

to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

NIGHTSIDE CHAT ON TOPICS OF CONCERN TO AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, once again we are here this evening for a little nightside chat. There are a number of different subjects I would like to cover this evening.

I would like to start out by talking about the loss of a good friend that I had last week, just a short comment in that regard. We are going to move on and talk about the Congressional Medal of Honor. We lost one of our heroes. If you want a true definition of hero, take a look at the people that serve in our military forces. We lost one in Colorado. I will talk a little about him. Then I want to move on and talk about the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms people.

We had a very interesting item in Colorado over the weekend about the enforcement, or lack of enforcement, by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms department in their inspections regarding firearms sales. As you know, across the country guns have become somewhat of a sensitive issue.

Now, last week when I addressed you, we talked a little on Operation Exile. I know that my colleague, the gentleman from the State of Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM), is going to introduce a bill tomorrow to assist our local States and our local communities on their Project Exile, so we will highlight a little of what he is attempting to do. We will talk about our public awareness campaign and talk about some of the responsibilities of gun ownership.

Then, if we have some time this evening, I would like to touch again on the death tax. As many of you know, that is a very punitive tax in our system. It is a tax that has devastating impacts on small businesses, has devastating impacts on farms and ranches across the country; and, frankly, this is not a justified tax.

It is a tax supported by the administration. In fact, the administration has proposed a \$9.5 billion increase in the death tax this year. I am confident that we can stop that. But just so you no, there is a big difference of opinion on the policy of the Democratic administration to raise death taxes and our position on the Republican side that says death taxes are fundamentally unfair, they are unjustified, and they should be eliminated in this country.

But we will get to all that in due time. Let us start first of all with just a comment about a friend of mine, a classmate of mine, a fellow named Richard. I will not go into his last name, but I want to tell Members, my friend committed suicide last week.

I hope that in your walks of life, sometimes we get so busy that we forget that some people have some demons within them that they cannot control, that they are having a difficult time with life.

What I try and do, and it just came back home this last week when I was at the service of this gentleman, and he really was, I think he had some demons he could not control; but it brought back the thought that, gosh, any time we see somebody in some despair, we should always urge them, before they take that step, that ultimate and in some regards very selfish step of suicide, urge them to call a suicide watch or get some assistance.

I am confident that my friend, had my friend just had a few more minutes of being able to calm down and think out the situation, we would have avoided a tragedy; not so much just a tragedy to my friend, but a tragedy to his friends, to his family, to his wife, and to his children. His wife, Anna, is a splendid person. She now faces a tremendous challenge ahead with these children.

The circumstances of this suicide were tragic. I think the circumstances of any suicide are tragic. And if there is a justification for mental health assistance in this country, it is that suicide tragedy that takes place across the entire spectrum, across the entire spectrum of age, every day in this country.

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So I just urge my colleagues again, we run at a fast pace around here, but if one has an opportunity to put one's hand on the shoulder of a friend, and I am sure all of my colleagues would do it, and I wish I would have had the opportunity to do it, it might just work; it might just prevent somebody from being in such despair that they ruin the most ultimate gift that God could give us.

PUEBLO, COLORADO: HOME OF A HERO, WILLIAM J. CRAWFORD

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about another sad event last week, although the gentleman lived a full life, and that is about a gentleman named William Crawford, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. My district is the Third Congressional District of Colorado, and just for those of my colleagues that need reminding, that includes most of the mountains of Colorado, all the resorts: Aspen, Colorado; Vail, Steamboat, Telluride; it has the industrial community of Pueblo, it has the San Luis Valley, it has Durango, down there in the Four Corners, the Anasazi ruins, the Colorado National Monuments, part of the Rocky Mountain National Monument, part of the Black Canyon National Monument. As my colleagues can see, any time I talk about my district, I get in kind of a promotional mood because it is such a wonderful district.

But there is another reason that stands out besides the natural beauty of this district and the people of this district, and that is that Pueblo, Colorado is what we call the Home of Heroes. Mr. Speaker, this last week we had four living members from the community who received the Congressional Medal of Honor. This was not awarded, they deserved this, they worked for it. I do not have to go into what the Congressional Medal of Honor means, although in my opinion, any recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor is at the very highest of the echelon as far as a definition of what being an American is all about.

Well, last week we lost one of our four; it was William Crawford. He passed away last Tuesday and actually they were holding a memorial service today at the United States Air Force Academy. I thought I would talk just a little about what Mr. Crawford did and how he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor. I guess the best way to do that is just take directly from the script which described his actions.

But before I do that, let me say that one of the things that causes me some, I guess one would say discouragement, is when I read throughout the sports pages of our newspapers in this country, we read about heroes in sports. My opinion is there are celebrities in sports and there are a lot of talented celebrities in sports, but we really ought to be very cautious and very selfish about the use of the word "heroes." The word "heroes" really should be placed not on sports figures, but figures like William Crawford, figures like the firemen or the policemen that lose their lives. I think we lose a police officer every 28 hours in this country. This year has been a bad year for our firemen as well. We have lost several firemen in the line of duty.

But let us go back to Mr. Crawford. I am not over-using the word when I use the word "hero." He was given this medal and this recognition for conspicuous gallantry at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy in Italy on September 13, 1943. When Company I attacked an enemy-held position on hill 424, the 3rd Platoon, in which Private Crawford was a squad scout, attacked as base platoon for the company.

After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine gun and small arms fire. Locating one of these guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Private Crawford, without orders and on his own initiative, moved over the hill directly into the line of fire and crawled to a point within a few yards of the gun emplacement and single-handedly stood up and destroyed the machine gun emplacement, killed three of the crew with a hand grenade and thus, enabled his platoon to continue its advance.

So he climbs over the first hill, he is in the direct line of fire of a machine gun, he is able to crawl under the machine gun fire, he gets right up to the