

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER MOTE

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Corporal Christopher “Chris” Mote of Rockwall, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Corporal Mote honorably served in the United States Marine Corps during the Gulf War.

Since his childhood, Corporal Mote knew he wanted to serve in our Armed Forces, as his family had done before him. His passion for military history and love of country led him to join the Marine Corps. Corporal Mote served as a Radar Operator on the USS *Tripoli* (LPH-10) amphibious assault ship. He served in both Okinawa, Japan, and Kuwait during the Gulf War. In February 1991, while sailing through an Iraqi minefield in the Persian Gulf, *Tripoli* was severely damaged by a naval mine. Fortunately, no one was killed in this incident. *Tripoli* went on to successfully conduct combat operations in the region and deploy Marines to help stop Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. For his distinguished service, Corporal Mote was awarded the Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon.

After his time in the Marine Corps, Corporal Mote made it his mission to make a meaningful impact on our community. During Memorial Day, he regularly leads his family in planting flags at the gravesites of soldiers who perished in prior conflicts. Furthermore, Corporal Mote helps fundraise for Carry the Load, a veterans’ charity that raises awareness of veteran issues and uplifts servicemembers, veterans, and first responders. For the past five years, he has also flown an American flag over the Highway 66 bridge connecting Rockwall and Rowlett to recognize those who served. Every morning, Corporal Mote checks the flag to ensure that it is proudly flying high. I commend his efforts to ensure that the sacrifices of our veterans will never be forgotten.

I am honored to represent Corporal Mote in Texas’ 4th Congressional District. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and to the people of North Texas.

HONORING MS. SHARON HODGE

HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary advocate for our Nation’s veterans and congratulate her on her retirement.

For 28 years, Sharon Hodge has left an indelible mark on the landscape of veterans’ ad-

vocacy through her work with Vietnam Veterans of America.

As Deputy Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Sharon’s expertise has guided critical legislative and regulatory strategies at the national level. Her counsel to myself and my staff on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs has been invaluable, shaping policies that touched the lives of countless veterans.

Through her tireless efforts, she established a robust online advocacy network, enlisting over 2000 legislative coordinators and spearheaded numerous grassroots campaigns. Sharon’s work facilitating this activism was instrumental in the enactment of the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act, the Toxic Exposure Research Act, and the PACT Act.

Beyond her role at VVA, Sharon served as Commissioner for the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs, where her work led to the establishment of a crucial VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic.

Sharon Hodge’s accolades are numerous, each one a testament to her compassion and tireless advocacy. From the VVA Commendation Medal to the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Brain Trust Award, her contributions have been recognized at the highest levels.

I thank Sharon for her decades of dedicated service to Vietnam Veterans of America and to our Nation. May her legacy inspire us all to champion the causes that matter most, to stand by our veterans, and to leave no one behind.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MRS. LINDA K. MITROVICH

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and lasting contributions of Mrs. Linda K. Mitrovich. A critical member of the environmental community, Mrs. Mitrovich leaves behind an indelible legacy of service and dedication to environmental conservation, both within her community and around the world.

For over 30 years, Mrs. Mitrovich fought to protect our environment and ensure our beautiful natural landscapes are preserved for future generations. For 25 years, she served as President and Co-Founder of Solution Strategies, a firm that helps public- and private-sector clients create solutions and resolve conflicts for businesses, governments, communities, and the environment. Through her leadership in Solution Strategies, Mrs. Mitrovich was renowned for her unique ability to unite stakeholders with conflicting interests to achieve a common goal. Her unparalleled skills in policy negotiation, strategy development, and coalition building allowed her to accomplish critical milestones for the environmental community.

In 2013, Mrs. Mitrovich co-founded Preservation Ranch, LLC, an organization focused on supporting and furthering the goals of conservation programs that support local economies. Preservation Ranch later established a partnership with the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, forming a groundbreaking pilot project that unites private and public lands under a conservation management program to directly benefit local communities.

In addition to Mrs. Mitrovich’s work in the private sector, she was instrumental in the environmental regulation space at both the state and federal levels. Her experience in the environmental regulatory arena included work with some of our country’s most essential environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act.

While exhibiting critical leadership in the environmental field, Mrs. Mitrovich also played a pivotal role in her local community. She served as City Councilwoman and Deputy Mayor of Poway, California, and served on numerous governmental boards and committees overseeing water in San Diego County and the state of California. She was also a Trustee of Whittier College, where she received her Bachelor of Arts, and her service to her community was recognized by the California State Government when she was honored as Woman of the Year by the State Senate and State Assembly.

Mrs. Mitrovich’s enduring spirit will live on in her family and the legacy of her work to preserve our environment. I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to Mrs. Mitrovich’s loved ones. I know that they, along with the people of California’s 8th Congressional District, join me in celebrating her life and legacy.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR PETTY OFFICER JOHN OESTE

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Petty Officer Third Class John Oeste of Prosper, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His selfless service in the United States Navy is a remarkable testament of his desire to protect the country he loves.

PO3 Oeste hails from a military household and heeded the call to defend his nation after being inspired by multiple generations of service. His family served in the First World War, Second World War, and the Korean War. As such, he understood that the many freedoms we enjoy today come through sacrifices of the highest order. During his time in the Navy, PO3 Oeste served as a Master Helmsman and Flight Deck Landing Signalman on the USS *Fife*, a Spruance-class destroyer.

From sailing the Latin American seas to patrolling the dangerous Persian Gulf during the

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Iran-Iraq War, PO3 Oeste helped assert the strength and dominance of the United States around the world. Moreover, he helped provide extensive humanitarian assistance and disaster relief for the people of Agalega Island, which suffered immensely during the 1983–84 cyclone season in the Indian Ocean. After his Naval service, PO3 Oeste completed his college education and met his wife, Patricia. Together, they raised two very successful children.

In his free time, PO3 Oeste teaches in his local church's pre-school classes during Sunday services. He and Patricia also help fundraise for underprivileged families and victims of domestic violence. These efforts will help to ensure that those facing difficult circumstances will not be overlooked. As a veteran, PO3 Oeste proudly goes the extra mile to show his appreciation for those who served. One of his longtime personal projects is to conduct research and present awards, medals, and pictures of fallen veterans to their family members. His ultimate goal is to share the untold story of these veterans to ensure that they will never be forgotten.

I am honored to represent PO3 Oeste in Texas' 4th Congressional District. I am privileged to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and to the people of North Texas.

HONORING DR. W.N. REED'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY AS PASTOR OF NEW MOUNT MORIAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. FRANK J. MRVAN

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this time to congratulate Reverend Dr. W.N. Reed on his 50th Anniversary as Pastor of New Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in Gary, Indiana. For his fifty years of service and dedication to his congregation and to the community of Gary, Reverend Reed will be honored at a Pastoral Anniversary Celebration that will take place at New Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, November 19, 2023.

Reverend Reed grew up in Brownsville, Tennessee, where he attended Carver High School. He went on to graduate from Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, and served in the United States Army before accepting the call to the ministry. Reverend Reed was ordained in 1963 at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Brownsville. While in Tennessee, he served as Pastor of Saint John Baptist Church in Dancyville, as well as Macedonia Baptist Church and First Baptist Church in Brownsville. In 1973, Reverend Reed became Pastor of New Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in Gary, Indiana. Throughout his fifty years of leadership, the church has become a beacon of light and hope for the community of Gary and beyond. In 1998, the church added an administrative/education wing and a fellowship hall. Reverend Reed and the parishioners are proud of the church's thriving and active Sunday school programs, numerous ministries, and growing congregation.

During his tenure, Reverend Reed has given of his time and efforts to various organi-

zations and endeavors including the Baptist Ministers Conference of Gary and Vicinity, Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc., Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Baptist Convention of Indiana, New Era District Association, One Church One School Initiative, and the NAACP, to name a few. For his unwavering devotion to providing spiritual guidance and support to so many in need, Reverend Dr. W.N. Reed is worthy of the highest praise.

Reverend Reed's remarkable commitment to the church and to his community is exceeded only by his admiration for his amazing family. He and his wonderful wife, Rosetta, have raised two beloved sons.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring and congratulating Reverend Dr. W.N. Reed on his 50th Anniversary as Pastor of New Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church. For his lifetime of leadership and selfless service to others, he is truly an inspiration to us all.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF ELLSWORTH "TONY" WILLIAMS

HON. SCOTT FRANKLIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize veteran and hero, Major Tony Williams, who today will be inducted into the Florida Veteran's Hall of Fame. Tony's exemplary service has made an unmistakable impact in the lives of countless Florida veterans.

Ellsworth 'Tony' Williams was born in Fort Hood, Texas as a dependent of a career Vietnam Army combat veteran before making the decision to join the U.S. Army himself, serving 24 years on active duty, eight as an enlisted soldier and sixteen as a commissioned officer.

Tony's service in the U.S. Army was marked by distinction. He was awarded a Bronze Star and three Meritorious Service Medals for his actions in Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Perhaps most remarkable, Mr. Speaker, is the care Tony displays to his community and fellow vets. After retiring in 2007, he returned to school to pursue graduate training in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Troy University.

After receiving his counseling degree, Tony made it his mission to help veterans struggling with their mental health, becoming a leading voice for veteran suicide prevention in his community. Tony established his nonprofit, Veterans Counseling Veterans, Inc., to provide counseling and emotional support to active duty, National Guardsmen, reservists, veterans and their families. Veterans Counseling Veterans also provides professional and career development support for those seeking a career in behavioral health.

Tony received several mental health counseling awards to include a 2014 National Award for Social Service from the American Mental Health Counseling Association. He sits on the Hillsborough Veterans Council, Florida Mental Health Counselor Association's Military Interest Committee, Crisis Center of Tampa Bay's Regional Veterans Advisory Council and is the American Legion Post 5 Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee Chair.

Major Tony Williams says it's in his bones to help veterans and their families, and he believes his latest recognition from the Florida Veteran's Hall of Fame is simply another 'assignment from God,' calling him to continue his good work.

I commend Major Williams for his sacrifices both in the U.S. Army and in his tireless efforts to help fellow Florida veterans. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating him.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR MAJOR JOHN McDERMOTT

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major John McDermott of Rockwall, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Major McDermott honorably served in the United States Marine Corps during the Cold War and the Global War on Terrorism.

Major McDermott was born in a military household, and his family's history of service dates back to the First World War. From a young age, he had a strong passion for aviation and military history. In 1986, Major McDermott enlisted in the Marine Corps and commissioned as an officer four years later. He served as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer and Plane Captain of an F/A-18 Hornet fighter aircraft. Major McDermott was responsible for flight safety protocols, aircraft readiness, and maintenance of numerous other aircraft such as the Harrier jump jet and KC-130 Hercules. His duties not only took him around the continental U.S., but also to Australia, Japan, and South Korea. During the Cold War, relations with the Soviet Union were highly contentious. Skilled officers like Major McDermott were tasked with supplying Hornets so they may patrol the skies over the Sea of Japan to counter Soviet and North Korean aggression in the region. For his service, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal among many others.

After his retirement from the Marine Corps in 2009, Major McDermott continued to make an impact on the community by working with the Civil Air Patrol. Additionally, he is a lifetime member of the CW02 Randolph Marine Corps League Detachment, whose members volunteer in community service programs throughout Rockwall County. Major McDermott's lifelong knowledge of aerospace and defense issues has allowed him to continue his career with L3Harris in Greenville, Texas. Even in civilian service, he is steadfast in his commitment to safeguard our Nation. Major McDermott is married to his wife Karen, and they have three sons, two of whom are current cadets at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.

I am honored to represent Major McDermott in Texas' 4th Congressional District. It is a privilege to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and to the people of North Texas.