

the youth and was dedicated to ensuring that they were afforded the opportunity to become involved.

Without question, Buck lived a life full of love and giving back to those around him. He was a friend and mentor to countless individuals and one of the area youth's biggest fans. To his family, however, he will most be remembered as a loving husband, father, and grandfather, a great man who they were blessed to have as their own and share with the Northwest Florida community.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize the life of James C. "Buck" Smith. My wife Vicki and I extend our heartfelt prayers and condolences to his wife of 44 years, Billie; daughter, Tina and her husband, Ryan; granddaughters Amber and Ryleigh; brother, Rocky; sisters, Connie, Debbie, Sonya, and Rita; and all of the Smith family.

IN HONOR OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESCOTT AREA WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE COMMISSION

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the silver anniversary and 25 years of dedicated service of the Prescott Area Wildland Urban Interface Commission (PAWUIC).

In 1989, Ed Hollenshead and Coy Jemmett of the Prescott National along with Prescott Fire Department's Ron Prince and Darrell Willis originally conceived the idea of an organization where community leaders were involved in combating issues in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). These conversations evolved into a task force known as the Interagency Fire and Emergency Management Group. A year later, The Prescott Area Wildland Urban Interface Commission was officially formed on September 7, 1990 when a memorandum of understanding was signed by PAWUIC, the City of Prescott, Yavapai County, Central Yavapai Fire District, Arizona State Land Department and the Prescott National Forest.

In 2001, Prescott was selected as one of seven communities in the United States to participate in the National Fire Protection Association's Firewise Communities program. This distinction resulted from Prescott having a strong, citizen-led commission on WUI issues.

Today, there are approximately 30 Firewise certified communities in and around Prescott protecting more than 12,000 properties and representing more than half of all Firewise communities in the State of Arizona.

I am proud to honor the Prescott Area Wildland Urban Interface Commission for their valuable contributions towards preventing dangerous wildfires and combating other wildland urban interface issues. At a time in our nation's history when catastrophic wildfires are devastating the West and have burned nearly 9 million acres this year alone, we must embrace commonsense and worthwhile efforts

that encourage active forest management. As a native Arizonan, I am personally thankful for the hard work and dedication that this commission has set forth by empowering so many citizen volunteers.

HONORING COL. JAMES ISAAC WHEELER

HON. MARTHA MCSALLY

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Col. James Isaac Wheeler, who passed away on August 24, 2015 at the age of 93.

Col. Wheeler was an exceptional pilot who served his country with honor in three different conflicts—World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Over his career in the Air Force, he piloted the P-47 "Thunderbolt," F-86, and C-47.

Upon his retirement, Col. Wheeler continued to serve his community and fellow airmen, holding numerous leadership positions in veterans organizations in Tucson. He was stoutly devoted to his fellow veterans and serving the Southern Arizona community he called home.

I met Col. Wheeler as a young captain after arriving at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in 1994. He became a great friend over the years and always encouraged me in my journey as a pilot, officer, and, most recently, Congresswoman. He was such a wonderful example of continued faithful service to the community, Air Force, and military members and family. He was a patriot and true servant leader, and I am so grateful for his example and friendship.

Few can say they answered the call to serve and defend our country as often, and during such critical times, as Col. Wheeler. It was my honor to have known and served with him, and I extend my sincere condolences to his family and friends.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE AND SELFLESS SACRIFICE OF TECHNICAL SERGEANT TIMOTHY A. OFFICER, JR.

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with both profound sadness and deep gratitude that I rise to pay tribute to a fallen decorated American hero. On Monday, August 3, 2015, Technical Sergeant Timothy A. Officer, Jr., of the 24th Special Operations Wing, located in Florida's First Congressional District, tragically lost his life during a military freefall training accident. TSgt Officer was 32 years old, but lived a lifetime marked by and full of service.

Timothy was born to Timothy and Linda Officer on August 8, 1982 in Huntington, West Virginia. After graduating high school, he followed in his family's footsteps of service and joined the Air Force in 2001. Upon becoming

a Tactical Air Control Party Journeyman and ultimately a Joint Terminal Attack Controller, TSgt Officer earned his stripes as one of our Nation's most elite, both in training and in the ultimate crucible of combat. With multiple deployments around the globe and specifically in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, TSgt Officer's leadership and devotion to duty served his fellow airmen and our Nation well over his prestigious fourteen-year career.

Among his many awards and accolades are two Bronze Stars, one with Valor Device, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Award with one oak leaf cluster, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with three oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Iraq Campaign Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, among many others.

One fateful night in Iraq, on March 31, 2003, while serving as a Tactical Air Command and Control Journeyman in support of the 1st Armored Division, TSgt Officer and his unit were engaged by enemy mortar, artillery, and direct fire. After an artillery shell exploded near his vehicle, then Airman Officer engaged the enemy, killing two, while coordinating close air support. When his crew ran out of ammunition, the citation for his Bronze Star with Valor reads, "He voluntarily dismounted his vehicle, ran across the battlefield through a hail of small arms fire to another vehicle, and returned with enough ammunition for his entire crew." Then Airman Officer assisted in the delivery of air support, resulting in 55 enemy killed. As the citation concludes, "His tremendous bravery under constant enemy fire undoubtedly saved his fellow crewmembers along with countless members of task force 2-70, and directly aided in the defeat of the enemy."

Mr. Speaker, this is the type of man we lost on August 3, 2015. Described as honest and loyal, he truly was a significant role model for those who knew him, not just by his words but by his actions. Adding more weight to our hearts, TSgt Officer is the second son and brother his family lays to rest upon the altar of freedom. His younger brother, Army Sergeant Justin Officer, tragically fell on the battlefield of Afghanistan while serving with the 101st Airborne on September 29, 2010. There are no words I, this body of Congress, or the Nation can say that might assuage the bereavement of the Officer family, as they endure the unendurable yet again. All I can say is on behalf of a humble and grateful Nation, we thank them for the love, counsel, guidance, and support given to Timothy and Justin, which helped make them the heroes they became. Their lives stand as a testament that freedom is not free, and their legacies will echo in time as examples of the ultimate sacrifice for all free people. My wife, Vicki, joins me in praying that God is with Timothy's parents, Timothy and Linda; his sister Kylea; and all of his family and friends during this time of great mourning, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.