

opposition. While in Congress he was a member of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee and the Space Science and Technology Committee.

During his career in Congress, he represented the Commonwealth and the First Congressional District with distinction. He worked to ensure the future of Newport News Shipyard and was instrumental in the yard's acquisition of the North Yard for its expansion. As a senior lawmaker on the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Tom had significant expertise in maritime issues and played a major role in crafting legislation.

On that Committee, he was a strong advocate of building a strong and modern U.S. Merchant Marine Service for this country's national security. Tom served as Chair of the Merchant Marine Subcommittee. As Chair, he presided over and helped to craft major legislation to overhaul and modernize the merchant marines. The Merchant Marine Act of 1970 was one of his signature pieces of legislation and was designed to renovate the American Merchant Navy by 1980.

In addition to his work on merchant marine issues on that Committee, he also played a prominent role in crafting legislation that sought to preserve the resources of our oceans and waterways. He played a leading role in the implementation of the Ocean-Dumping Convention and in extending U.S. fishing rights to the 200 mile limit bill. He also played a role in crafting the Deep Water Port Act as well as legislation on deep sea bed mining. At the time of his retirement from the House, one of his colleagues called him the "premier expert on the problems of the Nation's maritime commerce and its commercial fisheries industry."

As the Chairman of the NASA Oversight Subcommittee of the then Space Science and Technology Committee, his interests in scientific research made him a national leader of the space effort. On that Subcommittee, he also represented the interests of NASA Langley Research Center located in Hampton, Virginia.

Tom Downing also made a gift to future generations of Virginians and North Carolinians through his efforts to create the Assateague Island National Seashore Park and the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

In the Ninety-Fourth Congress, his colleagues called upon him to chair the prominent Select Committee on Assassinations that launched new investigations into the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. He had been a leading critic of the Warren Commission and was the author of the 1976 legislation to reopen investigation into both cases. Even knowing of his retirement, his colleagues could think of no other Member who could have served in that post with his ability and integrity during the nation's time of turmoil.

As the dean of the Virginia Delegation at the time, Tom Downing helped to set the tone and tradition of our delegation today. He consistently sought and achieved joint action by Members of the delegation, irrespective of party affiliation, to deal with matters affecting the entire State. Today, we still honor that tradition and work together as a delegation to speak with one voice for Virginia's interests.

Even after his lengthy service in Congress, Tom Downing continued his commitment to public service. He served on the Board of Visitors of the Virginia Military Institute from 1985 to 1993 and served as President of the Board of Directors of The Mariners' Museum.

Mr. Speaker, Tom Downing served in this body as a true statesman and Virginia gentleman. He was a good friend to everyone on the Virginia Peninsula and he will be sorely missed.

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IN MEMORY OF FORMER U.S. REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS DOWNING

**HON. JO ANN DAVIS**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 15, 2001*

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I take the opportunity to honor the memory of former United States Representative Thomas Downing, who passed away Tuesday, November 6, 2001.

Tom Downing was a strong and effective representative of Virginia's First District, and served the people well. He was a true friend of the military and an American patriot, Tom was loved by both Democrat and Republican alike. His passion was not about partisan politics—it was about Virginia, and he served the Commonwealth well.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor to represent the First District, which Tom did admirably with class, passion and an unyielding love for country. Representative Downing will be remembered not only for his service in Congress, but for his devoted military service as well.

A true war hero, Tom will be missed, but we will never forget his contributions to Virginia, and to our nation as a whole.

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IN MEMORY OF VIRGINIA CONGRESSMAN THOMAS N. DOWNING

**HON. J. RANDY FORBES**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 15, 2001*

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring the memory of a former Member of Congress and pivotal Tidewater politician, Thomas N. Downing.

Congressman Downing represented Tidewater Virginia for eighteen years. He was well-known for his affability with his colleagues and his tenacity in representing his constituents. In particular, he was a staunch supporter of Newport News Shipbuilding, which was and is a cornerstone of the Tidewater economy and of our nation's military readiness. It was Tom Downing's support and assistance that helped to expand and improve that company's ability to contribute so much to national defense and local jobs.

His interest in Newport News Shipbuilding was far more than parochial, it was patriotic. Tom Downing was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute (VMI), a decorated veteran of World War II, and a patriot in the truest sense

of the word. He graduated from VMI in 1940 and four years later was commanding mechanized cavalry troops and Army reconnaissance during the liberation of France and sweep across Germany. Tom Downing's personal bravery in rescuing two of his men who were injured during a German ambush earned him the Silver Star.

His legacy in Congress is no less impressive. Newport News Daily Press summed his service in these hallowed halls up best: "[In Congress] he truly hit his stride. He was a natural. Few congressmen have served their constituents better. Just ask the shipyard. Or NASA. Or the watermen. Or any of thousands of individuals and institutions that Mr. Downing helped during his eight terms. Fiscally conservative? Of course. Integrity? From head to toe. But it was the kindness of the man that most recall about Tom Downing. He liked people and vice-versa. . . ."

His memory lives on in Tidewater's strength and in the lives of those his service touched. Tom Downing will be missed, but not forgotten.

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HONORING CONGRESSMAN THOMAS DOWNING

**HON. EDWARD L. SCHROCK**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 15, 2001*

Mr. SCHROCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring the life of Congressman Thomas Downing. Congressman Downing served Virginia's First District as a member of this body from 1959 to 1977, and represented parts of the peninsula and the Eastern Shore that will soon become part of Virginia's Second Congressional District.

Congressman Downing brought with him to Congress a keen, first-hand knowledge of the military and the need for readiness. He was a decorated veteran and hero, having commanded some of the first troops to invade Germany. He was awarded the Silver Star for saving two of his company men after an ambush by German troops.

During his service in Congress, he used this knowledge of the military to help create a military more prepared for combat. He helped Newport News Shipbuilding expand and build the North Yard, which allowed them to build larger ships and to allow for a stronger and more prepared American Navy.

Congressman Downing is perhaps best known for his work following the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King. During the 94th Congress, he served as the Chairman of the Select Committee on Assassinations. His own curiosity in the matters fueled a vigorous investigation and numerous new theories to explain the circumstances surrounding President Kennedy's assassination.

Following his retirement from the House, Congressman Downing continued to serve the Commonwealth of Virginia and our nation, as a member of the Board of Visitors for his alma mater, the Virginia Military Institute, and as President of the Board of Directors of the Mariners' Museum.