

SGT. RAYMOND J. KOOMAN

HON. BILL PASCARELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 2015

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sergeant Raymond J. Kooman, who served bravely in World War II and survived as a prisoner of war in a German prison camp. Sgt. Kooman is being honored today at the 2015 POW/MIA Recognition Month Ceremony in Hackensack, NJ for his service.

In 1942, Sgt. Raymond J. Kooman, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. Kooman, enlisted in the service at the age of 19, serving in the United States Army, 28th Infantry Keystone Division. The red keystone, official emblem of the State of Pennsylvania, is the official shoulder sleeve insignia of the 28th Division which was originally a Pennsylvania National Guard organization. The Germans called it the 'Bloody Buckle' because of the blood-red keystone insignia and vicious fighting tactics during the Normandy Campaign. It was the 28th Infantry that paraded through the streets of Paris after the city's liberation. The division traces its history back to Benjamin Franklin's "Battalions for Associators" organized in 1747.

In October 1943, Sgt. Kooman was deployed to the European battlefield. He had been in action since D-Day and served with reconnaissance patrols, and in attacks on enemy strongholds. He continued to serve as a rifleman with the infantry in the European Theatre. On September 14, 1944 Sgt. Kooman was wounded when a German sniper shot him in the leg. He recovered quickly from his injuries and three weeks later he was sent back into action. After five months of fighting in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany, the 28th Infantry was deployed along a 25-mile stretch of the Our River, from north-eastern Luxembourg to Wallenstein, Germany.

On December 18, 1944, just three months after being injured, Sgt. Kooman was captured and taken prisoner by enemy German troops in Luxembourg. He was captured during the Battle of the Bulge and was eventually held as a POW in Stalag IV B in Germany. Sgt. Kooman weighed 155 pounds when he enlisted and weighed only 80 pounds when he was liberated by British soldiers. He also fell ill to dysentery, as had all prisoners. However, somehow, Sgt. Kooman found the will to survive. He still carries the prisoner identification tag he was forced to wear. Sgt. Kooman describes his experience as such: "We had 3,007 prisoners in our camp. Everybody slept on the floor in this prison. There were no beds and no toilets. There was nothing to eat—35 men to one loaf of bread. I never took my socks off, yet walked 800 miles in 35 days, the death march. I buried a lot of people, a lot of soldiers. Every day, I buried them."

After a year in captivity, he was eventually liberated by the British Army in 1945. His story of survival in the midst of so much agony is both inspirational and a snapshot of the true brutality of war.

In recognition for his service in the U.S. Army, Sgt. Kooman received several military decorations: the Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal—1st Oak Leaf Cluster, World War II Victory Medal, ETO Campaign Medal, and the Bronze Arrowhead—Omaha Beach Assault.

It is an honor for me to recognize Sgt. Raymond J. Kooman, who hails from the Borough

of Little Ferry, which I am proud to represent within the 9th Congressional District of New Jersey.

The job of a United States Congressman involves much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing and commemorating the life and achievements of individuals such as Sgt. Raymond J. Kooman.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, Sgt. Kooman's family and friends, all those whose lives he has touched, and me, in recognizing the life and service of Sergeant Raymond J. Kooman.

**TRIBUTE TO HAROLD AND
SANDRA BINTZ**
HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Harold and Sandra Bintz of Minden, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary.

Harold and Sandra's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa values. I commend this great couple on their 60th year together and I wish them many more. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

**IN RECOGNITION OF HONOR
FLIGHT OREGON**
HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to welcome the 35 World War II veterans visiting Washington, DC this week from our home state of Oregon. Their trip was made possible by Honor Flight of Oregon and their presence in the Capitol today is a humbling one.

We are joined by Navy, Army, Marine, Merchant Marine, Coast Guard and Army Air Force veterans who have faced terrors and dangers with bravery that continues to inspire. In this group are veterans who fought in Iwo Jima; those who fended off and survived the harrowing attack on the USS *Franklin*; documentarians who photographed the war; cryptographers who kept our secrets safe; and mechanics of all branches that kept us marching forward. These are just a few examples of the contributions these heroes made, but each deserves individual recognition:

Kenneth Anderson; John Fellas; RD, Sr Fortner; James Riopelle; Stanley Wheeler; Donald Bean; Marvin Johnson; Leo Schammel; Earl Uptegrove; Clyde Harrop; Roland Halberg; Lawrence Torrey; Donald Fowler; Patrick O'Brien; Eldon Dyer; Raymond Stahly; Robert Bortvedt; Lawrence Kissinger; Everett Lee; Gerald Midbust; Harold Goff; Raynold Deluca Sr; Murray Watts; Lyle Wescott; George Prusynski; Donald Cresap; William Birkeland; Harold Englet; Kenneth Kerns; Juanita Price; Donald Ford; James

Sperling; Robert Zimmerman; Rupert Fixott; and Joe Bruer.

The world as we know it would not be the same were it not for their courage, their bravery, and I hope that this trip bestows upon them a tiny fraction of the respect and gratitude that can never be fully repaid. To our Greatest Generation, I wish them my very best on their visit and thank them for their service.

These events are so important, connecting our veterans with the memorials erected to honor their service and with younger generations to ensure they know this important history. And a trip such as this would not be possible without the help of the volunteers who donate their time, resources and passion to Honor Flight Oregon. They ensure that each visit is met with the heroes welcome these veterans deserve.

**OBSERVING SEPTEMBER AS CHILDREN'S
CARDIOMYOPATHY
AWARENESS MONTH**
HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 2015

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, when my constituent Matthew Nehaus was 9, he suddenly lost weight, became too tired to participate in sports, and was frequently overcome by coughing bouts. Concerned, his parents took him to the doctor, who initially thought the cause was an infection or pneumonia. But an X-ray led to a much scarier diagnosis—cardiomyopathy.

Cardiomyopathy is a degenerative disease of the heart muscle that weakens its ability to efficiently and effectively pump blood around the body. Though more common for adults, it is a leading cause of sudden cardiac arrest and heart transplants in children.

This September is the second annual Children's Cardiomyopathy Awareness Month, an opportunity to educate people about the condition, its signs and risk factors, as well as advocate for policies that help address it.

One of those policies, which I'm proud to support, is H.R. 829, the SAFE PLAY Act. Introduced by Representatives LOIS CAPPs and BILL PASCARELL, the bill would take a number of needed steps to protect the safety of student athletes, including developing emergency response plans at schools, communicating the risks of overexertion in hot weather, and teaching students to conduct CPR and use defibrillators. Another important measure of this bill is identifying students with cardiomyopathy to help them get treatment and reduce their risks.

Luckily, Matthew Nehaus and his family found out about his condition in time to stabilize his health and, after years on the donation list, he received a heart transplant. I'm so grateful that Matthew has the opportunity to pursue a bright future and dearly hope that other children facing cardiomyopathy get the same chance. Please join me in spreading awareness about this condition and supporting policies that can lead to early detection and better health outcomes for these kids.