

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring the members of the Flying Tigers for their brave service to our great country.

RECOGNIZING JODY BRUCE AND JOSH HOFFMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRAMER. The author Henry Miller wrote: "The ordinary man is involved in action, the hero acts, an immense difference."

Mr. Speaker, having grown up the son of a rural electric lineman, I am more than a little familiar with the not so ordinary actions of these rather ordinary people.

They do a job most of us won't or can't do, often putting themselves in danger's way as they carry out their duties in all kinds of weather conditions. They earn a paycheck for their work for sure, but their contribution to the quality of life of rural America is to the benefit of millions of people.

But today, Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the extraordinary efforts of two rural electric linemen from North Dakota who stepped beyond being involved in the action to act.

Jody Bruce from Minot, who works for Verendrye Electric Cooperative, and Josh Hoffman from Carrington, who works for Northern Plains Electric Cooperative, left the comfort zone of middle America to facilitate the advent of safe, reliable, and affordable electricity in a community in Haiti.

Their service and sacrifice will improve the lives of many people because electricity is a critical element to improve quality of life, health care, education, clean water, and other vital services.

Volunteering their time and expertise, they both spent 2 weeks in the town of Caracol, providing safety training and mentoring for local linemen. They also assisted with installing power for residents located next to an industrial park. When fully functional, this facility will have the capacity to employ 30,000 people.

Jody and Josh are the only linemen from North Dakota to ever participate in such a project in Haiti, a country where only about 13 percent of the people have reliable access to electricity.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association International Foundation has been working on a U.S. Agency for International Development-funded program to bring electricity to the town of Caracol and nearby areas.

Today, more than 1,200 consumers in the town have access to reliable electricity. Some homes now have antennas for their TVs. In fact, some businesses are springing up, things like Internet cafes that have been established, and water treatment plants are in full operation.

While we often take for granted such basic amenities as safe, reliable elec-

tricity in this country, we ought to say a prayer for the men and women who ensure that the lights are always on for us and the families who wait for them at home.

In the case of Jody Bruce and Josh Hoffman, well, they deserve a ticker-tape parade. They, Mr. Speaker, are international heroes.

GRANT THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATEHOOD IN THE UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I began this series of remarks yesterday as the District prepares for Emancipation Day on April 16, when Lincoln freed the slaves in the District of Columbia before the national Emancipation Proclamation.

I began with the status of all the citizens of the District of Columbia today with "Taxation Without Representation," the slogan the Founders of our Nation and the Framers of our Constitution used to start the revolution that created the United States of America itself. With those taxes should come statehood.

But if there is any issue with greater command than taxation without representation for statehood for the District of Columbia, it is surely fighting and dying for one's country without representation, securing the vote for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, only to come home with no vote of your own in the Congress that sent you to war, or not coming home at all.

D.C. residents fought and died in the war that created the United States of America itself, and have served in every war since, often suffering casualties well beyond those of fellow Americans, casualties that mounted in each of the major wars of the 20th century: World War I, more casualties than three States; World War II, more casualties than four States; the Korean war, by then more casualties than eight States; and the Vietnam war, more casualties than 10 States of the Union.

Not only have thousands fought and died without the vote, many served with unusual distinction and many in the segregated Armed Forces, although African Americans in the District were outnumbered by Whites until recent years. Yet the District produced the first African American Army general, Benjamin O. Davis; the first African American Air Force general, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a graduate of West Point and commander of the Tuskegee Airmen; Wesley Davis, the first African American Naval Academy graduate; Charles Vernon Bush, the first African American Air Force Academy graduate, and the roster continues today—today the first Deputy Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Manson Brown, and the first female African American aviator, D.C. National Guard First Lieutenant Demetria Elosiebo.

Our country continues to deny District of Columbia citizens their basic rights at home.

Today, we ask that Congress draw the line on service in the Armed Forces. In the name of those who have fought or died in the Nation's wars, grant the citizens of the District of Columbia equal rights with other Americans. Grant the District of Columbia statehood in the Union.

A LETTER TO THE TURKISH PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. An open letter to the Turkish people:

Today, I write to you on an issue of great importance to both our nations. It is on a subject that many of you, especially the younger generation, may know little about because it concerns a chapter of world history that your government has expended enormous efforts to conceal.

Turkey has been at the center of human civilization from Neolithic times to the present, and your arts, culture, and science have enriched the world. But interwoven with all of Turkey's remarkable achievements is a dark chapter that too many of today's Turks know little or nothing about.

Were you aware that your grandparents and great-grandparents had many Armenian neighbors and friends—that 20 percent of the population of today's Istanbul was Armenian? Did you know that the Armenians were well integrated into Turkish society as celebrated intellectuals, artists, craftsmen, and community leaders? Have you ever wondered what happened to the Armenians? Have you ever asked your parents and grandparents how such a large, industrious, and prosperous people largely vanished from your midst? Do you know why your government goes to such lengths to conceal this part of your history?

Let me tell you a part of their story. The rest you must find out for yourselves.

Ninety-nine years ago this month, in the dying years of the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turk government launched a campaign of deportation, expropriation, starvation, and murder against the empire's Armenian citizens.

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Much of the Armenian population was forcibly removed to Syria, where many succumbed during brutal forced marches through the desert heat. Hundreds of thousands were massacred by Ottoman gendarmes, soldiers, and even their own neighbors.

By the time the slaughter ended in 1923, 1.5 million Armenians had been killed in what is now universally acknowledged as the first genocide of the 20th century. The survivors scattered throughout the Middle East and the