way—the advanced

knowledge and the preparation—the more common way—the disciplined path that started earlier in life, I am encouraged because there are so many talented young men and women who still want to put on our Nation's uniform to make sure that our Nation is made and kept free with an all-volunteer force committed to serve our country.

I look at The Long Gray Line today, a line that is a very tight-knit alumni organization where friends could be distant for years, even decades, and, in a moment, connect as if you just finished playing spades with one another after hours, ditching the late-lights penalties.

I look forward to those times. I cherish those memories. And I am so thankful to the West Point Association of Graduates, which has set a great example of how to bond classmates together to serve the cause and interest of our great alma mater so that this Long Gray Line may continue to flourish always.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for joining us tonight. He makes me think of a lot of things.

I want to make sure that we don't forget the staff and faculty, the Department of Army civilians, and the spouses and the families who make up the whole West Point experience.

A lot of times, staff and faculty will adopt a cadet to be their family while they are away. I am from Illinois, and New York was a pretty long distance. I was fortunate to be, in essence, adopted by Colonel Woodard and Mary Ellen Woodard. They were my pseudo family there, and, boy, did I need it. That was kind of joked about.

I also remember going and visiting many times instructors after hours on a program we called additional instruction. I thought I was smart in high school. I found out in college-level engineering school, I wasn't as smart as I thought I was. I needed a lot of assistance to get through the academic program there, so I appreciated it.

Many of those staff and faculty teachers were West Point graduates, so they not only had the book learning, but they knew the experience we were all going through.

I brought down my yearbook and paged through it. General Omar Bradley attended our graduation, which shows you the length, depth, and width of The Long Gray Line. It was a special time to be able to see that connection.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. WATKINS), our most junior graduate—maybe we would call him a plebe in our lexicon—but a freshman Member of Congress.

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

Duty, honor, country. The United States possesses the greatest military in the history of mankind, and it isn't even close. How is that possible since, through the ages, warfare changes, our enemies change, the geography changes, the ideology that we are up against changes.

I would contest that the reason we consistently win our Nation's wars is because our greatest attribute never does change. Those are the values that we hold dear. It is the leadership principles that every graduate of the United States Military Academy learns.

How on Earth could that be encapsulated? The best I could hope for is to call on General MacArthur, who in 1962, to the United States Corps of Cadets, said: "Duty, honor, country: Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying point to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn."

The United States Military Academy has a sacred place in my heart, to the class of 1999, with duty in mind. I want to thank God for West Point. I want to thank The Long Gray Line. And God bless you USMA, my rockbound highland home.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for joining us tonight.

We have people who watch and participate in the Army-Navy games. There is now a new kind of challenge for either the midshipmen or the Corps of Cadets, and it is a fight to see who sings second. If you watch the Army-Navy game, at the end, after a tremendous battle on the field of friendly strife, both sides will join together on each side, and they will listen as the alma maters are sung. The goal is to be the one who gets to sing second, because that means that you have won the football game.

I would like to read the alma mater of West Point.

Hail, Alma Mater dear,  
To us be ever near.  
Help us thy motto bear  
Through all the years.  
Let Duty be well performed.  
Honor be e'er untarned  
Country be ever armed.  
West Point, by thee.  
Guide us, thine own, aright  
Teach us by day, by night,  
To keep thine honor bright,  
For thee to fight.  
When we depart from thee,  
Serving on land or sea,  
May we stand loyal be,  
West Point, to thee  
And when our work is done,  
Our course on earth is run,  
May it be said, "Well done"  
Be thou at peace."  
E'er may that line of gray  
Increase from day to day  
Live, serve, and die, we pray,  
West Point, for thee.

I want to talk about my class, the class of 1980, a little bit. They are now mostly part of that Long Gray Line. We have some still on Active Duty, but they are leaving soon, and they have served faithfully over the years.

Folks will recognize some of these names. Our motto was "Pride and Excellence." These are the statistics I got from AOG. We all know that there is

garbage in, garbage out, so some of my classmates are not updating their records. They may not be 100 percent accurate, but the numbers are pretty good.

We graduated with 902. We think there are 23 who are deceased.

We graduated 62 women. These are the pioneers. This is the first class of women who graduated from West Point. They are very close. I talk with many of them frequently, and we are all very proud of them. It was not easy for these women, as you can imagine, in an all-male institution, and they are a tribute to our class.

We have four four-star generals or officers. Two recently retired, Brooks and Perkins. We still have Thomas, who is the commander of Special Operations Command, and Votel, who is commander at CENTCOM. They are both retiring soon.

We had six lieutenant generals, Donohue, Cheek, Hodges, Lanza, Chipman, and Linnington, and they are retired.

We had eight major generals and nine brigadier generals, the one stars. I want to note Brigadier General Retired Anne MacDonald who, for our women classmates, rose to the highest ranks of military service.

We have religious leaders in our class, pastors, chaplains, deacons. One that I like to always catch up with and follow is Nancy Gucwa, who is a Benedictine Sister, Nancy Rose Gucwa, who retired as lieutenant colonel and then became a nun.

□ 2015

We have medical doctors, and we have university professors. I would also like to highlight Jeff Williams, our astronaut who has spent more time in space as a guide of the United States NASA program. Now there is a female astronaut who just surpassed him, but he has been in space quite a bit, and we are very, very proud of him.

I think what is also interesting is that people talk about the military academies and these institutions as the proverbial return on investment. I think my colleagues have talked about the selfless service of their classmates and the people they have met. I think the interesting thing that I came upon in just going over some data from my class is we know that every graduate, for the most part, goes to serve in Active Duty, and the desire is for a 20-year service at a minimum. But a lot of people choose not to do that. I think what surprised me was how many people picked up the mantle in other branches of service or in the Reserve program. So out of the 902, I think about 422 retired from military service, that is getting close to 50 percent.

What are those?

That is, obviously, the United States Army, the United States Army Reserve, and the United States Army National Guard. We had a couple retired from the Air Force, and we had one retire, I think from the Coast Guard. So

selfless service, even as a part-time, and those who follow the military today, if you are in the Reserves or you are in the Guard, you are working, and you can be deployed. It is not a week-end warrior status anymore. They are part of the total military force.

We also have published authors, college professors, master level, world-class athletes, and even an artist. Some of our classmates now have their children who are already graduates, who already served their time and are already out of the service, so generation after generation of families. That is just an example of one of our classes.

The Association of Graduates does a good job, as was noted here, trying to keep us connected to our alma mater. We have folks that come, not only from every one of the 50 States based on the way the nomination process goes, but we also have folks from foreign countries who are invited to serve and go through the program, and that is the unity the association of graduates attempts to do.

So this night was spent to really accomplish two things: one, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Association of Graduates whose goal was to keep these bonds of friendship and keep reminding us of the goal of duty, honor, country.

Another part was to thank our classmates who have served with us, who help get us through the 4 years of training in the program, thanks to staff and faculty, thanks to the Department of Army Civilians, thanks to maintainers to allow us—really we should thank the national government for continuing to support the great institutions of higher military learning and training like West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force Academy, the Merchant Marine Academy, and the Coast Guard Academy.

I am going to end with the end of the Douglas MacArthur speech. Congressman WATKINS read the first part. I was going to read that too because it is one of my favorites.

I will end on this, Mr. Speaker. This is the end of the speech General Douglas MacArthur gave to the Corps of Cadets: "But in the evening of my memory, always I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes: Duty, Honor, Country. Today marks my final roll call with you, but I want you to know that when I cross the river my last conscious thoughts will be of The Corps, and The Corps, and The Corps. I bid you farewell."

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

#### HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker for the opportunity. We cer-

tainly appreciate the esteemed institution that is West Point. May I also say that the United States Marines are also a great institution, and I want to thank the Speaker for his service in Afghanistan and in Iraq as well.

#### RECOGNIZING MELINDA JONES WILLIAMS

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I want to recognize Melinda Jones Williams.

Melinda Jones Williams, a civil rights activist, was born March 14, 1950, in Americus, Georgia. She is currently a resident of Haines City, Florida, with one child, Jeffrey Jones.

In July, 1963, Melinda Jones Williams was one of 15 young Black girls with a passion to change the bigotry and divisiveness in Americus, Georgia, by protesting a strong force of generational racism. During a peaceful protest, she was arrested along with 14 other young girls. These girls were all stolen, hidden from their parents, and locked in an abandoned building for over a month. There were no windows, toilets, and no source of water.

This was their punishment for protesting a segregated movie theater. Melinda Jones Williams is one of the few remaining survivors of the Stolen Girls of Americus, Georgia.

For that and her heroism in the civil rights movement, we thank you, Ms. Jones Williams.

#### RECOGNIZING CHARLIE REED

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I want to recognize Charlie Reed.

She was born and raised in Kissimmee, Florida, my hometown. She was the first in her family to graduate from college with a degree in journalism from the University of Florida in 1997. She has worked at the Orlando Sentinel, Osceola News-Gazette, and Treasure Coast Newspapers. While working for the Stars and Stripes newspaper, she has covered international defense, geopolitics, and the U.S. military community.

After a reporting trip to Vietnam, Charlie moved there to do volunteer work and write about Vietnam veterans living in the place where they fought a war so many years before. While living in Vietnam, she was named editor for an English-language Vietnamese magazine and worked closely with several NGOs helping Agent Orange victims and impoverished children.

Charlie came back to Kissimmee in 2014 to reconnect with her Florida roots. It was a homecoming that led her back to the staff at the Osceola News-Gazette. As a seasoned journalist who has lived around the world, Charlie knows no stranger. Her ability to connect with people and understand their problems is perhaps her greatest strength. Charlie's life work is about more than chasing a story. It is about serving the community, being an advocate for the public, a voice for the voiceless and shining light on corruption. The pleasure she experiences while helping others is truly all hers.

For that, Charlie Reed, we recognize you.

#### RECOGNIZING JUANITA GEATHERS

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I want to recognize Juanita Geathers.

Juanita Geathers has six children and nine grandchildren with her husband, Lemuel Geathers, former mayor of Winter Haven. She has spent 34 years as an educator in Polk County schools, retiring as an assistant principal in 2004. She graduated from Jewett High School as valedictorian in 1959, went on to receive her bachelor of science degree from Rollins College and a master's in education from the University of South Florida.

Juanita served as Secretary for the Florida Democratic Party State Executive Committee and was the highest ranking African American woman during her tenure as Secretary. She also served as a Democratic National Convention delegate from Florida for three conventions.

As an active member of her community, she is a recipient of the Outstanding Community Service Award. She has served on the Polk Education Association, Polk County Opportunity Council, Polk County Voters League, Girls and Boys Club, and Girls, Inc. She is also a lifetime member of the NAACP and a member of the Hurst Chapel AME Church.

For that, Ms. Juanita Geathers, we honor you.

#### RECOGNIZING MONICA READUS

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I want to recognize Monica Readus.

Monica Readus is a wife, mother, business owner, and real estate professional. She was born in Detroit, Michigan.

After moving to Texas, Monica became aware of a shift in the political climate. After the 2004 Presidential race, Democrats were discouraged and Dallas Republicans were running unopposed. It was at that time that Monica took time away from the company's day-to-day operations to become a full-time volunteer for the Collin County Democratic Party office in Plano, Texas.

Since then, Monica has worked with candidates and campaign managers, coordinated grassroots efforts for local and Federal elections, and fundraised for candidates and more. In 2011 Monica moved to Florida where she immediately began coordinating grassroots efforts for Organizing for America by spearheading daily phone banks. She then joined the Democratic Women's Club of Florida of West Orange County, serving as its first president.

She now happily serves as the Democratic Women's Club of Florida Region 9 chair, serving nearly 600 members and the chair of the Annual PerSisters Rally in celebration of Democratic Women's Month.

For that, Monica Readus, we honor you.