

Stanislaus Counties and participates in the Tuolumne County Schools Forestry Institute for Teachers and presents to civic groups and organizations. They also sponsor various public forums on issues related to natural resources and is represented at the annual Alliance on American Fly-in for Freedom forum held in Washington, DC. The organization prepares press releases for all media outlets and meets with local, state and federal elected officials regarding issues of concern.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources and Environment, Inc. on twenty years of service. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing TuCARE many years of continued success.

HONORING GEORGE VUJNOVICH
FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE
HALYARD MISSION

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2009

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I am joined by the co-chairs of the Congressional Serbian Caucus, Representatives MELISSA BEAN of Illinois and DAN BURTON of Indiana, in honoring a treasured constituent of mine and one of the unsung heroes of World War II, retired Major George Vujnovich. Major Vujnovich, a proud Serbian-American, was instrumental in "Operation Halyard" and one of the last surviving members of that successful wartime mission.

In the summer of 1944, Americans and Allied airmen flew hundreds of sorties over Europe with the aim of disrupting the Ploesti oil complex, Adolf Hitler's most important oil pipeline. During their treacherous journey from Italian bases to the Romanian oil complex, 1,500 of our brave men were forced to bail out over Yugoslavia. Scores of American crewmen were trapped behind enemy lines and dependent on Serbian villagers to hide them from the Germans.

Although Yugoslavia was enemy territory at the time, much of the country's Serbian regions remained under the control of Yugoslav guerilla resistance leader General Draja Mihailovich and his Chetnik forces. General Mihailovich remained loyal to the Allies, and under his orders the Serbian people shielded these airmen and protected them from capture and imprisonment by German troops.

General Mihailovich passed information about the downed American airmen to the United States authorities. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) put together Operation Halyard, a daring mission to save the men without drawing the attention of the Nazis. The mission entailed flying and landing C-47 cargo planes into enemy territory, picking up the downed airmen, and flying back to allied territory. Before the mission could go forward, however, the Allied forces cut ties with General Mihailovich and no longer had specific information about the location of the American airmen. Major George Vujnovich, the OSS operation chief stationed in Bari, Italy, discovered that Mihailovich was hiding the airmen near his headquarters in the city of Pranjani. He informed U.S. officials of their location and Operation Halyard progressed.

As the mission advanced, Major Vujnovich's experience and expertise were indispensable. Major Vujnovich was responsible for selecting members of the Halyard Mission, and orchestrating the initial parachute drop into the area. The rescue plans hinged on his direction and the ability of local Serbs to build an airstrip without any modern tools and without German detection.

Operation Halyard took place between August and December 1944 and was a complete success. Hundreds of men were rescued behind enemy lines and no lives were lost in the mission. The Halyard Mission was a success thanks to the brave men and women of the OSS and the courageous Serbian locals who risked their lives to safeguard American airmen. Thanks to a keen mind and tactical expertise, Major Vujnovich demonstrated the courage and selflessness that mark him as an American hero.

Major George Vujnovich was born to Serbian parents in 1915. In 1934 he received a scholarship from the Serb National Federation and left his home in New York to attend college in Belgrade. While living in Belgrade, Mr. Vujnovich met and married his wife, Mirjana. Their life was disrupted in 1941, when the German Luftwaffe bombed Belgrade in Operation Punishment. Mr. Vujnovich was a firsthand witness to the bombing, nearly losing his life when a falling bomb destroyed a nearby streetcar. After the bombing, Mr. and Mrs. Vujnovich fled Yugoslavia, and he accepted a job in Ghana as assistant airport manager while Mirjana moved to Washington, DC to work at the Yugoslav Embassy. When the US entered the war, Mr. Vujnovich received a commission as a second lieutenant and assumed command of an airbase in Nigeria. While working at the airbase, he was recruited by the OSS for the clandestine services, and was later sent to the OSS post in Bari, Italy. From this post he saved the lives of his fellow servicemen and earned the title of hero. I am honored to have this opportunity to acknowledge Major Vujnovich's contribution to the Halyard Mission.

IN CELEBRATION OF MARTIN J.
AND ELEANOR R. KEARNEY

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2009

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Martin J. and Eleanor R. Kearney for being named the Irish Couple of the Year by the John Boyle O'Reilly Club in Springfield, Massachusetts. They were awarded this deserved title on February 7, 2009 for their support and contributions to the club. The couple has been active with the club for over fifty years. Both have helped with fundraisers and dances. Eleanor is an avid baker for the club and Martin was a strong supporter of the new building fund. A reception dinner was held in their honor on March 1, 2009.

Martin was born in the Great Blasket Islands in Dingle, County Kerry, Ireland on December 31, 1926. Eleanor is a life-long Springfield resident who was born on December 17, 1932. Martin came to America in 1951 where he soon met Eleanor. In 1953, they were mar-

ried in Saint Thomas Aquinas Church in Springfield. Martin became a member of the John Boyle O'Reilly Club in 1953 and now both Martin and Eleanor are life members.

The John Boyle O'Reilly Club was founded in 1880. The club consists of dedicated Irish and Irish-Americans whose goal is to preserve and promote their Irish heritage. The club's motto is culture, family and tradition. Since March 1970, the club has been located on 33 Progress Avenue in Springfield, Massachusetts. Today, the club is very active in their community, awarding the John Boyle O'Reilly Scholarship every year to college-bound students.

HONORING RABBI JON E. CUTLER

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2009

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Rabbi Jon E. Cutler—the only Jewish Chaplain currently serving in western Iraq. And as a former paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division who served in Baghdad 5 years ago and the first Iraq war veteran to serve in this great body, it fills me with tremendous pride to be Rabbi Cutler's Congressman. Rabbi Cutler has set an example for all of us—not just through his spiritual leadership—but through selfless service to our community and our nation.

In Iraq, Rabbi Cutler serves as the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Chaplain, and assists the entire Al Asad Marine Air Base. Prior to his service in Iraq, Rabbi Cutler served as the pulpit rabbi of Tiferes B'nai Israel in Warrington, Bucks County, Pennsylvania for the past 8 years.

As the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Chaplain, Rabbi Cutler supervises 20 Christian chaplains and chaplain assistants, and has worked to create a center for Jewish troops who are serving in Anbar Province. The congregants of Tiferes B'nai Israel even contributed to this effort, sending tiles and paste to be used for the chapel floor.

As the Rabbi for Tiferes B'nai Israel in Warrington, Rabbi Cutler worked tirelessly to unite his congregants, both old and new. He strived to make new members feel welcome while respecting the needs and wishes of long-standing members. Before he was deployed to Iraq, he also proudly received his Navy commander pins on the pulpit at Tiferes B'nai Israel.

Commander Cutler has been a chaplain in the U.S. Navy Reserve for 23 years. He was the only Jewish chaplain serving with the Marines in Desert Storm, and after 9/11, he was called to the Pentagon to counsel family members who lost loved ones during the tragic events of that terrible day.

When not serving our troops in Iraq or his congregants in Warrington, Rabbi Cutler has served as an instructor at Gratz College for Jewish education and a visiting professor at Philadelphia University. He received his B.A. and M.A. in religious studies from Temple University, and holds a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling from Hebrew Union College. Rabbi Cutler was ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, PA.

Rabbi Cutler has contributed enormously to the citizens of Bucks County and given so