

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 1, 2014

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the creation of United States Air Force Academy on 1 April 1954, and offer remarks to honor this youngest of our nation's service academies. Birthed in the minds of visionary post Army Air Corps leaders and the Eisenhower Administration, the Air Force Academy has become the most forward looking military institution and premiere Aerospace Military Academy imaginable during the second half of the 20th Century. Residing in the bedrock of the Colorado Rocky Mountains the United States Air Force Academy has fueled the heart, mind, and winning spirit of the U.S. Air Force by providing leaders who flew higher than its inspiring surrounding peaks.

Since its inception the U.S. Air Force Academy has produced over forty-six thousand young men and women officers and superior senior leaders across the span of six decades. These leaders provided the backbone of our Aerospace warriors, including the first Air Force ace from the Vietnam War, Captain Steve Ritchie and the first USAFA graduate to be given the Medal of Honor, Captain Lance Sijan. Since that era one hundred and eighty one graduates have given their lives in defense of our Nation. The lifeblood of the USAF leadership has flowed from the Academy over the decades, with contributions of 598 General officers and five Air Force Chiefs of Staff. As the premier academy to explore the final frontier of space the Academy has produced 38 Astronaut Graduates and continues to produce numerous strategic leaders in the military space arena.

The Air Force Academy has a longstanding tradition of producing both highly qualified and committed military officers combined with superbly educated college graduates from its halls of academic excellence. Over the years the Academy produced 37 Rhodes Scholars and the institution continues to be highly ranked in national college reviews such as *Forbes* and *US News and World Report* over more than three decades. Over the years the institution has scored in the top 100 of American colleges in numerous ranking publications. In college athletics USAFA competes in 17 NCAA sports conferences and continually performs extremely well in its various divisions. The Air Force Academy has won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy on the gridiron 18 times, far surpassing the other Service Academies and brining national publicity to this Colorado institution.

Since its inception the United States Air Force Academy has continually trained, educated, and inspired young men and women to become leaders of character with the motivation to serve as Air Force career officers. It continues into its sixth decade of institutional defense contributions to the Nation by providing a unique blend of academic curriculum, military training, and leadership and physical development. This institution has become a historical wellspring of Air Force military lead-

ership which will continue to develop future generations to defend our precious United States of America. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to recognize our USAFA landmark as it contributes to the security of our democracy from its position anchored in the foothills of the Colorado Rockies.

HONORING PETER J. WIRS

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 1, 2014

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) in drawing attention to an event that is set to unfold on April 17 at USA Wrestling's National Open in Las Vegas, where Mr. Peter J. Wirs is set to become what I am told is the oldest person ever to step onto an international freestyle wrestling mat for his very first competitive match.

I was fortunate to be involved in the sport of wrestling from an early age. I know from personal experience just how much dedication and discipline the sport requires. When my teammates and I wrestled, we faced certain challenges, but the challenges Pete Wirs faces next month are far different: He is 59 years old, has suffered a heart attack and two strokes, and has diabetes.

While my colleague from Pennsylvania spoke about the importance of Mr. Wirs overcoming diabetes to wrestle, I would also note the corollary: He chose wrestling as the sport to overcome diabetes.

Wrestling is demanding. Who wins and who loses is decided solely by the two individuals squaring off on the mat. People have different opinions about what percent of training is physical and what percent is mental, but everyone agrees that wrestling is an incredibly demanding sport, both physically and emotionally.

Former Speaker Dennis Hastert, a former wrestling coach, often commented on the courage, discipline, and perseverance that wrestling demands. Paraphrasing the old introduction to ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, wrestling demonstrates the "thrill of victory and the agony of defeat."

That will be very important to remember on April 17, when Pete Wirs steps onto the mat. From one wrestler to another and one public official to another, I wish him the best of luck.

Mr. Speaker, you may remember that the International Olympic Committee's executive board voted last year to expel wrestling from the Summer Games. Thanks to the outcry from ordinary citizens from across America and around the world, the IOC General Assembly ultimately reversed the board's decision and reinstated the sport. But this decision gives wrestling only a temporary reprieve. It is still on probation, with its status in the future facing further challenges.

Our country should celebrate the thousands of amateur athletes who train for and compete in the sport of wrestling. Today, I am honored to commend Pete Wirs and all who rise to the challenge.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF COLONEL ROBERT K. THOMPSON, USAF

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 1, 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Colonel Robert K. Thompson upon the occasion of his retirement after 29 years of honorable service to our great Nation in the United States Air Force and Air Force Reserve.

Colonel Thompson received his Air Force commission in 1985 as a distinguished ROTC graduate from Indiana University. After receiving his commission, he began an impressive career as a public affairs officer—a career that spanned nearly three decades and brought him to all corners of the world. Colonel Thompson's final assignment at Headquarters, United States Air Force, Pentagon, Washington, D.C., as the Chief of Public Affairs for the Policy Integration Directorate, Office of Air Force Reserve, was in direct support of the Chief of Air Force Reserve, where he helped fulfill mission directives for more than 70,000 reservists at 34 wings and 12 groups.

Throughout his myriad deployments in Central and South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and in the United States, Colonel Thompson championed America's First Amendment rights and goodwill in war zones and disaster areas. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he expedited the story and video of the airstrike that killed al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. As NATO's top spokesman in Bosnia, he communicated the coalition's commitment to the Dayton Peace Accord and coalition efforts to remove landmines, disarm former combatants and capture war criminals leading to the arrest of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. Utilizing his experience and success as a public affairs officer, Colonel Thompson wrote the first draft of the Department of Defense's media plan for Operation Enduring Freedom, which helped inform the American people while also protecting operational security. At home, Colonel Thompson escorted FOX, CNN, and CBS aboard the Air Force's first-responder helicopters to cover the Winter Olympics in Utah and rescue operations during Hurricane Katrina, ultimately writing the plans for release of information critical for the general public to understand military disaster relief operations. Additionally, Colonel Thompson orchestrated better insight into our humanitarian efforts in Japan, Libya, and Haiti, where we helped open schools, medical clinics and the first transnational road built coast-to-coast by the U.S. military in Honduras.

In his most recent position as Chief of Public Affairs, Colonel Thompson played an integral role in Congressional proceedings relating to life-cycle manpower costs and force shaping. He also worked to provide input to our Nation's highest military and civilian leaders and informed the public on important Air Force developments, with more than 100 published news articles viewed by millions. Colonel Thompson's efforts have also been critical to implementing new laws and policies supporting combat veterans, reservists, their civilian employers, and their families, and championing increased utilization of an operational reserve.