

changed their tactics, our military, with the help of our intelligence community, adapted and overcame. While there have been many that have questioned America's ability to commit to a long war, a decade later proves our determination as well as assures our Iraqi friends that they have a lasting ally in the United States.

While we commemorate the successful completion of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the challenges remain for Iraq just as it would for any nascent democracy. Today, let us recommit ourselves diplomatically to Iraq and ensure that as the country experiences the growing pains of a new democratic state, they can turn to the U.S. for guidance and help.

Today also serves as the successful completion of Operation Iraqi Freedom which will be remembered in history, along with the almost 4,500 service members that were killed in action in Iraq. Today we also reaffirm a solemn promise that we will always remember their sacrifice and that they gave up the most precious of all things—life. We acknowledge that the death and eternal absence of a soldier, sailor, airman, Coast Guardsman or Marine does not exist in a vacuum—it is a wound that will never truly heal in the hearts of all those who loved them. We honor them as individuals—they are people who cannot be replaced but whose memory lives on whenever their story is told. So as we close this chapter, let us promise to honor our war dead every day, tell their stories and remember their sacrifice. In honor of all those who died in service to our country in Operation Iraqi Freedom, I would like to read the names of those killed from my congressional district.

Gunnery Sgt Jeffrey Bohr, United States Marine Corps

First Lieutenant Todd Bryant, United States Army

Sergeant Ryan Young, United States Army
Private First Class Brian Cutter, United States Marine Corps

Sergeant Eliu Miersandoval, United States Army

Lance Corporal Rafael Suarez, United States Marine Corps

Corporal Billy Gomez, United States Army
Specialist Jonathan Castro, United States Army

Corporal Jason Morrow, United States Marine Corps
Private First Class Jason Franco, United States Marine Corps

Sergeant Rhys Klasno, California National Guard
Sergeant Thomas McFall, United States Army

Specialist Cameron Payne, United States Army

Specialist Joshua Modgling, United States Army

Specialist Eric Holke, California National Guard

Staff Sergeant Eric Cottrell, United States Army

Staff Sergeant Alejandro Ayala, United States Air Force

Specialist Armando A. De La Paz, United States Army

Private Grant Cotting, United States Army
Lance Corporal David James Hogan, United States Marine Corps

Staff Sergeant Michael Cardenaz, United States Army

Senior Airman Michael Hinkle, United States Air Force

Sergeant Aaron Blasjo, United States Army
Sergeant Andrew Tobin, United States Army
God Bless our Troops and God Bless America.

CONGRATULATING MS. MADIE TILLMAN

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize a distinguished member of the General Daniel "Chappie" James American Legion Auxiliary Post 776, located in my congressional district, for the service she has given to her community.

Ms. Madie Tillman received the Member of the Year Award for the Department of Ohio during the American Legion Auxiliary 2011 Department Convention, for her exceptional contributions to the American Legion Auxiliary. She is a long-time volunteer at the Dayton VA Medical Center. Last year, she raised \$500 for a Christmas party for veterans and their families.

As the widow of a veteran, Ms. Tillman has been a dedicated, generous and unselfish advocate for veterans and their families. After learning that veterans in the Homeless Program at the Dayton VA were in need of book bags for their classes at Sinclair Community College, she collected bags for the veterans from local charitable organizations.

In January, she collected over one hundred 2011 calendars after learning that our troops deployed overseas wanted them so they could mark off the days until they could return home. The calendars were shipped to our troops by the Blue Star Mothers. An associate member of the Blue Star Mothers of America, she also donates to their "Trick or Treat for Troops" program, and other activities.

I appreciate this opportunity to recognize a good and compassionate citizen, Ms. Madie Tillman, for her service to our community and our Nation's veterans.

IN HONOR OF THE RETURN OF OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS TO AMERICA

HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of our wounded warriors returning home from abroad. Several times a week, wounded American soldiers return to the United States, landing at Andrews Air Force Base. Some have short layovers before going to their homes or medical facilities around the country. Others remain in the Washington, DC, region to get care and recover. Whatever their final destination, I ask that our thoughts and prayers go out to the members of our Armed Forces and their families.

Their sacrifices to our nation will never be forgotten. In honor of their service and in hopes for their recovery I ask that this poem penned by Albert Caswell be placed in the RECORD.

IN HONOR NOW

In . . .
In Honor Now!
As here we stand so very proud!
So very proud of all of you so now . . .
With open arms, as here we stand with hearts so very warm . . . All in our hearts of love, so very full . . . beating loud!
Waiting all for you!
Welcome Home!
As you come down into view . . .
All as America's most brilliant of all hues!
Her Armed Forces so very tried and true!
As all of our hearts so run to you . . .
Oh can you but not so hear them now!
Welcome Home!
With open arms, all in our hearts of love for you so very warm!
Our most precious of all daughters and sons . . .
Who are but honor bound, as are all of these ones!
Who all so stood, for what was good and true!
While, all in that face . . . of deep dark death and war, as did you!
Welcome Home!
As all for God and Country Tis of Thee, you would so die and bleed!
As you so cried, as they so laid your brothers and sisters down to rest!
All into that soft cold quiet ground, were but lain all of America's Best so down!
All in your tears, as we so saw what your love for each other so said!
And That Blood That Binds You, so ran red!
All In Such Honor Now, as here we so stand so very proud!
All in how your fine lives have so read!
Can you but not so hear all of our hearts for you so pound?
Welcome Home, now to where you so belong!
With Open Arms, as here we stand with our love for you so very warm . . .
So very strong!
Back home again, with your families as the tears begin . . .
Whose, fine hearts have so cried . . . and so worried all of the time!
We pray to end their most restless sleep, and so let them all so find peace!
For they are but America's Quiet Heroes, The Families as so are all of these!
Because, all of you and your families' fine lives . . . have but been a song!
A song of such Faith and Courage!
One of such Strength In Honor, who this our Nation has so nourished!
With Open Arms we now so cry, Welcome Home!
Far from all of that darkness of most dreaded war, and all its grave harm!
As now, you all can so rest!
As a time to so rebuild . . . to so replenish, and once again your courage to test!
As you rebuild with what you have left . . .
As all our hearts are now so filled, with such love and respect . . . it's now time to heal America's Best!
For all of you and your families, may our Lord God So Bless . . .
For you have a new battle now to begin!
And oh yes, American's finest ones . . . you shall win!
Welcome Home, for this our Nation you have so blessed!
As now you wear that most noblest title of them all!
As an American Hero, whose magnificent hearts upon a battlefield of honor stood tall!
With . . .
With Open Arms . . .
Welcome Home! As to all of you, our hearts so roam!
In Honor Now, Here We So Stand With Open Arms!

Welcome Home . . . In Honor Now!
(By Albert Caswell)

JOHN TILLITSKI

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, when I was in 10th grade history class, the teacher caught me chewing gum. I don't know why it's so hard to chew gum without being noticed, but there I was caught and on my way to the Principal's office. I had never personally met him. He was a no-nonsense man named John Tillitski.

He asked me why I was sent to him. There weren't any official forms so when asked, you were expected to give a full report of your crime without equivocation.

"I was chewing gum, sir."

"Oh," He looked me in the eye and added, "Do you want to stay in school?"

"Yes, sir."

"Fine, bend over." With that, he pulled a 12" rubber sole of a shoe out of his desk, popped me on the hindquarters, and said, "go back to class."

That was it, verdict, sentence, and punishment. It was over in 5 minutes. Then I was back in class, sitting quietly, taking notes, and learning American history. No more chewing gum.

That's the way John Tillitski handled things. Clear. Concise. Fair. Without drama, without red tape, just old fashion, even-handed, blind justice.

It was 1971. He was a man suited for the time. We were the first white class to attend what had previously been the all black Burney Harris High School. The courts had spoken. The town was nervous, the administration tentative and the teachers incredibly challenged by the change set in front of them. Not Mr. Tillitski. He saw black and white not in skin color but in justice, fairness, and common sense. He could bridge the unsettled times with confidence.

The fear was that every fight, skirmish, or incident could accelerate into a race riot. In this atmosphere he became the "go to" guy. Everyone knew he was a straight shooter. If the issue could be resolved quietly he could do it.

A few years later, his son Chris and I decided to liven up the day by driving a motorcycle down the hall of the school. I should do the right thing and say it was a joint decision, but in the style of Washington politics I'll blame the whole idea on Chris, who in turn claimed his brothers Steve and Mike had pulled similar stunts. Down the hall we roared loudly as a jet plane. Soon, hundreds of students and teachers poured out of their classes trying to find out what had happened. We were surrounded by a mob of teachers and students, some laughing, some screaming, most in bewilderment. The principal was beet red in anger and unable to complete a sentence in his fury. Finally, Mr. Tillitski re-emerged from the throng. As the sea parted for his entrance, he simply said, "Turn the damn thing off and get it out of here." We pushed it outside, order was restored, and we were duly punished.

He was a man's man. Strong, gruff, and competitive. As the father of boys, he knew

boys needed discipline, love, and nourishment. Once, Chris and I found an old canoe in the river. Its seaworthiness had been beaten out of it by a series of rapids. We took it home to restore it, a long shot at best but Mr. Tillitski supported our effort. When we finally got it to float, he was the first to give us boat paddles.

Another time, Chris and I hopped a train and tried to make it to Myrtle Beach, S.C. We didn't disclose the details of our mode of transportation to our parents. We made it to Morehead City but ran out of track and trains headed in the right direction. Hitchhiking home, we informed our parents where we had been and announced that we'd try again soon. Rather than fighting about it, telling us we were stupid and how dangerous it was, Mr. Tillitski quietly let us borrow his prize green 1967 Mustang. Practically a sports car. Not a prettier sight was seen driving down the Myrtle Beach strip. He knew boys had to push an envelope but he also knew how to rein them in without killing our youthful spirit.

As with so many influential men there was a great family structure to go along with them. John's wife, Joan, was a wonderful partner standing by him, raising the boys and making sure the family bond stayed strong. As a trained nurse she knew when one of the boys needed a trip to the hospital, a bandage or a good hug. They are an ideal couple.

I was blessed to have people and educators such as John and Joan Tillitski in my life. In today's world with its confusion and uncertainty, we need more people with firm ideals and gentle hands to guide them. The world would be a better place.