

Armored Brigade Combat Team from Mississippi.

MAJ Fester, a native of Westerville, Ohio, attended Ohio State University. He enlisted in the Army in 1984, where he served as an administrative specialist in the Ohio National Guard. MAJ Fester received his Army ROTC commission in 1987, when he graduated from Ohio State University. As a second lieutenant, MAJ Fester served on active duty with the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment. He was promoted to first lieutenant in May 1989, while serving with the 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment. In 1990, MAJ Fester served with the Battery Charlie, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery (Multiple Launch Rocket System) in Wertheim, Germany. His unit deployed to parts of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq during the initial ground phase of Operation Desert Storm. MAJ Fester's service during Operation Desert Storm earned him a number of awards including the Bronze Star medal.

In August 1991, he attended the Officer Advanced Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and was promoted to captain. MAJ Fester's next assignment was at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he took command of the Battery Charlie, 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery. After MAJ Fester completed his service at Fort Bragg, he was assigned to New Cumberland Army Depot outside of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1996, MAJ Fester departed active duty and became a sales representative for Pfizer Inc. He was reclassified as a member of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). At the time, MAJ Fester served as a tactical intelligence officer in the New York Air National Guard's Engineer Brigade, 42nd Infantry Division. In December 1999, MAJ Fester joined the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), where he was assigned to the 402nd Civil Affairs Battalion, Tonawanda, New York. He completed the Civil Affairs Officer Advanced Course in 2001, and was promoted to major. In April 2002, a presidential executive order called MAJ Fester and other reservists back to service for a tour that was scheduled to last until 2006.

After MAJ Fester's death, his duties in Iraq were described in an online post at arlingtoncemetery.net. It was MAJ Fester's job to talk with mayors of Iraqi communities and Islamic clerics in the dangerous Sunni Triangle. MAJ Fester secured contractors to rebuild high schools and elementary schools. His wife, Julie, was proud of her husband's devotion to every project. "He believed in what he was doing," Mrs. Fester said. "The schools over there were rubble. He felt they were making a difference."

When MAJ Fester's body was returned to the United States for burial, more than 650 people came to the memorial service. It was held at the Ada Bible Church in Ada, Michigan. On the day of the service, flags throughout Michigan were lowered to half staff. Reverend Bob King, Ada Bible Church pastor, said MAJ Fester wanted to serve America. "He was very concerned about his family," Rev. King said. "But as a soldier, he was ready to step up and do his duty. He truly had the desire to make the world a better place."

MAJ Fester was transported to the Arlington National Cemetery where the Army Horseman of the Caisson Platoon carried him to his final resting place. His coffin was draped with an

American flag. At the end of the service, a military band played "America the Beautiful" as flags were presented to his family.

MAJ Fester's awards and decorations include two Bronze Star medals, the Purple Heart medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, two Army Commendation medals, the Army Achievement medal, the Army Reserve Components Achievement medal, the National Defense Service medal, the Southwest Asia Service medal with three bronze service stars, the Iraq Campaign medal, Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Kuwaiti Liberation medal, the Combat Action Badge, the Parachutist Badge and a Valorous Unit Award.

MAJ Fester is survived by his wife, Julie, his two daughters, Jenni and Megan; his son, Peyton; and his parents, William Fester and Virginia Piccoro.

MAJ Fester will always be remembered for his courage and bravery. He sacrificed his life to protect the freedoms we all enjoy.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF HARRY MESHEL

#### HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2017*

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Harry Meshel who died on September 4, 2017. Mr. Meshel was a native of Youngstown, Ohio and "known for his remarkable civic, cultural, and educational contributions to the community."

Well-known for his colorful stories, sharp wit, and keen memory, Meshel had a successful political career in the Ohio Democratic Party. Throughout his career, he had the opportunity to meet iconic political leaders, including President John F. Kennedy and President Lyndon B. Johnson. Meshel's break came in late 1963 when Youngstown Mayor-elect Anthony B. Flak selected him to be his administrative assistant. Meshel served in that capacity for more than five years. When a seat in the Ohio Senate opened, Meshel won a seven-person Democratic primary in 1970 and then the general election. He spent more than 22 years in the Ohio Senate, and the majority of that time was spent in leadership positions, including president for two years. After resigning from the Senate in 1993, Meshel served as state Democratic party chairman. He later went on to serve a nine-year term as a trustee on the board of Youngstown State University."

Harry was one of the original sponsors of legislation to establish the Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) in Rootstown. Additionally, he was instrumental in the creation of the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine and the Wright State University School of Professional Psychology. He was a relentless advocate of Youngstown State University as a student, a legislator, and as a Trustee. In addition to all the achievements of this able leader, I remember Harry as a Greek American who valiantly fought our nation's battle at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. He was a dedicated supporter of our veterans and a frequent participant at many veterans' events.

Harry was a respected and beloved member of the community who influenced countless

lives. He was a dear friend and mentor to me when I was just starting out my career in public service. His legacy is represented all over the Mahoning Valley and Youngstown State University. He will be deeply missed by our community and by all of those fortunate enough to know him. I extend my deepest condolences to his family and friends.

#### CELEBRATING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CRANDALL PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2017*

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the 125th Anniversary of the Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, New York.

Since its establishment in November of 1892, the Crandall Public Library has remained true to its mission of serving and educating our community. Acting as the central library for the Southern Adirondack Library System, the Crandall library holds an extensive and diverse collection of books and materials. The library's historical collections preserve the rich history of the region, while its Folklife Center Program showcases the cultural traditions of the upper Hudson Valley and southern Adirondacks. By offering thoughtful and engaging opportunities for people of all ages, the Library has provided our community with an excellent place to come together and learn.

In New York's 21st District, we are grateful for the Crandall Public Library's work on preserving our history, educating our people, and bringing our community together. I would like to thank the library's employees for their dedicated service, and congratulate them as they celebrate this historic occasion.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF FALLEN ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIER CAPTAIN (CPT) LOWELL T. MILLER, II

#### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Michigan Army National Guard soldier Captain (CPT) Lowell T. Miller, II who died while defending our great nation on August 31, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. CPT Miller and his military training team came under attack by enemy forces using small arms fire in Iskandariyah, Iraq. They were conducting military operations with the Iraqi Army. CPT Miller was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, McComb, Mississippi.

According to the Associated Press, CPT Miller was a member of Calvary Christian Church in Flint, Michigan. He accepted Jesus Christ as his savior and was baptized at the age of eight. He was active in his church's youth group, youth choir, and the Bible Quiz Bowl. CPT Miller attended Carman-Ainsworth High School where he lettered in track. He also

held the school record in the 4X100 meter for six years. CPT Miller graduated from high school in 1988. In 1993, CPT Miller graduated from Virginia Military Institute where he earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant upon graduation and was transferred to the Michigan Army National Guard. In January 2005, CPT Miller volunteered with the 1–155th Infantry Regiment, McComb, Mississippi in order to deploy to Iraq. At the time of his deployment, CPT Miller was employed as an electrical engineer for Yazaki North America, Inc.

CPT Miller's father, Lowell Thomas, wrote about his son's death on a memorial website. "It was a night mission that they said was too dangerous for American soldiers and they called on the group of Iraqi soldiers he had been training for six weeks," Mr Miller wrote. "He didn't want them to go alone, so he went with them. He was a soldier's soldier. He always took care of his men and never gave a thought for his own safety."

CPT Miller was remembered by a fellow soldier on a memorial website. "My brother in arms, you were more than just an officer, more than just a soldier, and more than just a leader," Specialist (SPC) Rickland L. Scholz, II wrote. "You were a true friend. I will never forget the missions we had been on together nor the long conversations and sound advice that you have given me. You will never be forgotten and I will always remember the time in Egypt that we were able to have long discussions. Rest in peace now, my fallen brother."

During the funeral service, at the Swartz Funeral Home in Flint, Michigan, Eric Leszczynski, CPT Miller's supervisor at Yazaki North America, Inc., said he was a man who knew how to get his coworkers motivated. "If you gave him something to do, it would get done," Leszczynski said.

In September 2005, family and friends attended the burial service at the Arlington National Cemetery Columbarium Complex in Arlington, Virginia. During the service, an honor guard held an American flag over the urn containing CPT Miller's ashes. A folded flag was presented to his wife, Angela.

CPT Miller is survived by his wife, Angela; his daughters, Danielle and Alexandra; his siblings, Patrick and Jennie; and his parents, Lowell and Linda Miller.

CPT Miller's commitment to protect America earned him the Bronze Star medal, the Purple Heart medal, the National Defense Service medal, and the Armed Forces Expeditionary medal. His sacrifice will not be forgotten.

#### HONORING DR. KENNETH K. LEE

### HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2017*

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Kenneth K. Lee, a combat-injured Operation Iraqi Freedom and Army veteran, who has been named by Disabled American Veterans (DAV) as its 2017 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year.

Dr. Lee, who deployed as the commander of the Army's Company B, 118th Area Support Medical Battalion, was injured in November 2004 by a suicide car bomber in Iraq. The ex-

plosion resulted in an open head traumatic brain injury and severe shrapnel wounds to his legs, leading to his evacuation back to the states, where he would later be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

While recovering from his injuries, Dr. Lee, a rehabilitation specialist, saw how long and difficult recovery could be, often leaving lasting changes. Dr. Lee, who resides in Brookfield, Wisconsin, is a volunteer physician at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which the Department of Veterans Affairs and DAV co-host, so he was no stranger to using adaptive sports as therapy. Through his own recovery, Dr. Lee propelled himself into the world of adaptive sports to help him deal with the psychological and physiological effects that can often times cause an individual to hit bottom.

Within a year of Dr. Lee's retirement in 2013, he formed the Milwaukee Wheelchair Lacrosse team and is now the president of the Wisconsin Adaptive Sports Association, which runs numerous adaptive sports programs.

On July 29, 2017, DAV National Commander David W. Riley presented Dr. Lee with the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year award at the organization's 96th National Convention.

In his statement, Riley praised Dr. Lee as a shining example of everything that is good about our nation and its veterans. He noted that the compassion Dr. Lee shows for other veterans and his work to help them find success is truly the hallmark of the award, and DAV is very proud of what he's doing for this community. Given the importance and therapeutic effectiveness of adaptive sports, it is vital to have experienced leaders like Dr. Lee involved and carving out a path forward.

Despite his injuries and the constant pain in his lower extremities, Dr. Lee speaks with gratitude about his time in the Army. He will tell you that he got a lot more from the Guard than he put into it, and that he joined the military with his eyes wide open and has no regrets.

Dr. Lee and his wife Kate currently live in Brookfield with their two children. In 2014, his daughter Leah earned a \$10,000 scholarship by volunteering for the DAV at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. On the same day that Dr. Lee was honored as DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, his son Jonathan earned the charity's largest scholarship of \$20,000, and was honored the same morning. They both hope ultimately to serve veterans as physicians through the VA.

#### RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE MADE BY MARINE CORPORAL DAVID SONKA

### HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2017*

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and sacrifice made by Marine Corporal David Sonka.

Corporal David Sonka was a devoted son, husband, and Marine. He grew up in Parker, Colorado and knew at a young age he wanted to serve his country. Corporal Sonka enlisted in the United States Marine Corps immediately following his high school graduation in 2008.

He completed Military Police school, K9 School, and in 2012 was selected to become a dog handler for the Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina where he was paired with his faithful canine companion, Flex.

On March 31, 2013, Corporal Sonka and Flex were deployed with Marine Special Operations Team 8223 to Farah Province, Afghanistan. While on watch during a meeting between Afghan military personnel and Marine Special Operations Forces on May 4, 2013, an Afghan soldier opened fire and fatally injured both Corporal Sonka and Flex. Corporal Sonka has since been recognized for his bravery and sacrifice. He received a Combat Action Ribbon, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and the Purple Heart. Additionally, the town of Parker, Colorado named their dog park after Corporal Sonka as did the MARSOC K9 Training Facility in Camp Lejeune.

Our nation owes no greater debt of gratitude than the one we owe our veterans. It is the heroic bravery and incredible sacrifices made by individuals like Corporal Sonka that have helped secure the freedoms that we as Americans hold dear. On behalf of the 4th Congressional District of Colorado, I extend my deepest gratitude to Corporal Sonka for his service and sacrifice for our nation.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Marine Corporal David Sonka for his sacrifice in defending the United States of America.

#### RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN SOLDIER ARMY SPECIALIST (SPC) BRIAN KEITH DERKS

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Specialist (SPC) Brian Keith Derks who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our great nation on August 13, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. SPC Derks was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated while he was on mounted patrol in Baghdad. SPC Derks was assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Irwin, California, which was attached to the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team from Mississippi.

SPC Derks, a White Cloud, Michigan native, graduated from White Cloud High School in 2003. According to the Associated Press, SPC Derks was the captain of the Quiz Bowl Team and was credited for bringing the team to a national competition. Tony McHattie, one of SPC Derks' high school teachers, said he had an astute mind. "Consistently, Brian would buzz in before a question was even half done," McHattie said. "He just had vast knowledge in all sorts of areas."

According to the memorial website FindAGrave.com, SPC Derks played football and baseball in high school. SPC Derks was an active member of the White Cloud Boy Scouts Troop #1137. He became an Eagle Scout and briefly served as an assistant scoutmaster. SPC Derks enjoyed hunting, fishing, computers, and spending time with his family. SPC Derks' sense of humor always kept people laughing.