

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.

HONORING KRISTEN HARRIS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Kristen Harris on her recent dual appointment as Executive Assistant to Vicksburg Police Department Chief Larry Burns and as the Department's Data and Compliance Specialist.

Ms. Harris is uniquely qualified for these positions. When the department received its National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) certification in 2020, she served as the sole NIBRS trainer for the State of Mississippi. In her new role, she will also leverage NIBRS data to pursue federal Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants, the leading source of criminal justice funding for state and local jurisdictions.

A 2008 graduate of Vicksburg High School, Ms. Harris earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from Tougaloo College, where she graduated as valedictorian. She went on to complete a master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Memphis. Her professional career includes service with the Department of Public Safety, where she first worked with the NIBRS system.

In 2021, Ms. Harris returned to her hometown of Vicksburg to help the city manage a \$3 million COVID relief grant. She later served as Chief of Staff for former Mayor George Flaggs, Jr., bringing her leadership and expertise to City government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Kristen Harris for her commitment to public service, her professional excellence, and her continued contributions to the City of Vicksburg and the State of Mississippi.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER "CHRIS"
LYNCH WITH A CONGRESSIONAL
VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Command Sergeant Major Christopher "Chris" Joseph Lynch of Rockwall, Texas, and to honor him with a Congressional

Veteran Commendation. CSM Lynch honorably served in the United States Army for twenty-seven years.

During his distinguished military career, Command Sergeant Major Lynch served in a wide range of roles, from basic infantry duties to senior leadership as the Command Sergeant Major of battalion-sized formations. His service record reflects a steady progression of responsibility—from fire team leader and squad leader to platoon sergeant, company first sergeant, and, ultimately, battalion Command Sergeant Major. In addition to these leadership positions, CSM Lynch held numerous noncommissioned officer staff roles within combat formations. His extensive service took him across the globe, including assignments in Korea, Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

CSM Lynch's outstanding service earned him numerous commendations, including the Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars, five Meritorious Service Medals, three Army Commendation Medals, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, and the Presidential Unit Citation. These honors reflect his exceptional leadership and steadfast dedication to his country and fellow soldiers.

Since retiring from the Army, Chris has continued his service as the Director of Elections for Rockwall County, where he leads a team known for integrity and excellence. He also serves as Post Vice Commander of the Rockwall Terry Fisher American Legion Post, where he established a Veteran Relief Program supporting local veterans in need. Additionally, he helped create a Youth Leadership Symposium that introduces middle school students to fundamental leadership principles.

I am deeply honored to recognize Command Sergeant Major Christopher Joseph Lynch for his extraordinary courage, patriotism, and lifelong commitment to service. He exemplifies the very best of Texas' 4th Congressional District and of our great Nation.

RECOGNIZING MR. MICHAEL TARR
ON BEING NAMED MARQUETTE
COUNTY VETERAN OF THE YEAR

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Mr. Michael A. Tarr for being

named the 2025 Marquette County Veteran of the Year. This well-deserved honor reflects his steadfast dedication to his fellow Servicemembers, the communities throughout the Upper Peninsula, and our Nation.

Mr. Tarr faithfully served 26 years in the U.S. Army, earning numerous military decorations including, but not limited to, the Army Commendation Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon. These honors stand as a testament to Mr. Tarr's unwavering dedication to his fellow Servicemembers and our great Nation.

After retiring from the U.S. Army, Mr. Tarr continued to serve his community, fellow Veterans, and country as a member of numerous Veteran organizations. Serving as a National Committee Member and Volunteer Director for Wish for Our Heroes (W4OH) since 2012, he has invested innumerable hours in helping Servicemembers and Veterans who are facing financial hardships. Playing a key role in fundraising for W4OH, he has been essential in raising over \$15 million and granting over 20,000 wishes across our country. Mr. Tarr also serves as Executive Director for Walk Among Heroes, leading operations to return WWII Veterans to battlefields they once fought on by coordinating all travel, lodging, and transportation. In addition to helping share the stories of WWII Veterans, he has had the distinct honor of leading battlefield walks for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.

Mr. Tarr has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to ensuring that the sacrifices of our Nation's heroes are not forgotten by future generations. In 2025, he launched the Walk Among Heroes Youth Ambassador Program where high school students walk the grounds of historic battlefields while learning from WWII Veterans.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in recognizing Michael A. Tarr for receiving the prestigious honor of being named the 2025 Marquette County Veteran of the Year. I thank him for his enduring commitment to Veterans, his community, and our great country.