

chapter in their lives, they will continue to find new ways to serve their community.

Although it seems that we as a Congress can't find ourselves in agreement on many things, one thing that is beyond dispute is that both Congressmen CRAMER and EVERETT have embodied the ideal of civil servants who tirelessly have served the interests of the American People.

TRIBUTE TO CARLOS MARIN

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 27, 2008

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my dear friend, Carlos Marin, the United States Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission, IBWC. On September 15th, he departed with his IBWC Mexican counterpart, Mr. Arturo Herrera, on a chartered flight to survey the flooding of the Rio Grande River along the border area of Presidio, Texas, and Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico. While working to assess the damage and coordinate joint-response efforts with the local officials and the Mexican Government, their chartered flight crashed, taking the lives of all those aboard, in a remote area of the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Mr. Marin joined the IBWC as a staff engineer in 1979, and he rose through management and executive positions through 2006, when President Bush appointed him as U.S. Commissioner to the IBWC. Our Nation has lost a true public servant who worked for a quarter of a century with the International Boundary and Water Commission on issues such as water debt, and most recently the rehabilitation of the levees in Hidalgo County. He was one of the few that understood the water issues facing the border region, and was a friend to everyone in South Texas.

My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and to the others who were on the plane with him. His tragic passing leaves a void in our hearts and minds. I am personally saddened to lose a wonderful friend; and it will not be the same working with the IBWC without Carlos as its commissioner. His exemplary dedication and service to the South Texas community have been crucial to future development, especially with the much-needed levee repairs that helped save residents in my district from flooding during the hurricanes this past summer. We in our South Texas community will be forever grateful to Carlos for his contributions, and I thank his family for their support of Carlos' work with IBWC.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to honor the memory of Mr. Carlos Marin.

USS "MISSOURI"

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 27, 2008

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, today I was honored to deliver the keynote address at

the keel laying ceremony for the new USS *Missouri* (SSN-780), a *Virginia* class attack submarine. The ceremony was held at the General Dynamics Electric Boat facility in Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

In Navy tradition, the keel laying ceremony is the first major milestone in the construction of a ship. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my remarks be included in the record. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

REMARKS OF CONGRESSMAN IKE SKELTON (D-MO), USS "MISSOURI" (SSN-780) KEEL LAYING CEREMONY, GENERAL DYNAMICS ELECTRIC BOAT FACILITY—QUONSET POINT, R.I., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2008

I am absolutely honored and thrilled to witness the latest chapter in the State of Missouri's historic association with the U.S. Navy.

I want to thank Navy Secretary Donald Winter for his decision to name the newest *Virginia* class submarine USS *Missouri*. All Missourians can take pride that a namesake to the "Mighty Mo" will soon be joining the Navy's fleet, this time in the silent service.

A submarine, or any Navy ship, is really just steel and equipment. Very highly engineered and crafted steel and equipment, but in the end just metal. It is the crew which gives a ship life, it is the crew who craft the legacy of the vessel. One *Virginia* class submarine is indistinguishable from the next—save the crew. The attitude of the crew, the dedication of the crew, the bravery of the crew, that will distinguish this ship. The first crew of this vessel will set the tone for all the crews to follow, and the first crew will take their lead from their sponsor.

So I especially want to congratulate and publicly thank Mrs. Gates on accepting the role of sponsor of the new USS *Missouri*. This is not the first connection the Gates Family has had to our great state. I recall that Secretary Gates' first duty station as an Air Force second lieutenant was Whiteman Air Force Base near Knob Noster, Missouri.

Being a sponsor is not a one or two ceremony job—this is your ship, these are your sailors. A sponsor may stay as involved as she wishes with her ship, and I hope that you do. My late wife Susie had the honor to serve as sponsor of the USS *Jefferson City*, a *Los Angeles* class submarine. I know how much she treasured keeping up with the activities of "her" submarine and she enjoyed every opportunity she had to visit and keep in touch with the crew and their families. I know that you will enjoy the same close relationship with the sailors who will bring this submarine to life. And may I remind everyone, most of the sailors that finally haul down the commissioning pennant of this vessel three decades from now won't be born for another 5 to 10 years. Mrs. Gates, good luck to you and thank you for your service to the nation.

The name *Missouri* has a distinguished naval history.

The first USS *Missouri* was a steam/sail vessel commissioned in 1842, only 21 years after *Missouri* was admitted to statehood. This frigate had an unfortunate fire which burned her to the waterline in the Port of Gibraltar.

The second *Missouri*—which a retired Navy Captain on my staff advises me not to count—was a Confederate side-wheel steamer used to ferry supplies on the Mississippi during the Civil War. This ship was turned over to the U.S. Navy at the end of the Civil War, but then scrapped because she was built from green timber and leaked excessively.

The third USS *Missouri*, a battleship commissioned in 1903, was part of the famous

"Great White Fleet" that sailed around the world in the first decade of the 20th century. The cruise of that fleet marked the beginning of the United States as a world power. It proved the point that American naval might could penetrate any waters and reach any foreign soil. That ship was still in active service during World War I, with my father serving on that ship as a coal-shoveling fireman in 1918.

The last USS *Missouri*, and the most famous, was commissioned in 1944 and earned the nickname "Mighty Mo" for essentially continuous combat action from arrival in the Pacific theater to hosting the Japanese surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay that ended World War II. The "Mighty Mo" also saw action during the Korean conflict. Decommissioned in 1955, she returned to the active rolls following a major upgrade in 1986. The "Mighty Mo" fired some of the first strikes during the first Persian Gulf War and the liberation of Kuwait. This fine ship gave our country many years of service until her final decommissioning in 1992. In fact, I participated in the recommissioning and the second decommissioning ceremonies for this, the most celebrated USS *Missouri*. The historic vessel is now open to the public as a floating museum in Pearl Harbor, near the final resting place of the USS *Arizona*.

So, as the keel is laid for the latest USS *Missouri*, shipbuilders and sailors alike should remember the legacy represented by the ships that previously held this proud name. This modern submarine will add to our nation's seafaring capabilities and project U.S. power wherever necessary to protect U.S. interests.

I commend the remarkable craftsmanship of the workers of both the Electric Boat Company and Newport News Shipbuilding. It is truly extraordinary how you start with steel plate, pipe, and rolls of cable and deliver the most complicated warships on the face of the earth in just a few short years. Your service to the country sometimes goes unheralded, so I wish to publicly thank you for your dedication and sacrifice as you make these ships for our warfighters.

I know that when this new submarine is christened and commissioned, many Missourians will attend the ceremonies to pay tribute to the fifth American warship named after the Show-Me State. I am confident that the sailors who will serve on the submarine USS *Missouri* will make us proud as they write a new chapter in naval history.

God bless.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 27, 2008

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, I was absent for several votes on Tuesday, September 23, 2008, for personal reasons. Had I been present to vote on passage of H.R. 5244, the Credit Cardholders Bill of Rights, I would have voted "yes." Likewise, had I been present to vote on passage of H.R. 6897, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, I would have voted "yes."