

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I regret that due to responsibilities in my congressional district that today I was unable to vote on H.R. 1376, "Tax Benefits to American Military Personnel in Yugoslavia." If I were able to vote on H.R. 1376 I would have voted in favor of this important bill. This bill which provides tax relief to our brave servicemen and service-women is the least we can do for our soldiers who are putting their lives on the line in service of our country. It is my hope and belief that this bill will be approved quickly by the Congress and signed by the President so that we can give a little back to the men and women who are giving our nation so much.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and wish to be recorded as a "yes" vote on final passage of H.J. Res. 37 (rollcall 90) and H.R. 1376 (rollcall 91).

PERMITTING USE OF ROTUNDA OF CAPITOL FOR CEREMONY IN HONOR OF FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF NATO, AND WELCOMING REPUBLIC OF POLAND, REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY, AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC INTO NATO

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 81) permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony in honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and welcoming the three newest members of NATO, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Hungary, and the Czech Republic, into NATO, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I will not object, but under my reservation I would be pleased to allow the chairman of the Committee on House Administration, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the opportunity to explain the resolution.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As was indicated, this is the use of the rotunda for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of NATO, and it is an especially important fiftieth anniversary because of the beginning of the expansion of NATO across what we used to know historically as the Iron Curtain.

□ 1615

It is, in fact, probably the best evidence we have seen of the reunification of Europe with the admission of the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I of course agree with the characterization of this resolution and would add, under my reservation, my own remarks that it is certainly appropriate that this House recognize and allow the recognition of NATO in the Rotunda.

NATO is one of the, perhaps, if not the most successful alliance in the history of the world in terms of maintaining and keeping peace. There is certainly none that excel it. And I am pleased to join with the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) in the support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, but I will not object, I welcome this measure. Next week we will be privileged to host in Washington the 50th anniversary of our North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Congress is honored to be able to play a part in these festivities.

The resolution will enable us to utilize the Rotunda to hold an appropriate ceremony in connection with this very important 50th anniversary commemoration. I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 81

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the rotunda of the United States Capitol is authorized to be used on April 23, 1999, for a ceremony in honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and welcoming the three newest members of NATO, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Hungary, and the Czech Republic, into NATO. Physical preparations for the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING CREWMEMBERS OF U.S.S. "ALABAMA" AND U.S.S. ALABAMA CREWMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be dis-

charged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 123) recognizing and honoring the crewmembers of the U.S.S. *Alabama* (BB-60) and the U.S.S. *Alabama* Crewmen's Association, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 123

Whereas the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) was a South Dakota class battleship that served first in the North Atlantic and then in the Pacific Fleet during World War II;

Whereas in the course of World War II, the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA directly shot down 22 enemy aircraft;

Whereas the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA earned the American Service Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 9 Battle Stars, the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Navy Occupation Service Medal;

Whereas the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA were a courageous group, braving both the Arctic chill and the Pacific heat to help defend the Nation against enemy oppression;

Whereas many former crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA belong to the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association;

Whereas each year former crewmembers participate in an annual reunion to celebrate their shared service, memories, and friendship; and

Whereas more than 100 former crewmembers, along with family and friends, are expected to participate in the next reunion, which will be held from April 15 to 18, 1999, aboard the U.S.S. ALABAMA at Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile, Alabama: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes and honors the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) and the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association for their valuable contributions to victory and peace in World War II and to the security and prosperity of the Nation.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT GOVERNMENT OF FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA AND PRESIDENT MILOSEVIC RELEASE UNITED STATES SERVICEMEN AND ABIDE BY GENEVA CONVENTION

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 83) expressing the sense of the Congress that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its