

Desert Storm and in all the many military deployments and associated activities of our nation since 1945.

And, finally, three African American Floridians have received our nation's highest medal for valor; the Medal of Honor. Adam Paine, Clifford Sims and Robert Jenkins.

Adam Paine was a Seminole Negro Indian Scout with the 4th US Cavalry and earned his medal 20 September 1874 on the Staked Plains of Texas. He was born in Florida and moved to Mexico just before the outbreak of the Civil War and crossed into Texas after the war to join the Army. To quote from his citation; "Seminole Negro Indian Scout Adam Paine; for gallantry when attacked by a hugely superior party of Indians. This is a Scout of great courage" signed Colonel Ranald MacKenzie; commanding the regiment.

Clifford Sims of Port St. Joe, Florida, was a Staff Sergeant with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam when he earned his medal 21 February 1968 in a battle associated with the Communist Tet Offensive near Hue.

He was a squad leader leading his men in an attack against heavily fortified enemy positions. He exhibited excellent leadership throughout the battle and saved his men from serious injury when an enemy ammo position exploded. Shortly afterward, when the unmistakable sound of an enemy booby trap being sprung was heard, he threw himself on the enemy device and was killed. His men lived.

Robert Jenkins Jr., of Interlachen, Florida was a Private First Class in the United States Marine Corps when he earned his medal on 5 March 1969 near the DMZ in northern Vietnam. He was serving as a machine gunner with Recon unit when his position was assaulted by NVA Regular troops. He and his assistant gunner fought back effectively, but when an enemy grenade was thrown into their position, Jenkins, without hesitation, placed himself between the grenade and his comrade, thus receiving the wounds from which he died later that day. His fellow Marine lived. He came to visit Robert's grave in Florida just this past year.

Well, this is but a sample of Florida's Black military heritage which we wish to commemorate with this memorial project. It is an interesting, unusual and distinguished heritage; one that needs to be made known to all Floridians. Out "Walk Through Time" memorial exhibit will be a start toward making this part of our state's long and incredibly diverse history available to the general public.

We extend our most profound thanks and appreciation to all of those who have, or who will, assist us in the creation and completion of this project.

RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT DONATION TO THE GAY'S HILL BAPTIST CHURCH IN MILLEN, GA

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 1997

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, in response to the malicious burning of the Gay's Hill Baptist Church in Millen, GA, the American Jewish Committee presented a donation of more than \$87,000 to the church's congregants for reconstruction on December 15, 1996. The remarks that David A. Harris, the executive director of the American Jewish Committee,

gave at the presentation were especially inspirational and carried the message of racial healing. Mr. Harris' apt remarks follow:

GAY'S HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

(By David A. Harris, Executive Director,
American Jewish Committee)

Reverend Baldwin, Ladies and Gentlemen, Brothers and Sisters, Perhaps they're out there right now, maybe hiding behind that tree, or over in that field, or behind that car. I'm speaking of those who would commit such an act as burning a church. Maybe they're out there right now, watching us. I hope so.

Perhaps they thought they had found an isolated church to burn down, a church no one would notice, much less care about.

They were wrong. This church is now at the center of the universe. It might as well be located in the middle of Times Square in New York, or between the White House and the U.S. Congress in Washington.

Perhaps they thought only Baptists would care.

They were wrong. It's not just Baptists who care. It's all caring people who care. And if this was an assault against Baptists, then all of us—of many religions—are today Baptists.

Perhaps they thought only African Americans would care.

They were wrong. It's not just African Americans who care. It's all caring people who care. And if this was an assault against African Americans, then all of us—of many races—are today African Americans.

Perhaps they thought only Christians would care.

They were wrong. It's not just Christians who care. It's all caring people who care. And if this was an assault against Christians, then all of us—of many faiths—are today Christians.

Perhaps they thought their hate would prevail.

They were wrong. Our love will. Our bonds—across race, religion, geography—will prevail. As we stand here today, hand in hand, arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder, we know that to be true.

Perhaps they thought destruction would prevail.

They were wrong. Construction will prevail. We are builders, not destroyers. The rebuilding of this church is but one example.

Perhaps they thought an exclusive view of America would prevail.

They were wrong. An inclusive vision of America—of all its people and their rich diversity—will prevail. We reaffirm that vision today, as we must every day. An America where we will learn to live together as brothers and sisters, else we die together as fools, as the late Reverend King so poignantly stated.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Brothers and Sisters,

When we at the American Jewish Committee learned about the spate of church burnings, we wanted to extend a helping hand—not just in words, words can be quite cheap, but in deeds. We wanted to rise up as part of the community of conscience and stand with those in pain and in need. We wanted to do something tangible.

For many of us, the sight of church burnings was all too familiar. Near and far, we have witnessed many of our synagogues, far too many, go down in ashes—targets of hate. We have experienced the sense of fear, of vulnerability, of anger, and of isolation that comes with such tragedies. And we know what can happen when we are alone. Yes, we know.

For too long, we were alone, as you have been alone.

But no more. Enough. Many good people are waking up and want to be counted. You are not alone. We are not alone. Just this past week, for example, Jews around the world were celebrating the holiday of Chanukah, the eight days marking the first recorded struggle for religious freedom, the freedom to be different. A Jewish family outside Philadelphia experienced a frightening event.

During the night, someone came, broke a window and destroyed the candelabra, the menorah as we call it, shining bright in their window. But what happened next? By the end of that day, virtually every home in the immediate neighborhood, Christian and Jewish, had placed a menorah in their front window. And something very similar happened in Billings, Montana three years earlier when thousands of Christian homes placed menorahs in their windows after a similar attack.

That's true faith, that's genuine kindness, that's real brotherly and sisterly love.

No, none of us should be alone. None of us should ever again experience the fear of isolation. And none of us should ever again remain quiet or inactive at such moments. That would be akin to acquiescence, to defeat.

And that's why we wanted to help, to stand up and be counted, to affirm that we are all God's children, all created in the Divine image. In doing so, we were motivated by the words of Samuel:

"The Lord declares to you that He, the Lord, will build a house for you . . . He shall build a house for God's name . . . Be pleased, therefore, to bless your servant's house, that it may abide before You forever; for You, O Lord God, have spoken. May your servant's house be blessed forever by Your blessing."

Joining me here today are a number of American Jewish Committee colleagues whom I'd like to ask to join me now. From Atlanta: Lois Frank, Steve Kleber, Sherry Frank and Sunny Stern. From Philadelphia: Lisa Weinberger and Eric Kantor.

And though technically not a colleague, I'd also like to ask my 17-year-old son, Danny, to come up. I asked Danny if he would come with me from New York because I wanted him to experience this day for himself and hopefully to draw strength and inspiration from it.

Reverend Baldwin, my colleagues and I at the American Jewish Committee said we wanted to do something tangible. As you know, we and the whole family of the American Jewish Committee undertook a fund raising effort to help you and your congregation rebuild the Gay's Hill Baptist Church. I am pleased today to be able to give you these checks totalling more than \$87,000 that resulted from the effort.

And now, may I ask you all—Christian and Jew, black and white, we who seek to build, not destroy; to love, not hate; to heal, not wound—to join hands for a moment of prayer.

"Our God and God of all Generations, We rejoice at the gift of friendship and fellowship that is ours this day.

We ask Your blessing upon those who lead and serve this Congregation. Bless them in their endeavors to build a new House of Prayer.

Give special strength, wisdom and courage to those who will labor to build this new House. Be with them in the days and months ahead.

And may they achieve the goal we all seek, the gift we Jews call Shalom, the gift of peace. And let us say, Amen."