

January 6, 2001

A TRIBUTE TO HENRY SCIARONI
ON THE OCCASION OF BEING
AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, 56 years ago Lt. Hank Sciaroni led a group of U.S. troops through hostile Nazi territory after his bomber crash-landed on an Italian beach. His heroics went unrecognized until December 18, 2000 when he was finally honored for his valor with the Bronze Star.

On October 20, 1944, when Lt. Sciaroni realized that his B-24 Liberator bomber wasn't going to make it back, he told his pilot to crash land on the Italian beach below because he knew that the B-24 was a heavy plane that would sink before the crew could get out.

It was not the only time Lt. Sciaroni would have to think quickly. After the wheels-up crash landing, Lt. Sciaroni took command of one of the three groups created by the downed crew members. For the next two weeks Lt. Sciaroni used his training, his quick thinking and his ability to speak Italian not only to evade capture and get his group back to safety, but to collect vital intelligence along the way. The other two groups of crew members were captured by German forces. Lt. Sciaroni would have been recommended for a medal, but by the time he made it back to his squadron his commanding officer who would have nominated him had been killed in action. Lt. Sciaroni went back into action and served out the War.

When I became aware of this war time story, I committed myself to secure the honor which had evaded this young and brave Lieutenant for 56 years. While it is extremely rare for medals to be awarded so long after an episode has occurred, we searched the military archives for crew reports. Fortunately, Hank Sciaroni had saved a copy of a report the

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

frontline unit made when he reached friendly forces. After petitioning the U.S. Army, they granted our request and Hank Sciaroni was finally honored.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to honor Hank Sciaroni with the Bronze Star. He represents the collective courage many of our soldiers displayed during WWII and we are a grateful and better nation because of him.

COMMEMORATING THE COMPLETION OF THE 103-MILE ADOPTED REGIONAL METRORAIL SYSTEM

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this region, and indeed this Nation, can take great pride in the fact that on Saturday, January 13, 2001, the final rail transit segment of the planned 103-mile Adopted Regional Metrorail System will be put into service. This most significant milestone represents the culmination of a great dream of a visionary group of people in the 1960's that our Nation's Capital would join other great capital cities in having a rapid transit system.

Congress was a full partner in the creation of WMATA, beginning in 1952 when Congress passed the National Capital Planning Act mandating that plans be developed to facilitate movement throughout the region. In 1967, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority was created by Congress to build and operate a premier subway system worthy of the Nation's Capital. Every Congress and Administration since has recognized and confirmed the Federal commitment to the Metrorail and Metrobus system.

From the outset, construction of the Metrorail system was a monumental undertaking. As directed by President Lyndon Johnson, it was monumental in design, befitting the beauty

and dignity of our Nation's Capital. Metro's designers used architecture that is aesthetically compatible with the history and symbolism of the capital city. Architects sought simplicity, durability, and a sense of timelessness that would serve future generations.

On January 13th, we will gather at the Branch Avenue Station in Prince George's County Maryland to symbolically drive the last spike in the 103-mile Metrorail System. We can only marvel at the handsome return on investment on the public's \$10 billion investment and remember that in today's dollars the 103-mile system would have cost \$22 billion.

Since opening day in March of 1976, more than two billion transit rides have been taken. We have revitalized communities in the vicinity of rail stations. Engineers and contractors from throughout the nation have benefitted from jobs and construction contracts. We have reduced energy consumption, improved air quality and enhanced mobility for the transit dependent. Everyday the Metrorail and Metrobus system take thousands of people to jobs, schools, hospitals, family and other pursuits. It is virtually impossible to truly quantify the unlimited contributions our world acclaimed Metro system has made to the quality of life in the national capital region.

Metrorail ridership has been topping records over the past year. Of the top twenty-five weekday ridership records in Metrorail history, twenty-two have occurred in the last year, as Metrorail carried well over 600,000 trips on those days.

We in Congress, the region, and the Nation can be proud that we have created such a fine public transit system, worthy of our capital. The success of the beautiful Metrorail system is testament to the vision and federal-regional cooperation over the past fifty years, as well as the profound dedication of the people that designed, built and now operate the finest transit system in the world. Please join me in congratulating WMATA on achieving this awesome milestone.