

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF VICTOR VALLEY HONORED BY THE APPLE VALLEY OPTIMIST CLUB

### HON. PAUL COOK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 11, 2019*

Mr. COOK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible service of the Assistance League of Victor Valley, who was honored by the Apple Valley Optimist Club on Saturday, March 8.

Founded in 1979 and achieving Full Chapter Status in 1982, the Assistance League of Victor Valley is a nonprofit organization focused on identifying and funding ongoing, community based philanthropic programs in the Victor Valley. Their signature program is Operation School Bell, which provides new school clothes to children in need living in the Victor Valley. Since the Operation began, 27,244 local children have received clothing, with 1,357 students receiving clothing during the 2017–2018 school year. The Assistance League has also logged 28,000 volunteer hours during that same period and gave 1,620 bears to children in local hospitals.

The Assistance League of Victor Valley is one of the most effective nonprofit organizations in the High Desert, and I am proud to see them receiving some very well-deserved recognition. I wish them nothing but success as they continue to help the less fortunate in our community.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DALE COOK

### HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 11, 2019*

Mr. DeSAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today with Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY to pay tribute to Dale Cook and recognize his service to our country.

Dale was born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. After enlisting in the Marine Corps as a high school senior in 1944, Dale was assigned to the 4th Marine Division on Maui.

Seventy-four years ago, Dale was one of the few surviving Marines who invaded Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. He was wounded by an enemy grenade and evacuated to Guam where he joined the first of his many Veterans organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

After returning to the United States, Dale was recruited by the Atomic Energy Commission as a regional public information officer and later moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he spent the rest of his career and retirement. He joined the Army Reserve as the Chief Public Information Officer of the 6th Army command at the Presidio of San Francisco, while continuing his involvement in veterans organizations.

Dale continued to serve his community by leading an annual commemoration of the Battle of Iwo Jima for many years, first at the Golden Gate National Cemetery and later at the Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco. He also volunteered as a Boy Scout troop leader and mentored many Eagle Scouts. A proud Marine, he started raising English Bulldogs, the military branch's mascot.

Dale will be sincerely missed by his family, the veteran community, and all those who had the great pleasure of knowing him. He will be remembered for his service to and love for his country.

HAPPY SESQUICENTENNIAL—CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE WEST POINT ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES PART I (1969–1990)

### HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 11, 2019*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise to include in the RECORD an article by Keith J. Hamel honoring the 150th Anniversary of the West Point Association of Graduates.

“On May 22, 2019, the West Point Association of Graduates will turn 150 years old. Think about it—one hundred and fifty years! When “the Association,” as it used to be known, held its first organizational meeting in the office of Dr. Horace Webster, Class of 1818, President of the College of the City of New York, the light bulb had yet to be invented; the telephone had not been patented; the U.S. flag had only 37 stars; and the machine gun, dynamite, and the torpedo were less than a decade old.

The year was 1869, an important year in the history of West Point graduates. On March 4 of that year, Ulysses S. Grant, Class of 1843, became the 18th President of the United States. Grant, of course, received national acclaim for commanding the Union Army to victory during the U.S. Civil War, accepting the surrender of Confederate forces from another West Point graduate, Robert E. Lee, Class of 1829. That recent conflict, roughly four years over by the time a handful of graduates met in Webster's office one Saturday afternoon for that first meeting, is often cited as the reason the “Association” was formed; that is, to heal the divide between West Point graduates who fought on opposing sides of the U.S. Civil War. While it may be romanticized, such a theory is plausible. After all, bridging chasms seemed to be the spirit of the age in 1869. On May 2 of that year the “golden spike” of the First Transcontinental Railroad was driven into the ground at Promontory Summit of Utah Territory, linking America's East Coast with its West Coast. Later that year, on November 17, the Suez Canal officially opened, finally completing a centuries-old idea to create a waterway between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

Yet when Robert Anderson, Class of 1825, wrote to Sylvanus Thayer, Class of 1808, on January 28, 1869 to propose the formation of “an association of the graduates of the Military Academy,” he never mentioned the Civil War as a *raison d'être* for this endeavor (and Anderson was the officer in charge of Fort Sumter when it was fired upon by P.G.T. Beauregard, Class of 1838, to start that war!) Instead, Anderson plainly told Thayer he wanted to form an association “to see what should be done to perfect and perpetuate this truly national Institution.” [West Point] and, in his February 12, 1869 reply to Anderson, Thayer agreed.

Three months later, 15 graduates gathered in Webster's office for the purposes of officially forming an “Association of the Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy.” Neither the Civil War nor the “perpetuation” of West Point was explicitly mentioned in the minutes from that meeting. Instead, the

graduates present, including Anderson, passed seven resolutions, the last pertaining to the “fundamental principle that the characteristic of this Association shall be.” According to the “Preliminary Meeting” minutes, Reverend Dr. Francis Vinton, Class of 1830, Assistant Minister of Trinity Church in New York City, introduced a resolution that the Association be “formed purely for the promotion of social and fraternal intercourse.” Vinton's resolution became Article II of the new Association's Constitution: “The objects of this Association shall be to cherish the memories of our Alma Mater, and to promote the social intercourse and fraternal fellowship of its graduates.”

Does this end the debate regarding the purpose of the Association of Graduates' founding? Not quite. Article IV of the Association's original Constitution complicates matters. It states, “Political, or any other discussions foreign to the purposes of the Association, as set forth in this Constitution, or any proceedings of such a tendency, are declared inimical to the purposes of this organization, and are prohibited.” Such an article calls attention to itself and seems to support the notion that the recent U.S. Civil War and its political aftermath might impede the formation of an Association of West Point Graduates. Furthermore, Article III, 2, states, “The oldest graduate belonging to the Association shall be President; and in his absence the senior graduate present shall preside at the meeting of the Association.” This made Thayer the “official” first president. Although Thayer never attended a meeting of the Association of Graduates (and, interestingly, his name does not appear on the roll of members until 1872), this passage marries Thayer's legacy with the creation of the Association, including his desire to form such an organization for the benefit of West Point. Going forward, both implicit political matters and the promotion of West Point routinely enter into the dialogue regarding the Association's early history and business.

Take the Association's first public act after a committee of 13 graduates, chaired by Webster, met on June 16, 1869 and drafted the constitution and bylaws for the new Association. Soon after, the committee mailed the proposed constitution and bylaws to all graduates; 128 joined (of more than 1,350 living graduates), including three former Confederate officers: Richard S. Ewell, Class of 1840; James Longstreet, Class of 1842; and Nathaniel R. Chambliss, Class of May 1861. In fact, Ewell sent a letter back with his dues stating, “I cannot think that any graduate of the Academy would, unless blinded by prejudices, decline to aid the work of reuniting . . . a bond broken asunder by civil discord and war.” Conversely, Simon Bolivar Buckner, Class of 1844, the first Confederate general to surrender an Army to Union forces, perhaps stinging from so-called “Radical Republicans” attempts to strip ex-rebels of their right to vote and hold office in the First Reconstruction Act (1867), wrote back to the committee saying, “Fraternal fellowship can exist only in the light of an acknowledged equality, [which] is denounced by the legislation of the central government which extends its fostering care to our class of graduates of our Alma Mater and at the same time prescribes the other . . . an acknowledgement of the inequality which renders agreeable social intercourse impossible.” Buckner's sentiment becomes an important theme taken up by committee member Charles Davies, Class of 1815, in his address to graduates at the Association's first reunion on June 17, 1870.

Forty-three graduates sat in the pews of the West Point Chapel (now known as the Old Cadet Chapel) to hear Davies' address.