

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS (RETIRED) ROY F. TACHIAS

**HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2018*

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to a great New Mexican and a true American hero, Sergeant First Class (ret.) Roy Tachias of Albuquerque, New Mexico. On this day, we also honor the entire Tachias family for their continued military service in support of the country they love.

To truly comprehend the significant service and sacrifice of Sergeant Tachias to our nation, it is important to understand his humble beginnings. Roy Tachias was born on January 25, 1932, in Cabezón, New Mexico. The village of Cabezón is located at the base of Cabezón Peak in a remote part of northwestern New Mexico, surrounded by tall mesas and bordering the Navajo Nation Reservation. It was a small village of nearly 200 people, very isolated from modern society. Most of the homes had dirt floors, and no one in the village had water, gas, or electricity. Roy fondly recalls memories of his early years when his mother would bake bread and make soap with his help and the help of his seven brothers and sisters. Each day, the family would haul back water from the local arroyos—arroyos which they shared with the local cattle. Laundry was a three-day process and the whole village would hang their clothes outside to air dry. The villagers were either farmers or cattle ranchers, and all lived off the fruits of their daily labor.

When Roy was in elementary school, the Tachias family moved to the city of Bernalillo. At age 16, Roy and a few of his friends hitchhiked to Albuquerque and enlisted in the United States Army. In 1949, at the age 17, Private Roy Tachias received his first military orders, was posted to Japan, and eventually became a member of the 21st Regiment of the 24th Infantry Division. That unit evolved into the infamous Task Force Smith, the first combat group of American fighting forces deployed to face the North Korean Army following their incursion into South Korea. During this effort, 40 percent of his unit was lost and many more were wounded. In the next few years, Task Force Smith members would go on to fight with distinction against both the North Korean and Chinese Armies. Sergeant Tachias describes the rough conditions, recalling times that his unit marched on without food and supplies, and even used old rags wrapped around their feet when their boots wore out.

In July of 1950, Task Force Smith was ordered to fight a delaying action until reinforcements arrived. Their mission was to join forces with the South Korean Army. At that time, the North Korean army had surged over the border and was headed toward the southern coast, leaving death and destruction behind them.

American soldiers met an estimated 6,000 North Korean troops near Osan, slowed down the enemy advance, and delayed their progress until they halted it altogether. Sergeant Tachias recalls the many times he leaned heavily on his faith to get him through. He says he prayed every day and night and believed that God walked beside him and protected him.

After extensive fighting, the American forces pushed the North Korean Army to the border of China. For five days and five nights straight, both armies fought an exhausting engagement. It was on one of those nights when Sergeant Tachias was ordered to be the sole individual to man a forward listening post in enemy territory, 5,000 yards from his unit on the front line. That night, in the darkness, Roy began to hear and feel a rumbling sound and witnessed the Chinese Army approaching him in waves.

Instinctively, Sergeant Tachias began to shout, shoot, and throw hand grenades at the waves of Chinese descending upon him. His efforts threw the enemy unit into disarray and successfully stopped the attack. He later said, "I confused them, I guess." By the time morning came, Sergeant Tachias had killed 33 enemy soldiers singlehandedly and taken a man prisoner. He was awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and heroism. The Stars and Stripes wrote an article and called him the "One Man Army" for his heroic efforts. Sergeant Tachias was wounded five times during his time on the Korean Peninsula. He also received the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with Valor.

After his service with the U.S. Army in Korea ended, Roy Tachias married the former Ramoncita Angelina Gonzales and settled in California, where he worked for Lockheed Aircraft. He eventually returned to the Army and served two tours in Vietnam, where he earned another Bronze Star. His leadership as a non-commissioned officer throughout his 20-year military career was second to none. In 1976, he retired from the military and returned to his home state of New Mexico, a man forever changed by the memories of those who fought alongside him, the battles he survived, and a lifetime spent in service to his country.

Sergeant Tachias and his wife, Ramoncita, traveled the world in service to our nation and they established a beautiful family with four children: Kathleen, Michael, Jeanette, and Brian. A soldier cannot perform at his best without the love and support of his family—especially without the support of a dedicated spouse, who, at times, must bear the burden of being both mother and father. So we also would like to commend Ramoncita Tachias for the many years of loving service and dedication she has shown to her family and to our nation. Roy and Ramoncita celebrate 65 years of marriage this year, so please join me in congratulating them on this milestone as well.

The Tachias family is known for their patriotism and their support for our Armed Services in their local communities. Due to his example, both sons followed in their father's footsteps

and are also combat veterans. Sergeant Tachias' oldest son, Michael, is a retired Lieutenant Colonel with over thirty years of service in the U.S. Army. After retirement, Col. Michael Tachias established the Cabezón Wounded Warrior Haven in Cabezón, New Mexico to provide a refuge for wounded warriors and their families.

Sergeant Tachias' younger son, Brian, retired as a full Colonel. Because his father's life was so greatly impacted by his military service in Korea, his son, Colonel Brian Tachias, wanted to serve there as well. As a young Infantry officer, he was stationed with the 506th Infantry Regiment on the Korean Demilitarized Zone some 38 years after his father. Colonel Tachias then continued his service as an Army Aviator and he recently retired with 29 years of active duty service.

The legacy does not end there. Sergeant Tachias' grandsons, Joe Garcia, Jr., Brian Tachias, Jr., and Nicholas Tachias, also stepped up to answer a new generation's call to service.

It is with great pride and deep respect that we today recognize the service of this outstanding individual. New Mexico is humbled to honor Sergeant Tachias' contributions to this nation, contributions that began on that Korean peninsula in 1950 and have had generational effects that continue onto a new page of history that is yet to be written. With a third generation of Tachias soldiers guarding America's freedom, we can have confidence that our nation's future is in good hands.

RECOGNIZING STEPHEN PEGRAM FOR LEADERSHIP IN FIRE SAFETY

**HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2018*

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Stephen Pegram, the Chief of Fire and Emergency Medical Services in Goshen, Ohio.

I am deeply grateful for the service of firefighters like Chief Pegram for the great work they do in Southern and Southwestern Ohio, and beyond. While others run from danger, they run toward it, charging burning buildings, responding to hidden danger, saving lives, and keeping our communities safe.

Chief Pegram has distinguished himself as firefighter worthy of our recognition and gratitude in this Congress. He led the Goshen Fire and EMS in their life-saving missions during this year's historic flooding; in addition, he also serves as the President of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI). ISFSI's mission is to improve training to increase firefighter safety and reduce fatalities and injuries. This mission is critical to protecting those who risk their lives every day to protect us.

Under Chief Pegram's leadership, ISFSI is being awarded the Paul S. Sarbanes Fire Service Safety Leadership Award. This well-

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