

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE PURPLE HEART VETERAN
JUSTIFICATION ACT, H.R. 3970

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address a troubling situation that Congress can address before our wounded Veteran's hard earned medals are diminished in importance.

As you may recall last year, Congress passed S. 923 denying burial benefits to veterans convicted of Federal Capital Offenses. The primary reason for the need of this legislation was to prevent individuals such as Tim McVeigh, the convicted murderer and terrorist, from being buried in our national cemeteries. We passed this legislation by voice vote with many members speaking out in favor of its passage.

I would like to relate the story of a woman by the name of Leah Schendel. On December 18, 1980, Mrs. Schendel was brutally raped and murdered by Manuel Babbit. Mrs. Schendel was a loving mother and at the time of her death was 78 years old, less than 5 feet tall, and weighed under 100 pounds. In 1981, Mr. Babbit was convicted of the horrible murder and was sentenced to death. Mr. Babbit's final appeal was scheduled for just this past month.

How might this problem relate to the problem of the Purple Heart Medal? Well, Mr. Babbit, a convicted murderer and death penalty recipient, recently received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds that he received in Vietnam over 25 years ago. While I do not argue that Mr. Babbit is eligible for the award, I have serious problems with the circumstances surrounding Mr. Babbit's application for the Purple Heart Medal. With no other choice, the military approved the award, which was required by Mr. Babbit's attorney, Charles Patterson.

I find the timing of Mr. Babbit's reception of this award troubling. Assuming the worst case scenario, Mr. Babbit is attempting to use the honor that comes along with reception of this medal to curry favor with an appellate judge to reduce his sentence or grant him a new trial. I find it appalling that someone would attempt to bring dishonor to an award granted to individuals who bravely fought for the greatness of the nation by using it to assist a murderer's appeal process.

H.R. 3970 would help put an end to problems like this. It would also go a long way to preserving the honor and dignity of the Purple Heart Medal. This legislation would prohibit the awarding of the Purple Heart Medal to individuals convicted of Federal Capital Offenses. The measure does not address eligibility for the award, but rather denies reception of the award for convicted Capital Offenders. The legislation is not retro-active and would not strip individuals of the Purple Heart Medal who had received the award prior to their con-

viction. Finally, the legislation is narrow in focus and would only apply to a very select group of individuals that have committed the most heinous crimes in our society.

Mr. Speaker, it is not often that we can act before a problem occurs, but that is exactly what this Congress can do on this matter. This legislation has been endorsed by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and was introduced with the support of the House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump. I would urge my colleagues to help preserve the dignity of the Purple Heart by co-sponsoring this important legislation.

IN HONOR OF RALPH A. VASEY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the achievements of Ralph Vasey on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

Ralph Vasey, a boxer in his teens, joined the Marine Corps and served diligently in the second world war, where he was wounded three times. He returned home to the honorable trade of Roofer, Waterproofing and Allied Worker. He held offices, including that of the president, for Local 44 through three decades; and was among the founders of the Pension Fund and Health and Welfare Fund for Local 44. Ralph Vasey has been a hard and industrious worker in all his pursuits and exemplifies the American Spirit. He worked with his hands and built a life he can be proud of. He has not only helped himself, but also persevered to help those in his community.

Ralph Vasey is also a devoted family man. He is the proud father of Michael. And his two granddaughters, Jenelle and Carrie, have made him a great grandfather of Jonathan, Brandon, Michael, Nicholas, Mikayla and soon to arrive Justin. In all his pursuits, Ralph Vasey has not lost sight of what is truly important: His family.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in recognizing the life accomplishments of a father, grandfather and great-grandfather, and a veteran of our country, Ralph Vasey, on his 80th birthday.

146TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
TRAGEDY AT EL PUEBLO, CO

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, Whereas, in 1842, El Pueblo was built a few miles above the junction of the Napeste River, present day Arkansas River, and Fontaine-qui-bouille, present day Fountain Creek, just north of the Mexican Border, and

Whereas, the Native American inhabitants of the area, had been displaced from their homes without regard to their survival and had suffered immensely, and

Whereas, at Christmas 1854 a party of Utes, and some Jicarilla Apaches, led by Chief Tierra Blanca fought with the occupants of El Pueblo resulting in the deaths of at least twelve Spanish surnamed individuals, and the capture of the two boys, and the deaths of an unknown number of Native Americans, and

Whereas, the settlers killed at El Pueblo were early residents of Pueblo, braving new frontiers and looking for a better way of life, and became victims at a time when cultures were in conflict, and

Whereas, it has been one-hundred forty-four years since the tragedy at El Pueblo.

Now, therefore, I Scott McInnis, a United States Congressman from the State of Colorado, on behalf of the Fray Angelico Chazes Hispanic Genealogical Society of Southern Colorado, proclaim this a significant event in Pueblo and Colorado's history and what led to this tragedy could have been prevented by the promotion of greater understanding between peoples and cultures and should never be allowed to happen again.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GERALD FROM

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay a respectful tribute to Dr. Gerald From, who has provided invaluable services to the South Bronx Mental Health Council since 1969 and made a tremendous contribution to the Gouverneur Hospital Community Advisory Board.

A long-time resident of New York, Dr. From received his B.A. from Yeshiva University, his Masters in Counseling Psychology from Columbia Teachers College and his Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counseling from New York University in 1987.

A man of many talents, Dr. From is a licensed substitute teacher for the New York City school system, as well as a rehabilitation counselor and a psychologist. He has worked at the Rockland County Center for the physically handicapped, the Pesach Tikvah Guidance Center, and he also ran his own part-time private practice.

Dr. From has made significant contributions to the Bronx Mental Health Clinics. In a variety of capacities during his 28 years of service there, he acted as both a senior and a supervising vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Dr. From impact on the New York community has also been profound. He was a remedial mathematics teacher at an antipoverty program called Project Talent, and he served as an audiometric tester for the Jewish Educational Committee, testing thousands of youngsters for hearing defects. He has served

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

on many boards, including the board of directors for the 219 Henry Street Corporation and the Department Center for Education and Health Services.

Dr. From has also received numerous honors, ranging from being named among the "Outstanding Young Men in America" in 1974, to being included in the 1997-98 Whos's Who in Medicine and Health Care.

Tonight, however, Dr. From will be honored for his outstanding contribution to the Gouverneur Hospital Community Advisory Board. Dr. From was first elected to the board in 1974 by over 3,000 diverse members of the New York City community. He served as treasurer until 1977, and then proceeded to serve as chairman of the board for 21 years. The community and Gouverneur Hospital have benefitted immensely from his wisdom and guidance.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in thanking and congratulating Dr. From for his many years of outstanding service to this board and to the community. It is a privilege to have such an outstanding leader in my district.

TRIBUTE TO OFFICER CLAIRE CONNELLY

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fallen police officer from Riverside, California. Officer Claire Connelly, who was an 18-month veteran of the force, is the first female Riverside police officer ever to be killed in the line of duty. She contributed generously of her time and talents to help others and to make her community a better place in which to live and work.

She was a bright, caring, and compassionate individual who made an everlasting impression in her short life. Claire Connelly went out every day to make a difference and she did—some days in small ways, some days in big ways, and on July 12, 1998, at the cost of her life. One cannot ask more of peace officers. Officer Connelly deserves our deepest respect and gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me today in remembering this fine officer. On behalf of the residents of the 43rd Congressional District, I extend my prayers and most heartfelt sympathy to her family and loved ones.

TRIBUTE TO THE BRONX PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, once again it is with pride that I rise to pay tribute to the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade, on its tenth year of celebrating the culture and contributions of the Puerto Rican community to our nation.

The Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade will be held on Sunday in my South Bronx Congres-

sional District. The event is the culmination of a series of activities surrounding Puerto Rican Week in the Bronx.

Under the leadership of its founder, Mr. Angel L. Rosario, and its president, Mr. Francisco Gonzalez, the Parade has grown into one of the most colorful and important festivals of Puerto Rican culture in the five Boroughs of New York City and beyond.

The Parade brings together people from all ethnic backgrounds, including Puerto Ricans from the island and all across the nation.

It is an honor for me to join once again the hundreds of thousands of people who will march with pride from Mount Eden to 161st Street and the Grand Concourse in celebration of our Puerto Rican heritage. The Puerto Rican flag and other ornaments in the flag's red, white, and blue will decorate the festival.

As one who has participated in the parade in the past, I can attest that the excitement it generates brings the entire City together. It is a celebration and an affirmation of life. It feels wonderful that so many people can have this experience, which will change the lives of many of them. There's no better way to see our Bronx community.

The event will feature a wide variety of entertainment for all age groups. The Parade ends at 161st and the Grand Concourse, where live music, Puerto Rican food, crafts, and other entertainments await partakers. It is expected that this year's Parade will surpass last year's half-million visitors.

In addition to the Parade, President Gonzalez and the many organizers will provide the community with nearly a week of activities to commemorate the contributions of the Puerto Rican community, its culture and history.

Mr. Speaker, it is with enthusiasm that I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this wonderful celebration of Puerto Rican culture, which has brought much pride to the Bronx community.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JOHN KELLY

HON. FLOYD SPENCE

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to pay tribute today to a truly exceptional Marine, and American, Colonel John Kelly, who serves as the Marine Corps Liaison Officer to the U.S. House of Representatives. Today, John pins on the rank of "full-bird" colonel. I cannot think of an officer more deserving of this promotion.

Military promotion boards make their selections based on sustained and superior performance, as well as on an officer's ability to lead. John has demonstrated throughout his career that he is an outstanding leader of Marines. And that is the essence being a Marine!

A native of Brighton, Massachusetts, John began his military career by enlisting in the Marine Corps on September 10, 1970. From the beginning, John demonstrated his leadership potential. Only nineteen months after enlisting, John was meritoriously promoted to sergeant—a feat that is nearly unheard of! Shortly thereafter, John was selected for the coveted Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in just over three years.

Upon graduation, John was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps on November 1, 1975. Throughout his twenty-eight-year career, John Kelly has commanded every echelon of infantry unit from fire team to battalion. His non-Fleet Marine Force assignments included serving as executive officer of the Marine detachments aboard the aircraft carriers U.S.S. *Forrestal* and U.S.S. *Independence*. During his ship-board duty, John acquired his "sea-legs" by qualifying as "Officer of the Deck Underway," a qualification that is difficult to achieve and allowed him to conn the ship during flight operations. Among his other assignments, John was stationed at the Marine Corps' Combat Development Command where he served as instructor at "The Basic School," manpower monitor, and director of the Infantry Officers Course. John also has earned post-graduate degrees from Georgetown University and the National Defense University.

On June 11, 1995, Colonel Kelly reported for duty at the Marine Corps' House Liaison Office and immediately assumed responsibility for the direction of the liaison office's activities, which include responding to Congressional and constituent inquiries as well as planning, coordinating and escorting Members and Congressional Staff on domestic and overseas travel. I benefited personally from John's professionalism, thoroughness and attention to detail, having had the opportunity to travel with him to military installations around the world. I know that I speak for all of my colleagues in thanking John for his integrity, his dedication to duty and, above all, for his friendship. John is a natural leader in the finest tradition of the nation and the Marine Corps.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize John's family. The national asks a lot of our service members. And when we ask a lot of the men and women in uniform, we also ask a lot of the spouses and families that are left behind. During John's career, he and his family have made many sacrifices for his nation. Therefore, I would also like to thank John's family—his lovely wife, Karen, and their three children, John, Robert and Kathleen—for their support to John and for their contributions to the Marine Corps.

Mr. Speaker, I know first hand that Colonel John Kelly is ready to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. John epitomizes what it means to devote oneself to serving the nation. I look forward to the day when I will call him "General." Semper Fidelis!

IN RECOGNITION OF MICHAEL D. WIDLER

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of an individual who has, for the past 30 years, faithfully and honorably served in the United States of America while in the United States Naval Reserves. His name is Michael D. Widler of Grand Junction, Colorado. During his distinguished career, Mr. Widler, a Master Chief Petty Officer, provided exceptional service and sustained outstanding performance while serving with the Naval Security Group, from October 8, 1969 through