

on from a devastating injury as well as any man."

MOTHERHOOD REDEFINED

Two months after Dawn Halfaker was wounded, Juanita Wilson arrived on a stretcher at Walter Reed, her left arm in bandages, her hand gone. It was August 25, 2004, just days after a roadside bomb went off under Wilson's Humvee. She came to the hospital as the Iraq war's fourth female combat amputee—the first who was a mother.

From the beginning, Wilson decided she did not want her only child to see her so wounded. She talked to the 6-year-old by phone. "Mommy's okay," she assured the girl. "What are you doing at school now?"

It was only after four weeks that Wilson allowed her husband and child to travel from Hawaii, where the family had been stationed, for a visit. By then, Wilson was more mobile. She asked a nurse put makeup on her face, stowed her IV medications into a backpack she could wear and planned an outing to Chuck E. Cheese's.

"Mommy, I'm sorry you got hurt," her daughter, Kenyah, said when she arrived, hugging her. And then: "Mommy, I thought you died."

The sort of mother who mailed her daughter penmanship exercises and math problems from the war zone, Wilson wanted Kenyah to stay focused on school and the ordinary concerns of being 6. "I wanted it to be like I was going to be okay when she saw me," said Wilson, 32.

Changes revealed themselves one at a time. Wilson remembered that her daughter eyed a plate of croissants in the hotel-like room where the family stayed at Walter Reed that first time they were together again. The child asked her mother for a sandwich.

"I realized, 'Oh, I can't even make a sandwich,'" she said. "It was a hurting feeling, your kid asking you to make her a sandwich and you're saying, 'You'll have to make your own sandwich' to a 6-year-old."

In November 2004, she heard that a female pilot had just been shot down in her Black Hawk helicopter in Iraq. Within days, Tammy Duckworth arrived at the hospital missing both legs, her right arm in jeopardy. She lay in a coma, her husband and parents at her bedside. "You care about everybody, but somehow amputees connect to amputees," Wilson said, especially if they are women. "It was a big deal to me," she said.

Wilson headed to the pilot's room to sit with her family. She found herself returning to Duckworth's bedside again and again—arranging her get-well cards, decorating her room, kissing the top of her head. One day, when Duckworth, now 37, was conscious, Wilson rolled up her sleeve to reveal her own amputated arm.

In a soft voice, Wilson said, she reassured her that another soldier was with her now. Wilson told her she could not imagine exactly how she felt but that she cared deeply.

She could not hold the pilot's hand because Duckworth was too injured.

Instead, Wilson stroked her hair.

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

By mid-2005, Juanita Wilson was back to the rhythms of daily life with her husband and daughter. The couple bought a house in the suburbs of Baltimore. She took a new job with the Army, is a staff sergeant and is up for a promotion.

At 6:30 one winter morning, Wilson was cooking Cream of Wheat on her stovetop—taking great care to pour with her prosthetic and stir with her other arm. In her life as a woman, a mother and a wife, there are limits she once didn't face and could not even imagine.

"Kenyah," Wilson called.

When the child came down the stairs in bright pink pajamas, she saw her mother's

trouble: Wilson was in uniform, almost ready for work, but she needed help with her hair.

Wilson sat on a chair as Kenyah brushed gently, and then brought her mother's hair up in a bun. She is "a happy helper," Wilson said.

The girl, now 7, tells all her friends about "handie," as she has nicknamed Wilson's artificial limb. "My daughter is definitely not bashful about telling anybody," Wilson said. "She tells other kids at school. Kids don't judge you. They think it's the coolest thing that I have a robotic arm."

But Wilson continues to shield her daughter from the discomfort and anguish of her injury. "I didn't want to take her childhood away. That's my focus—that she is happy and enjoying life and not thinking about me. She'll ask me questions, and I'll say, 'Oh that's not for children to worry about'"

On that winter morning, Wilson had already tied her combat boots, her right hand doing most of the work and her prosthetic holding the loop before it is tied. "I want it to be known that just because you're a female injured in combat, you don't have to give up your career and you don't have to look at yourself as disabled," she said.

She added: "I haven't met any female soldier yet who feels she shouldn't have been there."

How the world sees war-wounded women like her, she said, is a little harder to pinpoint.

"When you're in Walter Reed, you're in a bubble. I could walk around with my arm off. It's acceptable. Everyone there knows. . . . But when you walk out that gate, it's a whole different world. No one knows what I've been through, no one probably cares, and to avoid all of that, I never come outside without my [prosthetic] arm. Never."

Wilson added, "I have noticed that when you're a female walking around as an amputee, everybody's mouth drops."

Lately, she has set new career goals, aiming high, perhaps even for the Army's top enlisted job. She listened with glee to the news that Tammy Duckworth—at whose bedside she had prayed—had decided to run for Congress in Illinois.

Soon after she learned about her friend's new political life, she called Duckworth, joked that she would serve as her assistant in Congress, and then reflected: "It definitely says the sky is the limit."

SCARS FARTHER FROM THE SURFACE

Long out of Walter Reed, Dawn Halfaker is also deeply into a life remade. It has been 17 months since she was wounded, and her favorite yoga tape is playing on a small VCR in an apartment in Adams Morgan. Halfaker barely seems to notice her image, which once was difficult to bear and is now reflected back at her from a large mirror: red hair and trim, athletic build, one arm extended perfectly above her head.

In place of her missing limb is a T-shirt sleeve, empty, hanging. Following along with the yoga tape, Halfaker visualizes that she still has a right arm; it helps her balance.

She retired from the Army as a captain—a tough choice only four years out of West Point, but one she made as she tried to imagine fitting back into military culture. Without her arm, she could no longer do push-ups, tie her combat boots, tuck her hair neatly under a beret.

She still has friends in Iraq, although one was killed in December. But the Bronze Star that she was awarded last year for her role at the Diyala police station is tucked away in a box. That day, she was in charge of 32 soldiers during the sustained firefight, taking a position on the roof with a grenade launcher, then quelling a jail riot.

Lately, she works at an office in Arlington, mostly as a consultant to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. She has applied to graduate school in security studies, bought a condo in Adams Morgan and co-wrote a book proposal about postwar recovery.

To get to this new place, Halfaker has made all sorts of adjustments. She types on a computer one-handed. Drive a car with a push-button ignition. Uses her knees to hold steady a peanut butter jar she wants to open. To write a note or a letter, she learned to use her left hand, practicing nightly at Walter Reed as she penned her thoughts in a journal.

"You don't think about how many times you have a lot of things in your hands, like for me just carrying my coffee from cafe downstairs up to my office on the seventh floor is a total battle every day," she said. She has to hold the coffee cup, scan her identification badge, open doors, press elevator buttons. Sometimes she spills. Sometimes the coffee burns her.

In her apartment, Halfaker bends and stretches into yoga poses, her artificial arm lying beside the mirror. More functional prosthetics did little good for her type of injury, she found. So she persuaded prosthetic artists at Walter Reed to make this one—lightweight and natural-looking, easier on her body, allowing her to blend in with the outside world.

Halfaker goes without a prosthetic when she is exercising, jogging through the streets of Washington or snowboarding in Colorado or lobbing tennis balls around a court.

"I never really wanted to hide the fact that I was an amputee," she said, "but I never wanted it to be the central focus of my life." For some men, she said, it seems a badge of honor that they do not mind showing. "For a woman, at least for me, it's not at all. . . . The fact that I only have one arm, I'm okay with that, but I want to be able to walk around and look like everyone else and not attract attention to myself."

Last year, a guy she met on the Metro asked her out, saying that he thought she was pretty. She agreed to meet him for lunch but felt nervous about mentioning her missing limb. It turned out that he was no less interested, she said. In the fall, she started dating an Army anesthesiologist, to whom she has become close. He is deployed in Iraq.

As a woman in her twenties, "I want to look as good as I can look," she acknowledged. "I think that's very much a female perspective, based on the roles that society has put men and women in."

Even more, she said, "I don't want to be known for being one-armed. I want to be known for whatever it is I do in my life."

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT COLONEL DEWAYNE L. KNOTT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Dewayne L. Knott of St. Joseph, Missouri. He has served most recently as the Vice Commander of the 139th Medical Group of the Air National Guard based in St. Joseph. After 37 years of distinguished service, Lieutenant Colonel Knott is retiring from the Missouri Air National Guard.

The Lieutenant Colonel began his years of service in March of 1969 as an enlisted member of the United States Air Force. He served

dutifully in Kuwait during Desert Storm operations in 1991 and in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003 to 2004. He was recently decorated with Valor for his duty in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Lieutenant Colonel Dewayne L. Knott. His many years of distinguished service and commitment to serving his country have been an inspiration. I commend him for his service and I am honored to represent him in the U.S. Congress.

TRIBUTE TO TINA FALLON

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to State Representative Tina Fallon, who after 28 years of service, has chosen not to seek another term in the State House of Representatives. This extraordinary woman is certainly a valuable asset to the State of Delaware as well as being a friend to all. She has been described as not only a benevolent and accomplished citizen, but also an admirable leader. A fixture of her beloved Seaford-area district, she truly is a distinguished Delawarean.

In addition to raising four sons with her late husband, James Fallon, she spent three decades as a Seaford School District biology teacher. While there, she shared her love of education with young people. Upon her retirement from teaching in 1978, she turned her attention to politics, offering Delaware another three decades of amicable and selfless service. Additionally, she served as a member of the influential Joint Finance Committee.

After 14 consecutive terms in office, Representative Fallon is well recognized and respected by her constituents. She has received numerous honors during both her political and professional tenure. In 1998, then Gov. Thomas R. Carper declared her as the "Travel and Tourism Person of the Year," honoring her dedication to promoting and developing the state's tourism industry. In that same year, the National Republican Association recognized her as a Legislator of the Year. Clearly, the service offered by Representative Fallon has been a vital attribute to innumerable causes.

I congratulate State Representative Tina Fallon for her years of remarkable service and countless contributions to the State of Delaware. I am sure that in retirement, she will remain a dynamic and influential member of the community. I would like to thank her for the many sacrifices that she has made for the State of Delaware.

RIGHT-TO-RIDE LIVESTOCK ON FEDERAL LANDS ACT OF 2005

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a strong cosponsor of H.R. 586, the Right-to-Ride Livestock on Federal Lands Act of 2005.

Pack and saddle stock animals were a critical element in many early Americans' liveli-

hood. This bill will preserve their traditional, cultural and historic use of these lands and facilitate the continued access of pack and saddle stock animals on parts of National Park System, Bureau of Land Management lands, National Wildlife Refuge lands and the U.S. Forest System. This legislation will also ensure that any proposed reduction of these uses will undergo the full review process required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Defining managed recreation of this historical practice within our national forests is critical in recognizing the cultural contributions and precedent of pack and saddle stock in our public lands above simple recreational use.

In my congressional district in Tennessee, I have spoken with many of my constituents whose families have spent generations riding horseback through our National Forest trails. Especially in this age of the internet, television and video games, it is vital that we enhance opportunities for people of all ages to come and engage in outdoor activities in America's backyard.

I believe that horse and saddle stock hold a unique place in our heritage. We must pass this bill to ensure its historical preservation and continued enjoyment as a national pastime.

I want to thank the sponsor of this legislation for his support of this important issue and hope that all members can support this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. PEGGY REIPSA ON HER RETIREMENT FROM ORLAND PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT 135

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mrs. Peggy Reipsa on the occasion of her retirement from Orland School District 135. On June 30, 2006, Mrs. Reipsa will be stepping down after 34 years of distinguished service to the young people of Orland Park, Illinois.

From 1977 to 1998, Mrs. Reipsa served School District 135 in multiple capacities, including that of Special Needs Resource Teacher, Reading Teacher, and Instructional Services Assistant. In July of 1998, she accepted a position as Principal of Orland Center School, where she has served the students, faculty, and the community with great distinction.

On behalf of the families of School District 135, I would like to thank Mrs. Reipsa for her tremendous contribution to the education of so many young children over the years. Her guidance and leadership have helped countless children develop the confidence, knowledge, and skills to lead fruitful and fulfilling lives.

So one again, I congratulate Mrs. Peggy Reipsa and wish her a happy and relaxing retirement.

RECOGNIZING LARRY L. HARPER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to posthumously recognize Larry L. Harper of St. Joseph, Missouri. Mr. Harper was an outstanding Missourian with a passion for flying and his love of flying has remained an inspiration long after his passing. That passion will be memorialized by a statue, The Aviator, commissioned by his wife Carolyn and placed at Rosecrans Memorial Airport in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Larry's love of flying began at a young age, he would hang around the Rosecrans Airport offering to wash and fuel planes in exchange for flying lessons. While working as a mechanic, Larry eventually earned his pilots license. He logged over 30,000 hours in flight over 40 years of flying for four different companies in aircraft ranging from Aircoups to Lear Jets. His last flight came just one week before his passing, as he jumped at the opportunity to fly a Lear 55, every flight was a special flight for him.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Larry L. Harper. He was a pilot whose passion for the skies inspired the many people whom he met. He has been missed, but his love of flying will never be forgotten and the commitment of his beloved wife Carolyn ensures that all who come to Rosecrans Airport will know his passion. I commend him for his spirit and commitment to aviation and I was honored to represent him in the United States Congress.

IN HONOR OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL SOCIETY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor, recognition and remembrance of the men and women of our local law enforcement agencies who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty and every police officer who braves daily peril in order to protect and safeguard the citizens of our Cleveland community.

The Greater Cleveland Peace Officers Memorial Society was formed by a dedicated group of police officers and their families, committed to keeping the immense sacrifice and memories of their loved ones forever alive for themselves and for the entire community to honor. Their focus resulted in a striking, black polished granite monument, consisting of gently sloping walls that cover 1,000 square feet and tower six feet above the ground. The monument bears the name, law enforcement agency, and date of death of each of the 158 officers who have died in the line of duty. Every May, the Greater Cleveland Peace Officers Memorial brings together hundreds of police officers and their families from throughout greater Cleveland in unity with the general public to recognize and honor the fallen, to celebrate their lives and great contribution,