

gained by conducting separate, compartmentalized exercises on ranges that accept live ordnance. Training with dud ordnance excludes artillery, mortars and direct fire weapons systems as these systems either do not have inert ammunition available or insufficient quantities are on hand to conduct training. Limiting the range to inert ordnance denies the naval services from achieving essential live fire training and eliminates essential "arms" from the combined arms network that makes the Navy and Marine Corps so successful on the battlefield. Using live ordnance is the only way to simulate actual combat conditions. It instills confidence in our Marines and sailors on their procedures and equipment and validates every aspect of weapon employment. Without live fire training, the Navy-Marine team would deploy without having tested its ability to integrate, organize, execute and sustain high tempo combat operations with all weapons systems and live fire ordnance.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot look myself in the mirror knowing that we have sent our troops out to do a job that we have not prepared them for when the tools to prepare them are in place and ready for use. Is it not unusual that the decision to end the live fire bombing rides on the coattails of the President's decision to grant clemency to convicted Puerto Rican terrorists? We can mask the reasons for the decision by saying that the bombing was stopped to prevent further casualties, but the real purpose seems to be political. Mr. Rodriguez was killed in a live fire accident several months ago in Vieques. However, his death is not justification to threaten several thousand of our military members by closing the range. If we stopped training every time we had a training casualty, we would never train.

I implore my fellow Members of Congress to look at this situation carefully and apply some common sense. The encroachment of military training areas is alarmingly on the rise and this is another example. We must provide our military with the best possible facilities so they can be ready to respond to any contingency. This is proven in the recent events in Bosnia and East Timor where we called upon our service members and thrust them into hostile environments with the assumption that they were prepared and trained. Without Vieques, our naval forces are dealt a severe blow. With that, I make it a point to ensure that the island of Vieques is reopened indefinitely for live fire training with the intent that we provide our young men and women like those currently deployed with the USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit with the best possible training before sending them into harm's way.

#### INTRODUCTION OF MILITARY FAMILY FOOD STAMP TAX CREDIT BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to read part of a transcript from the June 25 edition of "20/20" which featured a story on our military families who cannot make ends meet. I quote from the transcript.

"We begin with a shameful story about the men and women we count on to protect us, members of the United States armed services. They are prepared to die for us, but did you know that some of them must stand in food lines to help feed their families?"

Again, I quote from the transcript: "It is a shocking sight to see proud American soldiers accepting charity and Federal aid just to get by."

The show also featured a 26-year-old computer operations specialist who has served 6 years in the Navy, Mr. Speaker, but makes only \$18,000 a year to care for his wife and three children. He said, and I quote, "I've talked to managers at fast food restaurants who make more money than I do. And I'm prepared to die for my country if necessary. And sometimes that seems really unfair."

A reported 600,000 enlisted troops, almost half the entire military base, make a base salary of \$18,000 or less. On May 21 of last year, "CBS This Morning" did a profile during its "Eye on America" on the state of our military families. The reporter interviewed a church volunteer and former military wife by the name of Pat Kallenbarger who works to help our military families in need.

She said, and I quote, "It's not unusual for me to find a family sleeping on the floor for lack of beds and eating on the floor because they don't have a table and chairs, and they don't have the money to either buy them or rent them."

I further quote: "I find babies in cardboard cartons. They'd be in a dresser drawer, except the family doesn't own a dresser."

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Mr. Speaker, this is shameful. These are our military families. In fact, I introduced a bill, H.R. 1055, a year ago, that would help give these men and women on food stamps a \$500 tax credit. I am urging our leadership, both Republican and Democrat, this year to please make sure before we end this session in October that we have spoken to this issue of our men and women on food stamps.

Mr. Speaker, I have before me a Marine. This Marine is holding in his arms his baby daughter named Bridgett, and the young lady standing on his feet is his 3-year-old daughter named Megan.

Mr. Speaker, this Marine is getting ready to deploy for Bosnia. The sad part of all of this, this Marine represents all of our men and women in uniform and represents those 600,000 that are making under \$18,000.

We must remember that these men and women that are willing to die for this country, 60 percent of them have families. I think about this little girl, Megan, because you can see in her eyes a concern, and maybe that concern even at that young age is the fact that her daddy might leave and never come back. I do not know. But I do know this, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of this Congress, that those of us on both sides of the political aisle, we have an obligation, and in fact I think it is deplorable and unacceptable that we have not begun to help those men and women in uniform on food stamps.

So I urge my colleagues, we have about 80 Members of this House, both Republican and Democrat, on this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to please join me in this effort to make sure that this year, before we leave, that we do something tangible to help those men and women on food stamps.

#### HOME HEATING OIL PRICES MUST BE BROUGHT DOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the issue I want to talk about is the issue of the skyrocketing cost of home heating oil in the Northeast, particularly in New York and New England. It is an extremely, extremely serious problem.

The problem was brought to my attention, quite frankly, by the good work and the efforts of our U.S. Senator from New York who was seen nightly on the television programs, CHUCK SCHUMER, talking about the imminent problem that we are now faced with.

I, along with the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), introduced legislation to provide the Secretary of Energy with the authority to draw down the Nation's reserve oil supply in the Strategic Oil Reserve. That will go a long way to reducing the cost of home heating oil immediately, as was demonstrated back during the Iraqi conflict in 1991 when then President Bush opened the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and, overnight, the cost of home heating oil dropped by \$10 a barrel, affording millions of people in this country more home heating oil.

President Clinton has indicated that he will not draw down the supplies; but I, along with many of my colleagues, will press him in this matter. Hence, I have joined with a number of my colleagues in both political parties asking

him to reconsider his refusal to use these reserves.

We have a massive oil supply problem, and I believe the best way to address this issue and see a sharp decline in the cost of oil is to open these reserves and bring this oil into the market.

Last week Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson addressed a number of Congressmen and women from the Northeast, and, although he too expressed reluctance to open up these reserves, by listening to us and the stories of our constituents, such as Dorothy Alteri of Dudley Avenue, who saw her energy bill skyrocket this year, I hope we can sway him to reconsider.

Mr. Speaker, I have before me here two bills to two constituents. Phillip Occhino from the Bronx, his bill for the last month was \$414. I dare say it has more than doubled this past month.

I have another one here from Thomas Donohue from Woodside, Queens. His, too, his home heating bill for last month was \$410.39, well above what they paid in the past for the same home heating oil.

I fear that after last year's warm winter and the resulting profit losses of the oil refineries, that they are trying to recoup past deficits by overcharging this year. To reinforce this contention, I have noticed that the price of oil, diesel fuel and fuels in general, are much higher in the New York and New England region than they are in other parts of the country.

For example, I got a letter from Vincent Fullone, the president of Fullone Trucking, who told me the national average price for diesel fuel on February 9, 2000, was \$1.47 a gallon. On that very same day in New York, a gallon of diesel fuel cost \$2.29 a gallon. It just is not fair that diesel fuel trucks in our region are paying more for their diesel than other regions of this country.

It is safe to be said for the home heating oil industry and our gasoline prices as well that there is a serious price differential from what we here in New York pay versus what other people in different States pay. For that reason I am working with my colleagues and demanding an investigation by Attorney General Janet Reno and the Department of Justice into any price fixing that may have been orchestrated by the fuel oil industry.

I am also pleased that the House has held a hearing on OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. I am glad that my committee, the Committee on International Relations, has also held a hearing investigating OPEC's price-fixing schemes.

OPEC are the same people that brought us the 1977-1979 oil shortages, as well as 1973; and I fear they are at it again, cutting supply to raise their profit margin at the expense of Americans. The U.S. must stop this practice of OPEC.

For lower-income seniors I am also a supporter of the President's releasing more of the Nation's reserve funds in the LIHEAP program. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program is a Federal program that provides assistance to low-income Americans to pay for fuel and utility costs. Recently, the President released \$175 million of LIHEAP surplus funds, with \$36.6 million going to New York.

Although I was pleased the President has begun releasing the reserve funds in this account, I was troubled to see the flawed formula used by the administration. Instead of targeting the States with the greatest need, like New York and the New England States, virtually every State in the U.S. and U.S. territories benefited from this Federal program for home heating assistance, including the Virgin Islands, Florida, Arizona and Texas. I am urging the President to release more money from this reserve account, but asking him to do it in a way targeting those people hurting the most, like the people in New York.

In New York City there are too many seniors who live only on Social Security checks. They cannot afford any increase in the cost of home heating oil. This LIHEAP reserve fund is there to help offset the high cost of home heating fuel for these lower-income individuals. These funds should be used to aid those with the most need.

I am also one of the principal supporters of legislation sponsored by my friend, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), legislation that would create a home heating oil reserve that the President could draw down upon when oil fuel prices skyrocket, like they have this winter. This legislation is based on a 1998 Department of Energy study that outlined that a home heating oil reserve would be an effective method of stabilizing home heating oil prices in the future.

Some of this oil, 2 million barrels, would be stored in containers in New York Harbor. I understand the Secretary of Energy has recently expressed some interest in this idea, and I am grateful for that. Although the solutions I speak of will not resolve any of the difficulties this winter, it would address these problems in the upcoming years. I want to let you know that we are working tirelessly on this issue.

I received a petition just yesterday from a number of senior citizens in the Bronx in my district complaining about their high cost of home heating oil. The reality is we may not be at war with the Middle East nations, but we are in economic war with OPEC. The people to be the victims in this war will be the senior citizens, the people least able to afford to pay for home heating oil.

ON THE KEEP THE PROMISES ACT,  
H.R. 3573

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I know you know that this House is very attuned to the ongoing debate over reining in the abuses of the managed care industry in general. But today I would like to bring attention to a more specific injustice, one that is not addressed by the managed care reform legislation under consideration by the House-Senate conferees committee.

Mr. Speaker, before this session is out, we need to pass legislation that will address the worst HMO in the country, our military health care system. As is the case with all managed care abuses, our military system is failing to deliver the benefits for which its beneficiaries have paid.

These patients were promised fully funded health care for life in exchange for 20 years of military service. That is a defined benefit, just like those benefits defined in civilian-managed care plans. You pay the premium, and you should receive the benefit.

Our military retirees paid for their benefit with 2 decades of service. In return, they were guaranteed that they would not have to pay out of pocket for health care by having access to military health care facilities or supplemental insurance, CHAMPUS, that would pay the bills at civilian hospitals if military facilities were not available.

That is the coverage that Sergeant First Class John Nation and his wife, Barbara, of Southport, North Carolina, thought they had after John served 21 years in the Army. That service included two tours in Vietnam with the artillery. Sergeant Nation was certified by the Veterans Administration as suffering cancer from exposure to Agent Orange during that war.

Here is the benefit that Sergeant Nation received: because there was not an Army or VA hospital within 2½ hours of their home, they had to seek civilian treatment. Because Barbara had private health insurance through her job at Carolina Power & Light, CHAMPUS refused to accept primary responsibility for John's treatment. When CHAMPUS received the portion of John's bills not covered by the private insurance, they still refused to pay for the vast majority of the care. They told Barbara, his wife, that the charges exceeded their rate schedule, so they were not obligated to pay anything. On bills that were within their rate schedule, CHAMPUS rejected the majority of chemotherapy, radiation, and hospital charges on technical grounds. John passed away. Barbara was forced to surrender her entire retirement savings to pay the bills rejected by CHAMPUS.