Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I come before you today celebrating with my constituents the career of Officer Kenneth L. Pontious. I hope you and my colleagues will also join me in congratulating him for his contribution to the community.

IN MEMORY OF JOSE RIOS

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a young Texas hero—Jose Rios, a 17-year-old who rescued a young boy from a house fire before tragically losing his own life during another heroic effort to save the life of the boy's brother.

There are no words to adequately express our sorrow when one so young, acting in such a courageous manner, should be taken so tragically. To his family and friends in the small community of Royse City, where he lived, he is a genuine hero. And as is common in small communities across America when tragedy strikes, the citizens of Royse City have united in their efforts to help the families of the victims and to make sure that Jose Rios will forever be remembered for his selfless act of courage.

Early in the morning of February 20, 1996, a fire broke out from a space heater in the bedroom shared by 11-year-old Aron Carreon and his 7-year-old brother, Ramon. Jose observed the fire coming from his neighbors' house and rushed over to help. He broke through the bedroom window and carried the wheelchair-bound Ramon to safety, apparently with the assistance of Ramon's brother, Aron. Without stopping to think of his own safety, Jose rushed back into the burning house in an effort to save Aron, but he was overtaken by smoke. Rescue efforts by the local fire department ended in vain. Both Jose and Aron died of smoke inhalation.

Jose was a student at Royse City High School. Principal Ruth Cherry said, ''He's a hero. He helped a lot of the students who are new from Mexico. We'll miss him. I'm so happy to have known him.'' Aron was a student at Royse City Elementary School, where Principal Gary Evers described him as a ''wonderful boy'' who was respected and loved by everyone.

Royse City has been deeply moved by this act of courage and by the premature deaths of these two young boys. The story was carried in area newspapers. A memorial fund was established. There are plans for a permanent memorial. Jose Rios deserves this recognition, Mr. Speaker, and he deserves our respect. So as we adjourn today, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this courageous young Texan, Jose Rios, and to his young neighbor, Aaron Carreon, who died along with him. They will be missed by all those in Royse City who knew and loved them.

And they will be remembered. Jose Rios will be remembered as a genuine hero, one who gave his life to save the life of another. Mr. Speaker, Jose Rios is a hero for all times.

MEMORIALIZATION OF BRIG. GEN. RICHARD J. DIRGINS, U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the first officially named U.S. Army Reserve center located outside of American territory will be dedicated in the memory of Brig. Gen. Richard J. Dirgins on April 19, 1995, in Schwetzingen, Germany. Dirgins, a native of Fairfield, CT, and an alumnus of Norwich University, Vermont, led the 7th Army Reserve Command for almost 7 years. The general died January 14, 1995, just months after relinquishing command of the 7th ARCOM, which has 23 Army Reserve units in Germany and Italy. Presently 11 of the command's units are mobilized in support of Operation Joint Endeavor.

Dirgins's many years of service in the Army will be remembered in an outdoor ceremony at Tompkins Barracks that will include the unveiling of a bronze plaque and a portrait and the planting of a tree outside the building which will bear his name.

321ST MISSILE GROUP, GRAND FORKS AFB, ND

HON. ROBERT K. DORNAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the dedicated young men and women of the U.S. Air Force 321st Missile Group at Grand Forks, ND. The 321st, commanded by Col. Robert P. Summers, is currently undergoing a very stressful but highly successful realignment of Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBM's] while at the same time maintaining an active nuclear deterrent force. Despite the apparent end to the cold war, recent tensions with mainland China and elsewhere in the world clearly demonstrate the need to maintain a reliable and effective ground-based nuclear deterrent force. Colonel Summers and everyone in his command are to be commended for their personal sacrifice, professionalism, and dedication towards ensuring we have the best nuclear deterrent in the world both today and tomorrow. I am including for my colleagues a copy of the mission statement, values, and strategic goals for the 321st Missile Group, as well as a unit history. Again, to Colonel Summers and everyone in the 321st—job well done. And may none of us ever forget the 321st motto: ''Global Power for Peace.''

321ST MISSILE GROUP HISTORY

Serving in defense of its country, the 321st Missile Group has undergone a comprehensive hardware metamorphosis over the past 40 years. The development of the 321st Missile Group began June 26, 1942, as the 321st Bombardment Group (Medium); assigned under Twelfth Air Force. The group flew B–25 Mitchell bombers in the Mediterranean theater from March 7, 1943, to September 12, 1945. For their flying accomplishments the group was awarded two Distinguished Unit Citations. The group was later deactivated September 12, 1945, at Pomigliano, Italy, and returned to the United States. The 321st reactivated as an Air Force Reserve unit under 15th Air Force and designated the 321st Bombardment Group (Light) on March 31, 1946. It was again inactivated on June 27, 1949.

The 321st reactivated at Pinecastle AFB, Fla., under Second Air Force as the 321st Bombardment Wing (Medium) Dec. 15, 1953. The wing flew the B–47 strategic bomber and won the Fairchild Trophy in the 1957 Strategic Air Command annual bombing, navigation and reconnaissance competition. During this period, the wing transferred from Second Air Force to the 6th Air Division under Eighth Air Force Jan. 1, 1959. With the phase-out of the B–47, the unit deactivated again Oct. 25, 1961.

On Nov. 1, 1964, the Air Force again activated the 321st, this time as the 321st Strategic Missile Wing. The Missile Wing found a home at Grand Forks Air Force Base and assigned to the 4th Strategic Aerospace Division under Second Air Force. In 1965, the 446th, 447th, and 448th Strategic Missile Squadrons were activated. Together, they worked toward making the 321st the first operational Minuteman II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Wing in Strategic Air Command on Dec. 7, 1966. The 321st became the first unit to deploy the LGM–30F Minuteman II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

In 1969, the wing won the Blanchard Trophy for excellence during the annual SAC missile combat competition, becoming the only wing in the Air Force to win top awards for both bombardment and missile excellence. The 321st Strategic Missile Wing won the Blanchard Trophy again in 1969, 1974, and 1987.

From 1970 until 1988, the wing fell under Fifteenth Air Force's 57th Air Division, and later the 4th Air Division. Between 1971 and 1973, the wing changed weapons systems turning over Minuteman II's for Minuteman III's.

After 18 years with Fifteenth Air Force, the 321st Strategic Missile Wing was reassigned to the Eighth Air Force when the 42nd Air Division came to Grand Forks Air Force Base June 16, 1988. Under the Eighth Air Force, the 321st Organizational Missile Maintenance Squadron received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award from 1988 through 1990. Strategic Air Command also selected the 448th Strategic Missile Squadron as the ICBM Operational Squadron of the Year for 1990.

On Sept. 1, 1991 during a reorganization, the 321st was redesignated the 321st Missile Wing and assigned under the newly reactivated Twentieth Air Force with the inactivation of the 42nd Air Division. Then on June 1, 1992, the 321st Missile Wing became assigned to the newly formed Air Combat Command. While in the Air Combat Command, the 321st continued a tradition of excellence when in 1992 Air Combat Command named the 447th, ICBM Missile Squadron of the Year.

On May 1, 1993, Detachment 3, 37th Air Rescue Squadron was redesignated as the 79th Rescue Flight. The change realigned the bases HH–1H Huey helicopters, pilots, and support personnel under direct control of the 321st Operations Group commander.

Further changes in the Air Force resulted with the 321st Missile Wing being realigned from Air Combat Command to Air Force Space Command on July 1, 1993. The missile wing's move transferred the daily management of the Air Force's land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles to a command familiar with missile and rocket technology.

On Nov. 1, 1993, the 321st Organizational Missile Maintenance Squadron earned the Air Force Space Command Maintenance Effectiveness Award, and later went on to win the award at the Air Force level.