CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF HAR-LA-TUSKEGEE AIRMAN JO-SEPH HERMAN SPOONER

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Tuskegee Airman Joseph Herman Spooner, a life-long resident of the Village of Harlem as noted by the family. On September 11th, 2014, America surrendered a living legend to the annals of Black American history. Inextricably intertwined to the importance of this day “September 11th” in American history, a Tuskegee Airman at 94 years old, has passed over.

September 11 reminds all of us every year that ‘freedom is not free’ and the strength of our nation depends on men and women, such as Joe Spooner, a decorated World War II original member of the 99th Fighter Squadron/332nd Fighter Group stationed out of Tuskegee, Alabama.

Joseph Spooner was born on October 30th, 1919 to Joseph and Georgianna Spooner. Joseph was hilarious and loved to play jokes on people. He was high spirited and the life of the party. He had five siblings and three generations of grandchildren. He attended PS 179 Elementary School, PS 165 Robert E. Simon, and graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School in which he excelled in academics and athletics. He loved to play and watch sports. In his early years, he played Semi-Pro Basketball on a team against the Colombians.

At the time he was drafted Joseph Spooner was a freshman at The City College of New York. Having played with the likes of Negro Basketball League legend John Issacs and “Pop” Gates of the original Harlem Globetrotters he made his family proud qualifying to be the 99th Fighter Squadron/332nd Fighter Group stationed out of Tuskegee, Alabama.

On April 43, the 99th Fighter Squadron in their P-47 Thunderbolt fighters went into combat bound for North Africa, where it would join the 33rd Fighter Group and its commander, Colonel William W. Momyer. Given little guidance from battle-experienced pilots, the 99th's first combat mission was to attack the small stra- nel William W. Momyer. Given little guidance from battle-experienced pilots, the 99th's first combat mission was to attack the small stra-

HISTORICAL RECORD OF SENATE AND HOUSE HEARINGS ON PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS OF AMERICAN SAMOA’S ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS AND OVERSEAS VOTERS

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
OF AMERICAN SAMOA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include, for historical purposes, information on Senate and House hearings on a bill to protect the voting rights of American Samoa’s active duty service members and overseas voters.

[Press Release, July 14, 2004]

SENATE HOLDINGS HEARING ON FALEOMAVAEGA BILL TO PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS AND OVERSEAS VOTERS

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests held a hearing on H.R. 2010, a bill he introduced to protect the voting rights of active duty service members and overseas voters whose home of residence is American Samoa.

At this time, I want to thank Chairman Larry Craig and Ranking Member Ron Wyden for the opportunity to enter the full text of my statement into the record, Chairman Faleomavaega said. I also want to thank Senator Daniel Akaka who is a senior member of both the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests held a hearing on H.R. 2010, a bill he introduced to protect the voting rights of active duty service members and overseas voters whose home of residence is American Samoa.

At this time, I want to thank Chairman Larry Craig and Ranking Member Ron Wyden for the opportunity to enter the full text of my statement into the record, Senator Faleomavaega said. I also want to thank Senator Daniel Akaka who is a senior member of both the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands. Senator Akaka was instrumental in getting this hearing held and I thank him for his support and kind words.

At today’s hearing, Senator Akaka said, “H.R. 2010 was introduced by my good friend, Eni Faleomavaega, a senior member of the House who couldn’t testify himself because of the centennial celebration for the islands of Manua. On this occasion, I’d like to send the people of American Samoa our best wishes as they celebrate this holiday and for victory, since the stars and stripes were first raised by their traditional chiefs.”

Senator Akaka continued by saying, “I do not have a question, Mr. Chairman, but a comment as someone who is very familiar with the challenges of transportation and communications out in this part of the world. This bill would resolve a long-standing problem in the Territories of American Samoa. When the Delegate to Congress introduced a bill to elect the Delegate from American Samoa: How to conduct a run-off election in just 14 days. The number of absentee voters and only two regular flights from the U.S. each week? This bill would provide for election of the Delegate by majority vote. Ok. In the delegate’s case, he or she wants, by a majority vote following a primary election, it would resolve a long-standing problem.”

Chairman Craig thanked Senator Akaka for his comments and I also thank Senator Akaka for being at today’s hearing. Although I was invited to testify before the Senate Subcommittee, I thought it was equally important to attend Flag Day celebrations being held in American Samoa to recognize Manua’s 100 year relationship with the United States. Congressman Faleomavaega said. This celebration is an historic event and I am pleased to be with the people on this important day. Again, I am pleased that Chairman Craig recognized the importance of Flag Day and included my written testimony in the Committee records.

I am also pleased to welcome the MV Sili to Manua. It is most fitting for our new vessel to arrive from Louisiana just in time to commemorate Manua’s 100 year relationship with our traditional leaders and chiefs, past and present. The arrival of this vessel has been more than a year in the making and I am grateful to our Congressional friends in the House who supported our efforts to set aside funding for this vessel.

I am also pleased that Governor Togiola stood with me and agreed that $5 million should be set aside for the purchase of a new vessel for Manua. I am also thankful that Senator Breaux supported our efforts to set aside funding for this vessel.

Because we were successful in including the Territories, American Samoa received more than $10 million from the Tax Act of 2003, Democratic Senator Benjamin Nelson from Nebraska fought hard to help us keep our funding in place. Later, Republican Chairman Bill Thomas of the House Ways and Means Committee sent me a letter saying that he was pleased he could assist me in this effort.

Although I was invited to testify before the Territories, the Territories of the United States, Congressman Faleomavaega said. This celebration is an historic event and I am pleased to be with the people on this important day. Again, I am pleased that Chairman Craig recognized the importance of Flag Day and included my written testimony in the Committee records.