

Peer Network, where she provides peer support, suicide prevention, and community outreach for veterans in need. As a Mentor Coordinator for Veterans Court, she assists justice-involved veterans by offering guidance, accountability, and a second chance at success through rehabilitation and support.

In 2024, Petty Officer Waldrep graduated from the Texoma Regional Police Academy, where she received the Grayson College Veteran Award for her outstanding achievements. She went on to serve with the Grayson County Sheriff's Office and now provides security for Austin College. In addition to her service and career, she is a devoted mother of four, continuing to lead with strength and compassion.

I am deeply honored to recognize Petty Officer Third Class Ashten Waldrep for her courage, patriotism, and lifelong devotion to serving others. She exemplifies the very best of Texas' 4th Congressional District and of the United States of America.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR.  
JAMES E. ALDREDGE

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2025*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. James E. Aldredge, a trailblazer, educator, and public servant whose lifelong commitment to improving the City of Fresno—particularly for residents in Southwest Fresno—has left an enduring mark on our community. Dr. Aldredge passed away peacefully on October 12, 2025, surrounded by his loved ones.

Born in Gilmer, Texas, and raised in Fresno from the age of four, Dr. Aldredge's story is one of perseverance, excellence, and service. A star athlete at Edison High School, he signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates at just seventeen years old, showcasing the talent and determination that would define his life. After a career-ending injury ended his professional baseball aspirations, Dr. Aldredge redirected his focus to education, an area he would champion for decades to come.

Dr. Aldredge earned degrees from Fresno City College and California State University, Fresno, before completing both a master's and Ph.D. in Organizational Development at the University of Southern California, with additional studies at Oxford University. His academic journey reflected his deep belief that education is the key opportunity, a principle he shared throughout his life with students and colleagues alike.

In 1985, Dr. Aldredge made history when he became Fresno's first Black City Manager, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations of leaders. His steady leadership, integrity, and commitment to equity guided the city through times of transition and progress. After retiring from City Hall in 1989, he continued to serve the community as an educator at Fresno State, City College, the University of San Francisco, and Fresno Pacific University, mentoring countless students who would go on to serve their own communities with the same sense of purpose.

Beyond public service, Dr. Aldredge dedicated his time to numerous organizations, in-

cluding the boards of Saint Agnes Hospital, Kings View Behavioral Health, and CEN-CAL Business Finance Group. He also established a foundation that grew over one million dollars in assets to support students, athletes, and social services. Among his many honors, he received the B'nai B'rith Award for his lifelong commitment to justice and equality and was inducted into the State Center Community College District's Wall of Honor at the African American Historical and Cultural Museum.

Dr. Aldredge was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Daisy Rae, and his brother, John Aldredge. He is remembered by his family, friends, colleagues, and former students for his humor, wisdom, and unwavering belief in Fresno's potential. His legacy continues through the James E. Aldredge Foundation, which embodies his vision of empowering others through education and civic engagement.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in recognizing and celebrating the extraordinary life of Dr. James E. Aldredge. His story reminds us that true leadership is rooted in service, resilience, and commitment to uplifting the communities we call home.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD**

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2025*

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for the vote series on November 17, 2025 due to a funeral for a family member.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 286; YEA on Roll Call No. 287; and NAY on Roll Call No. 288.

HONORING BILLY GENE TEAGUE  
WITH A CONGRESSIONAL VET-  
ERAN COMMENDATION

**HON. PAT FALLON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2025*

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Specialist Billy Gene Teague of Denison, Texas, and to honor him with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Specialist Teague honorably served his country across multiple branches, including the United States Marine Corps Reserve from 1981 to 1982, the Texas Army National Guard from 1982 to 1983, the United States Army from 1986 to 1987, and the Texas State Guard from 1988 to 1990 and again from 2015 to 2017.

Throughout his military service, he held roles as a tracked vehicle repairman, armored vehicle landing bridge operator, military police supervisor, and later as a nurse and military police officer in the Texas State Guard, where he achieved the rank of First Lieutenant. His duty stations included Parris Island, Aberdeen, Fort Hood, Hunter Army Airfield, the Rio Grande Valley, Fort Walters, Dallas, and Camp Pendleton. For his exemplary service, Specialist Teague received numerous awards and honors, including the Army Service Ribbon, the Medal of Merit, the Adjutant Gen-

eral's Individual Award with two stars, the Commanding General's Individual Medal, the Humanitarian Service Ribbon, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon, the Cold War Medal, the Sons of the American Revolution Good Citizen Bronze Medal, and the Texas Medal of Merit.

Beyond his military service, Specialist Teague has remained deeply devoted to his fellow veterans and the Texoma community. He developed both the Terminally Ill Veteran Flag Program and the Texoma Heroes Project, dedicating more than 1,500 volunteer hours to recognizing hundreds of veterans. He also created a Trauma-Affected Veteran training curriculum for law enforcement and an ASVAB pretest program for students at Grayson College.

Specialist Teague currently serves as Chaplain for the American Legion Post No. 29 in Sherman, Texas, where he continues to assist veterans and their families. A proud husband, father of four, and grandfather of six, he lives by the values of God, family, and country. Despite being a 100 percent disabled veteran, he continues to dedicate his life to serving others and uplifting the veteran community across North Texas.

I am deeply honored to recognize Specialist Billy Teague for his courage, patriotism, and lifelong dedication to serving both his country and his community. He exemplifies the very best of Texas' 4th Congressional District and of the United States of America.

COMMEMORATING THE 245TH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE FIRST AFRI-  
CAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF RICH-  
MOND, VIRGINIA

**HON. JENNIFER L. MCCLELLAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2025*

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 245th anniversary of the First African Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, one of the oldest continuously operating Black congregations in the United States and a cornerstone of faith, resilience, and community leadership in the Commonwealth and in Virginia's 4th Congressional District.

The church's roots run deep into Richmond's past. On July 1, 1841, members of three Baptist churches gathered at First Baptist Church to formally organize what was to become "The African Baptist Church of Richmond." That founding charter included stipulations that reflect the fraught realities of its time, including the oversight of religious instruction by a committee of white members of Richmond's Baptist churches.

Founded in 1780, during a time when the vast majority of African Americans in Virginia were enslaved, First African Baptist Church began as a congregation of free and enslaved worshippers who sought spiritual refuge and self-determination in the heart of Richmond. Despite extraordinary obstacles, the congregation persevered, grew, and became formally recognized as an independent church in 1841 under the leadership of Reverend Robert Ryland.

Throughout its remarkable history, First African Baptist Church has stood as a beacon of hope and activism in Richmond. It was a center for abolitionist organizing, education, and

later, for the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia, playing a vital role in advancing justice, equity, and opportunity for all.

I had the honor of joining the congregation for their 245th anniversary celebration and witnessing firsthand the deep faith, unity, and pride that continue to define this historic church. Under the dedicated leadership of Reverend Dr. Rodney D. Waller, First African Baptist Church remains a powerful force for good, empowering future generations through worship, education, and community outreach.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the 245th anniversary of the First African Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, and in recognizing the profound contributions this historic congregation has made to our Commonwealth.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OTTAWA POST 3134

#### HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2025*

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ottawa Post 3134 for their 80 years of dedicated service to the Veteran community of the Iron River area.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), established in 1899, is an organization of United States Veterans who fought in wars on foreign land, water, or airspace. For over a century, the organization has steadfastly supported the needs of our Nation's disabled and impoverished Veterans, as well as widows of Veterans and the dependents of former Servicemembers.

This historic organization was born from the unification of several communities following the Spanish-American War. Small groups of Veterans returning from campaigns in Cuba and the Philippine Islands formed local communities composed of those who shared the dangers faced while in combat. Eventually, these small, localized societies found each other, culminating in the creation of the American Veterans of Foreign Service (the predecessor to the VFW) founded by James C. Putnam, a Veteran of the Spanish-American War.

On October 17, 1945, the petition charter was granted to form VFW Ottawa Post 3134 to support Veterans returning from World War II. Since then, they have provided a wide range of services, including assistance with VA benefits, community outreach, financial support for Veterans in need, and programs to honor the sacrifices of those who served. Today, Post 3134 continues to serve the needs of Veterans from its surrounding communities under the leadership of its Commander, Jesse Casari.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize VFW Ottawa Post 3134 for their 80 years of service to the Veteran community of the Iron River area. I thank them for their dedication, compassion, and selflessness on behalf of our Upper Peninsula Veterans.

#### REMEMBERING SERGEANT MICHAEL VERARDO

#### HON. GREGORY F. MURPHY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2025*

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in remembrance of American Hero, Retired Army Sergeant Michael Verardo. After a heroic fifteen-year battle with catastrophic injuries from his deployment to Afghanistan, Sergeant Verardo tragically lost his life this past August. He will be laid to rest on November 19, 2025, in Arlington National Cemetery.

Sergeant Verardo enlisted in the Army in 2001, joining the distinguished 82nd Airborne Division as an infantryman and serving multiple tours between Iraq and Afghanistan. During his deployments, he received numerous well-deserved awards and decorations for his service, including two Purple Hearts for deeds in April 2010. He received the second award as the result of life altering injuries from an improvised explosive device detonation.

He underwent extensive speech, visual, physical, and occupational therapy to recover from his injuries. During his fight, he sought to help other veterans by selflessly dedicating time to their needs and struggles. Through the Wounded Warrior Project and countless other initiatives, he worked alongside his wife, Sarah, to make meaningful changes not just in individual lives but through legislation at the state and federal levels.

His wife, Sarah, continues his work as the CEO of the Independence Fund, where she supports service members, combat Veterans, their Caregivers, and families. Michael inspired many of the Independence Fund's programs, and his legacy will live on in all those they continue to help.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in remembering the life and legacy of American Hero, Sergeant Michael Verardo, who will continue to serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made to protect our Nation.

#### HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALLS TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

#### HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2025*

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to rise in recognition of the distinct achievements and dedicated service of the Falls Township Police Department on the occasion of their 75th anniversary.

For three quarters of a century, the men and women of the Falls Township Police Department have served their community with distinction, dedication, professionalism, and valor. Established on January 2, 1950, under the leadership of Chief Franklin Kirby as a one-man operation in a rapidly growing township, the department's contributions to public safety in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, are immeasurable, and their legacy is one of commitment, adaptability, and steadfast protection of those who live, work, and travel through Falls Township.

The Falls Township Police Department traces its origins to that humble beginning in

1950, when Chief Franklin Kirby patrolled alone in a vehicle without modern amenities like radios, computers, or air conditioning, safeguarding a small farming community surrounding historic Fallsington. From those early days, the department has grown alongside the township's transformation into a thriving suburb encompassing Levittown, Fairless Hills, and parts of Morrisville, meeting the evolving needs of a population that has swelled and diversified.

Over the decades, the department has expanded to a professional force of sworn personnel, operating continually with increasing capabilities. It has adapted to the demands of modern law enforcement, incorporating advanced training, technology, and community-oriented policing while maintaining operational readiness in an ever-changing environment. The officers of the Falls Township Police Department have skillfully navigated shifts in population, infrastructure, and societal challenges, providing decades of vigilant patrol, investigative excellence, and emergency response for the residents and visitors of this vital Pennsylvania community. Their continual adaptation to new tools, techniques, and threats is a true testament to the resiliency, professionalism, and reliability of the men and women of this department.

Their unwavering dedication to duty and willingness to innovate to meet the needs of a dynamic community is exemplified in their growth into a full-service agency, embracing advancements in equipment, tactics, and community partnerships. Today, under the leadership of Chief Nelson E. Whitney, II, the professionals of the Falls Township Police Department continue to uphold the highest standards, providing patrol, criminal investigation, crisis response, and outreach that directly support the safety and well-being of our neighborhoods.

Throughout its history, the Falls Township Police Department has embodied the core principles of law enforcement: integrity, service, and community trust. They have protected the community, responded in times of crisis, and stood ready to answer the call whenever needed. Their officers and support personnel have been, and continue to be, among the most skilled and committed in Bucks County.

As we mark this significant milestone, it is my distinct honor to celebrate those who have faithfully served in the Falls Township Police Department over the past seventy-five years. Their sacrifices, and those of their families, have ensured the peace and security of our community. It is with deep gratitude that we acknowledge their service and pay tribute to their courage and commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Falls Township Police Department and in extending a heartfelt thank you to the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, in this distinguished agency. May the next seventy-five years of officers serve with the same valor, honor, integrity, and dedication to duty as the exemplary men and women of the Falls Township Police Department have so expertly demonstrated over the last three-quarter century of service.