

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK SANFORD

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 672 and YEA on Roll Call No. 673.

RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPACE CENTER HOUSTON

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Space Center Houston, the Official Visitor Center of the NASA Johnson Space Center.

Since opening in 1992, Space Center Houston has welcomed nearly twenty million visitors and currently hosts nearly one million visitors annually in its 250,000 square-foot educational complex. The Manned Space Flight Foundation, a private entity separate from NASA, funds Space Center Houston, its educational programs and the preservation of artifacts in its space science museum. Educational emphasis is placed on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in a fun and engaging way.

At Space Center Houston you can see the history and future of human spaceflight under one roof and it is the only Smithsonian Affiliate museum in Houston. The Visitor's Center is home to a one-of-a-kind exhibit displaying the world's only shuttle replica (Independence) mounted on an original Shuttle Carrier Aircraft (NASA 905). For the first time, only at Space Center Houston, you can see the spacecraft from the first and last lunar landings under the same roof. Currently, Space Center Houston is partnering with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum to display both the Apollo 11 and Apollo 17 command modules to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of our nation's extraordinary achievement of man's first step on the Moon in 1969.

Through Space Center Houston, the foundation can teach future generations how far we've come with the space program and emphasize how far we have to go to touch the rest of our universe.

Mr. Speaker, as the Congressman who represents Space Center Houston, and as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Space, it is my distinct honor to recognize Space Center Houston on this milestone occasion.

CONGRATULATING THE NEW HAVEN SHAMROCKS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in con-

gratulating the New Haven Shamrocks Boys Cross Country team on winning the Class 1 Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the New Haven Shamrocks Boys Cross Country team for a job well done.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY SPECIALIST (SPC) RAPHAEL SAPTIAN DAVIS

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Specialist (SPC) Raphael Saptian Davis who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 2, 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. SPC Davis was killed when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device in Tampa, Iraq. SPC Davis was assigned to B Company, 223rd Engineer Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, based in Calhoun City, Mississippi.

According to the Associated Press, SPC Davis grew up in the Mississippi Delta. He lived with his mother in Tutwiler, Mississippi. SPC Davis graduated from Tallahatchie High School in Webb, Mississippi in 1998. SPC Davis attended Holmes Community College in Goodman, Mississippi where he was pursuing a degree in engineering. He then attended Hinds Community College in Jackson, Mississippi. Davis joined the Mississippi Army National Guard in 2001. SPC Davis was deployed during his second year of college.

Clifton Bailey, SPC Davis' father, remembers the last time he talked with his son on the phone. "He called me on November 16th," Mr. Bailey said. "He tracked me down until he found me at work. I never heard him sound so happy. He told me he was coming home. We all assumed he meant Tutwiler, but he knew he was going to his heavenly home. He was calling to say goodbye." Betty Davis Pimpton, SPC Davis' mother, said she always worried about her son as any mother would. "You always hope for the best, never thinking about the worst that can happen," Mrs. Pimpton said. "I was really proud of his service. He enjoyed it and wanted to make a career out of it."

Lakeitha Johnson, a classmate of SPC Davis, paid tribute to him on a memorial website. "There isn't a day that goes by when I don't think about my classmate and friend, Raphael," Lakeitha said. "I think everyone here agrees that the last two years without him have been tough. Even though his loss has left a huge void in our community, I always think of him and smile. I know that you are in heaven smiling down on us and we love you and miss you so much. We'll see you when we reach that other shore, Raph."

SPC Davis was the father of three children, Raphael Davis, Junior, Ravin Davis, and Razavier Seon Davis. His youngest child, Razavier Seon Davis, was born four weeks before SPC Davis was killed. Deetra Tucker,

mother of Razavier, was also a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard.

A funeral was held for SPC Davis at West Tallahatchie High School in Webb, Mississippi. SPC Davis was laid to rest in the family cemetery located on Sharkey Road in Glendora, Mississippi. SPC Davis' sisters and brothers wrote a special tribute to their brother which was printed in the program for the funeral. It read, "Ralph, our beautiful brother, there's really no need for words. Your life spoke loud and clear. You were not perfect and that's okay. No human being is. You are still our brother and we love you. There's a lot of press these days about how there are no heroes or great men for our children to look up to. They were wrong. Ralph, you are a hero and we will make sure that all of your nieces and nephews know you were that special hero. We love you."

SPC Davis is survived by his father, Clifton Bailey; his mother, Betty Davis Pimpton; his girlfriend, Deetra Tucker; the mother of his two oldest children, Kimberlie Blount; his three children, Raphael Davis, Junior, Ravin Davis, and Razavier Seon Davis; his eleven brothers, Cedric Davis, Demarcus Davis, Lamonte Harris, Clifton Davis, Junior, Zavier Bailey, Bernard Berryhill, Taierry Brown, Areail Wallace, Steve Hill, Terrence Steele, and Maurice Steele; his two sisters, Wynde Bailey, and Premmie Stevenson.

SPC Davis will always be remembered for his service and sacrifice to protect America and to preserve the freedoms we all enjoy.

GODSPEED MARTIN WHITMER

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, we are thinking of my family friend Martin Whitmer and his wife, the former Julie Thurmond, as Martin is scheduled for open heart surgery this Thursday, December 14. We pray for his family in this difficult time and have faith that he will recuperate quickly to become even stronger than before.

IN HONOR OF LANETT WINNING AHSAA CLASS 2A HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TITLE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize Lanett High School for winning the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) Class 2A football state title for the first time ever.

The Panthers sealed their victory by beating Leroy High School 33-15 on December 8 at Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the students and faculty of Lanett High School, the coaches, the players and all the Panthers fans on this exciting achievement. Go Panthers.