

Mr. Speaker, Matthew Nonnemacher represents the best of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Matthew was once asked why he wanted to help the poor and his answer was plain: "So the poor can have everything that we have—like food, clothes, and a place to stay." I am glad the White House has recognized Matthew's achievement by inviting him to the White House Conference on Philanthropy. Matthew's dedicated parents, John and Sandi, also deserve praise for their heroic efforts to guide and help their son.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to bring Matthew's achievements to the attention of my colleagues and wish Matthew the best in his future philanthropic efforts.

A VERY SPECIAL MEMORIAL

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 20, 1999

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to participate in an extraordinary event in my Congressional District. The Ex-Students Association of Blooming Grove High School in Blooming Grove, Texas, recently dedicated a World War II memorial listing the names of all area residents who had served in our armed forces in World War II.

What made this event so extraordinary is that the memorial contains the names of 324 men and women, and two German Shepherds. These 324 men and women served in the military from a town of less than 1,000 in population. I can't imagine that any community of comparable size anywhere in America contributed as many of its sons and daughters to the war effort between 1941 and 1945.

Of the 324 from this remarkable Navarro County community, a total of 15 lost their lives. Additionally, a tremendously high number of the soldiers, sailors, and airmen from Blooming Grove were officers, with 37 holding officer rank. One of these 37, Ray Morris, rose to the rank of Admiral.

Two dogs, "Snitch" Lane and "Jack" Garrison were pressed into duty as sentries. Bruce Lane, one of the driving forces behind the creation of the memorial, was only eight years old when his German Shepherd, "Snitch," was drafted by the Army. Bruce remembers how the dog's handler wrote letters home on a regular basis, letting him know that "Snitch" was OK.

The memorial, which was dedicated on October 16th, consists of five pieces of Georgia gray granite inscribed with the names, rank, and branch of Blooming Grove residents who served during World War II.

Members of the committee that raised money to construct the monument included Jean Hinkle, Alice Bell, Bob Lane, Bruce Lane, Jack McGraw, Ralph and Reba Ferrell, Shelby Thedford, Brad Butler, and Earl Smith. The committee overseeing construction included Bob Lane, Dana Stub, Loyd and Mary Gowd, and Helen Farrish. The beautification committee for the memorial included Terry Golden, Jean Hinkle, Bruce Lane, Elaine Campbell, and Alyne McCormick. They are all to be commended for their efforts in erecting this memorial.

Every community that contributed to the war effort should have a memorial to those who

served, but few towns are as deserving of a memorial as Blooming Grove. Communities like Blooming Grove won the war and helped save the world for democracy. It is highly appropriate that Blooming Grove residents' service has been recognized with a very special memorial.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 20, 1999

Mr. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on October 19, 1999, I inadvertently voted "no" on final passage of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (RC 513). This bill is very important because it will make it easier for the disabled to re-enter the workforce and be productive members of society. America is about freedom, and that includes the freedom to work and not be penalized because of a disability.

I strongly supported this bill when the Committee on Ways and Means approved it, and I hope the President signs the bill when it reaches his desk.

COMMENDING THE COLCHESTER LIONS CLUB FOR FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 20, 1999

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend members of Lions Club of Colchester, Connecticut for fifty years of service to their community.

The Club, formed on August 2, 1949, provides support to a wide array of activities in Colchester. It has a long-standing commitment to young people through its sponsorship of sports leagues and the creation and expansion of scholarship programs. Members of the Club work hard each and every year to provide vital support to local food banks. In addition, the Colchester Lions Club has been a leader nationwide in raising funds to eradicate preventable causes of blindness. In 1993, the Club was recognized by its national organization as one of forty "model clubs" in the country for its successful work in support of this effort.

The Lions Club might be most well-known in town for decorating and lighting a large Christmas tree on the town green. Some of the founding members of the Club planted this tree forty years ago and successive generations of members have tended it. Much like the tree, the Club has grown and flourished and become a central part of the community.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Colchester Lions Club on its Fiftieth Anniversary. I am confident that it will continue to play a vital role in Colchester for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN THOMAS G. OTTERBEIN, USN

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 20, 1999

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and say farewell to an outstanding Naval Officer, Captain Thomas G. Otterbein, as he prepares to retire upon completion of 29 years of distinguished service. It is a privilege for me to honor his many outstanding achievements and commend him for his devotion to the Navy and our great Nation.

A native of Bad Axe, Michigan, Captain Otterbein is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Class of 1970. After receiving his commission, he completed flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator in 1973. His first operational tour was with Fighter Squadron 111 flying the F-4 Phantom II, where he made deployments to the Mediterranean Sea and Western Pacific Ocean aboard USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CV-42) and USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV-63) respectively. Upon completion of F-14 Tomcat training, his next sea tour was with Fighter Squadron 51, where he made an around the world cruise aboard USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70). In recognition of his superior aeronautical skills and leadership abilities, Captain Otterbein was selected for F/A-18 Hornet training and subsequently became the Executive Officer of Fighter Squadrons 161 aboard USS *Midway* (CV-41). Following that tour, he was the Executive Officer of Fighter Squadron 195 and had command of that squadron for eighteen months.

Captain Otterbein successfully completed Nuclear Power Training and was soon back in the fleet, serving as Executive Officer of USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN-71). He subsequently assumed command of USS *Nashville* (LPD-13) and led the ship through Operations Support/Uphold Democracy in Haiti, earning the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and Battle Efficiency "E" Award. The crowning achievement of his career came when he reported as Commanding Officer, USS *Harry S Truman* (CVN-75), leading the crew of our newest aircraft carrier through her sea trials and initial training operations.

Captain Otterbein completed shore assignments at Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 4, where he was the Operations Officer and Operational Test Director, and as the Executive Officer and acting Commanding Officer of the Navy Fighter Weapons School (Top Gun). He has also had tours on the staff of Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet as the Safety Officer and as the senior aviation representative on the Chief of Naval Operations' Strategic Studies Group.

Captain Otterbein has been a dynamic and truly outstanding Naval Officer who has been a great mentor and a charismatic leader. He is a passionate advocate of the Sea Services and has devoted himself to caring for our Sailors in the Fleet and their families. His contributions and accomplishments will have long term benefits for both the Navy and the country he so proudly honors with his uniform. As Captain Otterbein prepares for quieter times with his wife Catherine Mary, I am certain that my colleagues will join me in thanking him for his many years of Naval service.