

SPC Derks was determined to join the Army, so in order to meet the weight requirements, he worked to lose 100 pounds. Captain (CPT) Jarrod P. Wickline, an Army recruiter, said SPC Derks accomplished his goal. "He took that as a personal challenge," CPT Wickline said. "He lost the weight in three months. There is no doubt to me that by sheer willpower alone, he would be anything he wanted to be."

The memorial service was held at First Christian Reformed Church in Fremont, Michigan. SPC Derks was laid to rest at White Cloud Cemetery.

SPC Derks was awarded the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct medal, the National Defense Service medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary medal, the Global War on Terrorism medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

SPC Derks is survived by his parents, Keith and Peggy Derks; sister, Sally Derks; maternal grandparents, Emery and Ester Wilson; paternal grandparents, Vernon and Evelyn Derks; and fiancée, Nikki Crans.

SPC Derks' sacrifice to protect the freedoms we all enjoy will not be forgotten.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, on September 6, 2017, I was not present for the recorded votes on roll call no 442, 443, and 444. Had I been present, I would have voted:

On Roll Call vote no. 442, H. Res. 500, on ordering the previous question, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3354) making appropriations for the Dept. of the Interior; providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules; and waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, I would have voted NAY.

On Roll Call vote no. 443, on agreeing to the resolution, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3354) making appropriations for the Dept. of the Interior; providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules; and waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, I would have voted NAY.

On Roll Call vote no. 444, on approving the Journal, I would have voted YEA.

IN RECOGNITION OF RAIL SAFETY MONTH AND RAIL SAFETY WEEK

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2017

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September as Rail Safety Month and September 24–30, 2017 as Rail Safety week, and to commend the efforts being made across our country to improve railroad crossing safety.

An accident involving a train occurs every 3 hours in the United States and California

ranks No. 1 in the nation in both trespassing and grade crossing deaths. Last year in California there were a total of 148 highway grade-crossing incidents, including 98 trespasser fatalities and 32 highway-rail crossing fatalities, all of which could have been avoided if both trespassers and drivers were taking the necessary safety precautions. There are more than 10,000 highway rail-grade crossings located within 52 counties and more than 400 cities in California to service the BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, other freight trains, and Amtrak passenger trains running through California.

September is historically back to school month for most children and college students. Many must cross railroad tracks to attend school and it is important to reinforce rail safety with both children and their caretakers. California Operation Lifesaver, the Federal Rail Administration, the California Department of Transportation, the California Public Utilities Commission and freight and passenger railroads are working together to improve railroad safety and educate children and adults about the dangers of not obeying the signs and signals around railroad property. The "See Tracks? Think Train" campaign by Operation Lifesaver and its federal partners aims to help reduce pedestrian and driver injuries and fatalities around railroad tracks by highlighting behaviors that put people at risk, and by conducting on-the-ground law enforcement trainings, safety presentations, and public awareness activities. Railroad operators, motor vehicle operators, and pedestrians will benefit from a combined effort by local, state, Federal, industry, and citizen efforts to promote safety around railroad tracks and crossings.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize September as Rail Safety Month and September 24–30, 2017 as Rail Safety week. I ask all my colleagues to join me in commending efforts being made to improve railroad crossing safety.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY MASTER SERGEANT (MSG) COATER BERNARD DEBOSE

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 fallen Mississippi soldier Army Master Sergeant (MSG) Coater Bernard DeBose. MSG DeBose gave his life while in service to our great nation on August 19, 2008, during Operation Enduring Freedom. MSG DeBose died in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, of wounds he received from small arms fire while conducting security force assistance operations. MSG DeBose was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 351st Infantry Regiment, 158th Infantry Brigade, First Army Division East, Camp Shelby, Mississippi. MSG DeBose was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart medals.

According to the Associated Press, MSG DeBose, a State Line, Mississippi native, joined the Alabama National Guard in May 1983. He transferred to the Army Reserves in 2008. He was deployed in April 2004 to Af-

ghanistan, where he served as a communications specialist. It was his job to train Afghan police in the Kandahar region.

There have been many memorials posted in MSG DeBose's honor on Legacy.com, including one that appeared on September 1, 2012 from Master Sergeant (MSG) Maranda McCorvey. "As I sign this guest book, no words can explain the loss of a true soldier," MSG McCorvey said. "He was a leader, mentor, motivator, and trainer to many lives in and out of the uniform."

Rebecca Lewis of Moss Point wrote, "May God continue to watch over you and your family at this time," Mrs. Lewis said. "Deacon DeBose will certainly be missed by all of us including his Greater First Baptist Church in Escatawpa, Mississippi, under the leadership of Richard Young. Deacon DeBose was a great man and touched many hearts."

Christopher DeBose, MSG DeBose's son, wrote about the pain of losing his father in an August 30, 2012. "I pray that there is a military up in heaven," Christopher said. "I know Master Sergeant DeBose would be in charge of something. No matter what it is, I'm sure God will trust you with any task because he knows you will get it done."

Caronica DeBose-Jackson, MSG DeBose's daughter, paid tribute to her father in a September 6, 2012 post. "I hear your voice telling me to keep moving and live life to the fullest," Caronica said. "I will go on because that's what you would want. I will honor your life and legacy forever."

MSG DeBose is survived by his wife, Juanita, his three sons, Latravis DeBose, Christopher DeBose, and Broderick DeBose; and two daughters, Caronica DeBose-Jackson, and Nekeshia Raybon.

MSG DeBose demonstrated the qualities of an American hero. His 27 years of military service will always be remembered.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JUDGE JOHN L. APOSTOLOU

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I along with my colleague, Representative MORGAN GRIF-FIN rise to honor the life of Judge John L. Apostolou, a native of Salem, Virginia Born on August, 16, 1930, Judge Apostolou passed away on Monday, August 21, 2017, at the age of 87.

Judge Apostolou was a widely respected member of the local legal community and well-known in the Roanoke Valley as a "law-and-order judge." He was loved by the bar because he was a lawyer's judge, one who would help a young lawyer learn the craft of practicing in the courtroom, and was always fair to everyone who came before him, whether they were represented by a lawyer or not.

Following his graduation from the College of William and Mary and the Marshall-Wythe School of Law, he worked in a private law practice and later worked as an assistant commonwealth's attorney in Roanoke. He also served as acting judge of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court on two occasions during the 1960s. In 1985, he began full-time service as a General District Court judge in