

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE
LATE JOHN T. O'CONNOR

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 5, 2001

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember John T. O'Connor, a community activist and environmental advocate who passed away on November 30, 2001. A longtime resident of Cambridge, Massachusetts, John O'Connor fought for many important causes, from ending poverty to protecting our environment.

He graduated from Clark University in 1978, beginning a career of public service and advocacy. After graduation, he joined the "Volunteers in Service to America", an organization focused on eliminating poverty. He went on to found the National Toxics Campaign in 1983 and fought tirelessly for passage of the Superfund law.

Mr. O'Connor never lost his commitment to preserving our environment and demonstrated this in a number of ways over the years. He served as Chairman of Gravestar, Inc.—a development company that focused on environmentally sensitive real estate projects. In 1991, he founded Greenworks, a company that provides a wide range of services from office space, financial support and advice to environmental start-up companies.

Mr. O'Connor paid tribute to his Irish roots by serving on the Irish Famine Memorial Committee. The Committee successfully raised the funds to construct a memorial in Cambridge and dedicated it in the presence of Mary Robinson, then President of Ireland.

Many people have stories to tell about Mr. O'Connor's generosity and his spirit. He helped local young people by providing guidance, advice and even money for college tuition. By these actions, he no doubt changed the course of many young lives for the better.

Mr. O'Connor made the world a better place in so many ways. He was generous with his time and his considerable talents, helping to further so many different causes, both large and small. He dedicated a significant amount of time and money to charitable organizations, making a tangible difference in the lives of so many.

I came to know John O'Connor first as a local businessman, then as an opponent in the 1998 congressional race, and later as a friend. He touched many lives in his 46 years, including mine, and I am saddened by his passage. My thoughts and prayers are with John's wife, Carolyn Mugar, his family and his many friends during this difficult time.

HONORING THE IDAHO PEARL
HARBOR SURVIVOR'S ASSOCIATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 5, 2001

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a generation of American patriots. They were the men and women at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii that day of infamy, December 7, 1941. The men and women who served and died at Pearl Harbor paid a great price to our nation.

Today as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, I would like to honor the men and women who make up the Idaho Pearl Harbor Survivor's Association. This group of 50 active members helps keep the memory of those who served so bravely alive. To be a member you must be a military survivor of the December 7th attack, have been within a three-mile radius of the Island of Oahu between 7:55 a.m. and 9:45 a.m.

The nation-wide group has approximately 10,000 members and started with just 11 people in 1958. The Magic Valley Chapter started on Feb. 17, 1979 with five members. Over the years, the members have given back to each Idaho community—buying flags, talking with youth groups, and performing countless hours of community service. They have sounded their motto, "Remember Pearl Harbor—Keep America Alert" in all their activities. How poignant this statement is considering the events of September 11, 2001.

Today, I would like to honor this group by naming each survivor who currently lives in Idaho. This list is according to the Idaho Pearl Harbor Association. The members are:

Harold F. Beebe, Pocatello, Kaneohe NAS; Ralph Eaton, Twin Falls, USS Henley; Richard Hansing, Twin Falls, USS Nevada; C.H. Harame, Pocatello, USS Detroit; William Harten, Idaho Falls, USS West Virginia; Pershing Hill, Idaho Falls, USS Nevada; Leroy J. Kohntopp, Filer, USS Maryland; Gale D. Mohlenbrink, Buhl, USS Northampton; Patrick C. O'Connor, Pocatello, Receiving Station, Pearl Harbor; Robert R. Olsen, Chubbuck, Naval Hospital; Steve F. Phillips, Challis, Ford Island NAS; David R. Roessler, Gooding, 24 SIG; Tony Sabala, Jerome, 21st INF.; Irvin A. Satterfield, American Falls, USS Argonne; Nicholas Gaynos, Post Falls, 407th SIG; Miles R. Gillespie, Nampa, 27th INF.; Roy Hayter, Athol, USS Honolulu; Munith F. Higbee, Meridian, USS Phelps; Don A. Irby, Boise, USS Maryland; Wallace R. Jacobs, Lewiston, USS California; Dale E. Magnuss, Pinehurst, USS Cummings; James R. Mallory, Boise, USS St. Louis; Ernest R. Mangrum, Boise, USS West Virginia; Eugene N. McDonough, Boise, 24th INF.; Dallas F. Pohlmann, Boise, Pack Train; Glenn R. Rosenberry, Caldwell, HQ 18th Bomb EG.; Carrol V. Rowell, Boise, 2d Marie Air WG; Robert W. Arent, Nampa, USS Maryland; Richard L. Artley, Lewiston, USS Oklahoma; Ray Aznavoorian, Post Falls, USS Ontario; Conway B. Benson, Boise, USS Tennessee; Thomas A. Brown, Boise, USS Phoenix; Frank A. Cannon, Orofino, USS Wasmuth; Robert A. Coates, Nampa, USS Nevada; James R. Critchett, Silverton, Kaneohe, NAS; Frank R. Dallas, Meridian, HQ 18th Bomb WG.

USS Ogala; Harold M. Sr. Erland, Boise, HQ HAW.; Dan C. Fry, Banks, Kaneohe; Horace E. Dresser, Caldwell, USS San Francisco; Raymond W. Garland, Couer D'Alene; USS Tennessee; John R. Sandell, Kamiah, HQ 5th Bomb GP; James K. Thomas, Boise; Franklin Elliott, Eagle.

HQ Hawaiian AF; Kenneth F. Walters, Lewiston, USS Pennsylvania.

On behalf of all Idahoans and Americans everywhere, "thank you" for your sacrifice and service to your country. You've reminded Americans that we can never become complacent and must keep our defenses strong. We will remember Pearl Harbor and always be on alert.

TRIBUTE TO ROLLIN "RUFFY"
JOHNSON ON THE OCCASION OF
HIS RETIREMENT AS A VFW AS-
SISTANT DEPARTMENT SERVICE
OFFICER

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 5, 2001

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to a U.S. military veteran—a special veteran, one who after completing his own tour of duty has spent a career providing assistance to other veterans. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Rollin "Ruffy" Johnson on the occasion of his retirement as a Veterans of Foreign Wars assistant state service officer for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

It is conventional wisdom that no person in any organization—and that includes you and I, Mr. Speaker—is truly irreplaceable, but Michigan veterans may look long and hard before they come up with an individual who has worked and battled so hard for the rights for our former military men and women as Ruffy Johnson has. I guess that, in Ruffy's case, his work on behalf of veterans blends innate Yooper cussedness with the personal style of a person who has claimed that his nickname "Ruffy" comes from his early days of enjoying a good fight. If you combine those characteristics with the important task of fighting for veterans' benefits, you know you have a mixture that can make people at the Department of Veterans Affairs sit up and listen.

After graduating in 1951 from Negaunee High School in Michigan's U.P., Ruffy enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving the first two years on the destroyer U.S.S. Beale and two more years at a base in the Mediterranean. His four-year hitch completed, he returned to the U.P. and was one of the first dozen civilians hired at K.I. Sawyer, a Strategic Air Command Base near Marquette, which is now closed. Following his Sawyer job he worked for a number of years for the U.S. Post office, but he took the job that really concerns us here in 1988, when he accepted a position with the Department of Michigan Veterans of Foreign Wars as an assistant state service officer in Detroit.

At least one Detroit colleague remembers Ruffy arriving from the U.P. with his wife Doreen in their pickup truck, and that colleague recalls checking to see if there was a hunting rifle in the rear window. Doreen remembers there was no gun, but she believes the rack was probably there.

Mr. Speaker, I said that Rolling Johnson was a fighter for veterans. An example of his tenacity is what occurred after Ruffy learned that veterans were being pressed for the co-payments of their prescription drugs. He inquired about the appeal process and was told by the VA there was no appeal. Well, Mr. Speaker, the VA had tangled with the wrong guy, and through the tenacity of Ruffy Johnson a national appeal process was established.

Ruffy was transferred from Detroit back to the U.P. in 1992. His initial veterans' service area was the eastern U.P. but by the end of the decade he was assisting across the Upper Peninsula. I know what's involved in that effort, Mr. Speaker, because I have put more