

Pine, Tennessee, where up to 2,000 people are expected to attend.

Governor Bill Haslam has proclaimed September 26th as Appalachian Electric Cooperative Day.

Since 1940, the member-owned, non-profit Appalachian Electric Cooperative has been providing reliable and affordable electricity across East Tennessee.

Today, it serves 45,000 people in Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson and Sevier Counties.

Several years ago, I was named the number one champion of rural America in the entire House of Representatives.

I have always rooted for the little guy or the underdog in life. It is very important to stand up for small towns and rural areas because they do not have the resources of big cities and often get shortchanged.

I read recently that two-thirds of the counties in the U.S. are losing population. There are many small towns and rural areas across the Appalachian region that are barely holding on.

Without affordable, reliable electricity, these rural areas would cease to exist. We must do everything we can to support rural America and help stem this population loss.

Mr. Speaker, the Appalachian Electric Cooperative has been a lifeline for many thousands of people across rural East Tennessee for the last 75 years. I urge my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD to congratulate them on this milestone and thank them for their service to Tennessee.

GREATER LOVE HAS NO MAN THAN THIS THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, etched in white marble on a gravestone in Arlington National Cemetery is the name of Army Staff Sergeant Brian T. Craig. Born on April 2, 1975, he passed away 13 days after his 27th birthday on April 15, 2002 in Afghanistan.

Brian was a son, a friend and, most importantly to him, a Christian. Brian loved his family, and he made it a weekly ritual to call home early on Saturday mornings to let his parents know he was okay. He graduated from Klein Forest High School in 1993 and from there went on to enlist in the United States Army the next fall. His parents had encouraged him to go to college, but Brian was dead set on enlisting; it was in his blood. His father, Arthur, was stationed in Thailand with the Air Force during the Vietnam War. Brian served in Anchorage, Alaska as an Airborne Infantry soldier.

Upon reenlistment, he served in a range of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (E.O.D.) missions in support of the United States and NATO, even serving in Bosnia/Kosovo and The Republic of North Korea. He was deployed in support of Operation Noble Eagle/Enduring Freedom to Kandahar, Afghanistan in November of 2001, when he was later killed.

His parents, Arthur and Barbara Craig, heard news that four U.S. soldiers were killed

in Kandahar as they dismantled confiscated rockets, they feared their son was among that four.

Barbara was returning from the airport, after dropping her husband off for a mission trip, when she saw an Army car pull up in front of the house. Her worries were confirmed, Brian was among the dead in Afghanistan.

Brian paid the ultimate sacrifice; he laid down his life for not only his family and friends, but people he had never met. He was working to keep the civilians of Afghanistan safe, to make the world a little safer, too. Brian worked with a small team that went around and collected old bombs and rockets. They then took these explosives to a safe location to detonate them, so they would not harm other people. As his father put it, rather than using these weapons of destruction, Brian was cleaning up munitions left by past and present wars.

On the homepage of a memorial website for Brian reads a verse from the Book of John: "Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." This short scripture is a living testimony of the man that Brian was. He was a man of great faith whose life was a light in dark circumstances.

The website features one of Brian's last letters home. In this three page letter, Brian describes his walk with Christ. He says that during his time in Afghanistan, he had grown spiritually. He was a member of a men's bible study and reiterated that it was an answer to his prayers. He also stated that he never thought he could grow in his relationship with God and the people he worked with and that he wanted to make a difference in these men's lives.

And he did.

On the message board of his memorial website are short messages from Brian's friends, family and coworkers. A comment from Major Chris Miller, Commander, Special Forces, reads: "He let his silent comportment and deep faith speak for him instead of his words. This is such a rare quality in young people these days." In his letter, Brian graciously thanks his parents for their love and support. He let them know, the Lord was answering their prayers for him; he could feel it. He simply asked them to continue their prayers and sent his love.

Brian was a person of tremendous character and faith. He will not be forgotten. For his service, he was awarded the Purple Heart Medal and the Bronze Star Medal.

We should always support our troops, and we should always keep them in our thoughts and prayers. For the warriors across the globe who fight every day ensuring our well-being, there is no greater love.

God Bless our troops, and God Bless Army Staff Sergeant Brian T. Craig.

And that's just the way it is.

IN HONOR OF COUNCILMAN DAVID DUNCAN

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincere condolences and honor the memory of Bellmawr, New Jersey, Councilman

David Duncan for his exemplary life of service to the Bellmawr community. In addition to being a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, Mr. Duncan was a resident of Bellmawr for almost forty-five years and spent his time giving back to his city.

Mr. Duncan was an experienced insurance agent and a member of the Union Ironworker Local #399 for 35 years. For years, he led the effort to get out the labor vote on Election Day. As Councilman, David oversaw the Department of Public Safety, and Department of Health, and served as the Planning Board Liaison. In addition, Mr. Duncan was active in many Bellmawr organizations. He served on the executive board of the Bellmawr Democrat Club, as president of the Bellmawr Lions Club, and as a member of the Bellmawr Men's Club.

Mr. Duncan was also a veteran of the United States Navy, as well as a dedicated member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, one of the largest organizations for combat veterans in the world and I thank him for his service to our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, David Duncan was an incredible man, dedicated to his family, community and country. He leaves behind a great legacy and I join the Bellmawr community and the entire state of New Jersey in honoring the achievements and the life of this great man.

HONORING VINCENT A. MIRO

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Mr. Vincent A. Miro for his service in the United States Navy and to congratulate him for being presented with eight medals.

Mr. Miro served in the Navy for over 2 years during World War II. He enlisted as soon as he was old enough and served up until the end of the war in Europe. Mr. Miro served in the D-Day invasion, storming the beaches of Normandy when he was just 18. We are honored to present him with the following medals: World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (with bronze star appurtenance), Combat Action Ribbon, Discharge Button, Honorable Service Lapel Pin (Ruptured Duck).

In honor of his commitment and sacrifice for his country, I am honored to recognize Mr. Vincent A. Miro and offer him my sincerest congratulations.

HONORING GAYLES MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 65th Anniversary of Gayles Memorial Missionary Baptist Church in Aurora, Illinois.

Since 1950, the members of Gayles Memorial Missionary Baptist Church have committed