

and friends who lost loved ones in the fire that took seven young lives on October 28, 2008.

As parents, we grieve with the parents who grieve. As siblings, we mourn with those who mourn the loss of sisters and brothers. As friends, we weep with those friends who weep.

In the midst of grief, we point to hope. We hope that our words bring some comfort, and we pray that these everlasting words will bring peace to the family, friends and loved ones of Cassidy, Lauren, Justin, Travis, Allison, William, and Emily:

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53: 4-5).”

Thank you, Representative CLYBURN, for offering this resolution. South Carolina and the nation unite in our sympathy and support for those affected by this tragedy.

VETERANS DAY: A GRATEFUL
NATION REMEMBERS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in tribute to this Nation's veterans, a distinguished group of Americans which I am so proud to be associated with.

Prior to my election to public office, it was my privilege to work on behalf of veterans for more than 15 years as a chief psychiatric nurse at the Dallas VA Hospital, Day Treatment Center, as well as the Day Hospital in Dallas, TX.

Our 25 million living veterans need Congress' continued support for health care and compensation for those with service-connected disabilities. Educational support, counseling, and employment-assistance programs for those readjusting to civilian life also must be sustained. These programs and others to assist the survivors of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, help acknowledge a debt we can never truly repay.

We cannot hide from the truth that close to 25 percent of our Nation's homeless are veterans, many of whom suffer from chronic mental illness. We also cannot ignore that unemployment rates among service-connected disabled and recently discharged veterans remain unacceptably high, and that it is estimated that over 10,000 Iraq and Afghan veterans suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

I will proudly join millions of North Texans to honor our veterans on November 11th—many of those just returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, others who long ago returned from Europe, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and all those brave men and women who served elsewhere during the years between these conflicts.

TRIBUTE TO BG PAUL W. TIBBETTS,
JR.

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2007

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, each Veterans Day we recognize and pay tribute to the extraordinary courage of those who have served in our nation's armed forces. The sacrificial service of these brave men and women committed to God, family, and country has preserved the freedom of this great Nation and granted freedom to millions around the world. Though, we must never forget that freedom is not free. The price of freedom is paid for with the lives and blood of the men and women of our Armed Forces.

Just 8 days ago on November 1, 2007, our Nation lost retired BG Paul W. Tibbetts when he died at the age of 92 surrounded by family and friends in Columbus, OH. At a time when our Nation witnessed the rape of Nanking, the Death March to Bataan, and the tragedy of Pearl Harbor, General Tibbetts fulfilled his call to duty and today we honor him for his service.

February 23, 1915, was a significant day in history as it marked the birth of Paul Warfield Tibbetts, Jr. to Mr. Paul and Enola Gay Tibbetts. Just 30 years later their son would command the most famous single military air strike in world history over Hiroshima, Japan, in a plane carrying his mother's namesake.

In one of his very rare interviews, General Tibbetts, offered his perspective on his role in the bombing of Hiroshima. “I'm not proud that I killed 80,000 people, but I'm proud I was able to start with nothing, plan it and have it work as perfectly as it did,” he said years later. “You've got to take stock and assess the situation at that time. We were at war, and you use anything at your disposal.”

This gives us great insight into the life and legacy of BG Paul W. Tibbetts, whose unwavering commitment epitomized the words of the 18th Century British philosopher John Stuart Mill, “War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.”

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AP-
PROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008—CON-
FERENCE REPORT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3222) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this legislation.

The Defense Appropriations conference report for fiscal year 2008 provides \$459 billion in funding for our military operations, an increase of \$39 billion over this year's enacted levels. This report begins to address this country's military readiness crisis, modernizes our forces to meet future threats throughout the world, and ensures that our troops get the benefits they have earned.

This bipartisan bill invests in equipment, training, and weaponry—including body armor and armored vehicles to save the lives of our soldiers. It restores depleted equipment for our National Guard and Reserve, provides a 3.5 percent pay raise for all military personnel, and fully funds the \$1.9 billion TRICARE shortfall without cost to our troops. The bill provides an increase in funding for wounded warrior assistance and funds programs to improve coordination between the Defense Department, DOD, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, improve DOD's health record-keeping, and enhance preventative medicine programs.

The bill strengthens the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which helps to secure loose nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union. It also provides accountability by increasing funding for additional Inspector General civilian personnel to oversee DOD's contract services, and establishes a clear set of rules-of-engagement for contracted security personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also includes language that I advocated for prohibiting funding for permanent U.S. bases in Iraq.

The bill includes much that benefits Colorado. Section 8119 mandates that work to destroy chemical weapons stockpiles at Pueblo Chemical Depot be completed, preferably by the Chemical Weapons Convention treaty deadline of 2012, and in any event by no later than 2017. The bill also includes funding to help meet this deadline—\$142.4 million for chemical demilitarization activities. This funding will accelerate weapons destruction activities already underway and will supplement \$35.1 million for the construction of on-site chemical destruction facilities already provided in the fiscal year 2008 Military Construction spending bill.

I strongly support these provisions because I think we need to continue to do all we can to safely and expeditiously remove the mustard agent remaining at the Pueblo depot. The sooner we clean up these weapons, the sooner the surrounding communities will be safe—and a clean-up by the Chemical Weapons Convention treaty deadline of 2012 will come at a lower cost to taxpayers.

I am also pleased that the conference report includes provisions I fought for to help Colorado's educational institutions—\$3.2 million for the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs to help UCCS, working together with NORTHCOM, to offer the Nation's first federally funded Ph.D. program in homeland defense; \$1.6 million for UCCS, working with the national Space Education Consortium, to advance science, technology, engineering, and math education; and \$2 million for Colorado State University's DOD Center for Geosciences/Atmospheric Research to continue providing research on priority environmental problems to the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force.

As a co-chair of the Bi-Cameral Caucus on Parkinson's Disease, I am also pleased that