

product was a video recording of the session, which in turn will be transcribed in order to produce a document, or written report for presentation back to Reps. BISHOP, JR. (D-GA), and RANGEL (D-NY) of the Veterans Braintrust, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Democratic leaders in the House, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and others recommending ways to address the unique needs of both Iraqi & Afghanistan returning soldiers, and their families, as well as African American, or black veterans and provide thoughtful proposals for legislation.

Later that evening I hosted the 20th anniversary gala reception and awards ceremony at the Washington Grand Hyatt Hotel. Among those publicly recognized and acknowledged on this special occasion were Judge Robert Russell, Jr. who was presented the Citizens Beneficiary Award by the Mike Handy Foundation and Fund, for his unique Buffalo Veterans Court Treatment Program in the state of New York along with the U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute recognizing Frederick Gray, President of the Black Iwo Jima Veterans Group; Brig. Gen. Robert Cocroft, President and CEO of the Center for Veterans Issues; and Joseph Stevenson, a World War II veteran.

Other 2008 Braintrust awardees included: Actor John Amos, Sgt. Nathaniel Bass, USA, Ret., Asa Gordon, Dr. Richard Danford, Jr., Ph.D., Dr. Edward Brown, Dr. Vincent Patton III, Maj. Gen. Rosetta Burke, NYANG, Ret., Thomas Jones, Sr., Christopher Moore, Dr. Charles Simmons, Howard Wright, Thomas Yarosz, Halley's Comet Foundation, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Tubman African American Museum, Smithsonian's National Museum for African American History and Culture, Parting Ways Historical Site, Sankofa Restoration Project, Myrl Billings Memorial Veterans Center, and Doubleback Productions.

Finally singled out for special praise was the Association of the 2221 Negro Volunteers of World War II, who served in white Army infantry units during and after the Battle of Bulge. Afterward the private reception and awards ceremony was opened to the general public for a party with entertainment provided by Tori Robinson of Paris and Recording Artist Betty Wright.

My special thanks go to Roslyn Burrough, Anthony Hawkins, Mae Campbell, Forest Farley, Jr., Dr. Frank Smith, Jr., Brigadier General Robert Cocroft, Joe Wynn, Jack Evans, Dr. Vince Patton III, Belinda Foster, Dr. Martel Teasley, Dr. Michael Kane, Dr. Cheryl Royster Branker, Karen Freeman Wilson, Carmen Wilson II, Lucretia McClenny, Thomas Harris, Pastor Leon Bryant, Sr., Maceo May, Jason Young, Clarence Slaughter, Jean Davis, David Thompson, Maj. Myles Caggins, USA, Tonya Collins, Medgar Evers College and Congressional staff members Emile Milne, Kenya Handy, Holly Biglow, Kiwanis Harvey Styles, Roshan Hodge, Lee Footer, Alexandra Ward, Sonya Passi, Jonathan Halpern, Edwin Larkins, Tony Buckles and Malcolm Shorter.

May God continue to Bless America, and thank all veterans for their service.

48TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PEACE CORPS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 48th Anniversary of the Peace Corps and in doing so, join many others around the nation in celebrating National Peace Corps Week. Their mission is to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women while helping to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, as well as, a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Since the establishment of the Peace Corps by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, more than 195,000 U.S. citizens have served their country in the cause of peace by living and working in 139 countries throughout the world. As of September 30, 2008, 7,876 Peace Corps Volunteers are making significant and lasting contributions to improve the lives of individuals and communities in 76 countries.

I am proud to say that three of those volunteers currently serving their country are from my district in West Virginia. Both Ashley M. Hess (Burkina Faso) and Garrett C. Prendergast (Mongolia) will finish up their two years' of service in August of 2010, while Stephanie D. Zorio will finish up her two years' of service in the Philippines in November of 2010.

Peace Corps volunteers have made significant and lasting contributions around the world in agriculture, business development, information technology, education, health and HIV/AIDS, youth and the environment.

The 195,000 citizens, who have volunteered to serve their country since 1961, came from all walks of life and represent the best of what the United States has to offer. The work they have done over the past 47 years has played an important role in developing nations and continues to provide opportunities for people of different backgrounds to come together to serve the cause of peace.

SUPPORTING THE MEDAL OF
HONOR COMMEMORATIVE COIN
ACT OF 2009

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I am proud to join my good friend Congressman CHRIS CARNEY as an original cosponsor of the Congressional Medal of Honor Commemorative Coin Act of 2009. This bipartisan legislation will assist the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation in raising the funds it needs to promote heroism and selflessness among our nation's youth—qualities which the Medal of Honor embodies.

First authorized by Congress in 1861, the Congressional Medal of Honor is our nation's highest award for valor in action against an enemy force. It is a symbol of how ordinary Americans can risk their lives and go above and beyond the call of duty in defense of our great nation.

Since its inception, fewer than 3,500 Medals of Honor have been awarded to members of the United States Armed Forces—approximately half during the Civil War. Today, there are only 111 living recipients. These select few exemplify the values of our great nation through their incredible acts of bravery and commitment to our country.

As the first U.S. Representative-reservist to be deployed to an imminent danger area since World War II, I know first hand the sacrifices and challenges our men and women in armed forces face. It was an honor to serve with uniformed Americans in Afghanistan and it is in their honor that I join Mr. CARNEY in introducing this legislation today.

EXEMPLARY STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Madam Speaker, There are wonderful examples of academic achievement and community service taking place in Southeast Queens high schools. Many students throughout the New York Congressional 6th District are performing at such a high level in their academic work and community activities that it deserves public recognition. I have been so inspired that I initiated the Exemplary Student Achievement (ESA) award program to honor these young citizens who are emerging as our community's future leaders.

Since the inception of the ESA program in September 2008, I have partnered with administrators and faculty in various Southeast Queens high schools to identify and honor worthy students. It has been my privilege to award the following students with Congressional Achievement Awards:

Andrew Sargeant of Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship Magnet High School

Brian Herb of Queens High School for the Sciences at York College

Chandraika Niranjana of Math, Science Research & Technology Magnet High School

Cleavelyn Murray of Humanities & the Arts High School

Deborah Hector of Humanities & the Arts High School

Dookumarie Persaud of Jamaica High School

Kevin Thom of Humanities & the Arts High School

LeeAnn Anderson of Queens High School

Mariamama Donzo of Hillcrest High School

Marquise Moore of Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship Magnet High School

Miriam Gonzalez of Hillcrest High School

Oniyebiyi Hinton of Humanities & the Arts High School

Peter Brown of Math, Science Research & Technology Magnet High School

Philipnary Thuyamany of Jamaica High School

Reaz Khan of Jamaica High School

Robin Singh of Queens High School for the Sciences at York College

Shannon Gordon of Humanities and the Arts High School