

War II, fewer than 500,000 are still with us today, and we're losing about 350 of them every day.

After the war, Mel came to Chicago and married the former Mary Harris, who herself just turned 89, and the two of them have raised three children, have five grandchildren spread across the country, and will be celebrating their 69th wedding anniversary this Fall.

Mel has had a distinguished career as a journalist, management and marketing consultant, and published author. One of his best-known books is "Yesterday's Warriors," which recounts his experiences in the War and his band of brothers who remained friends for a lifetime.

It is with particular pride that we recognize the service and wonderful life of a veteran who is not just still with us, but alive and kicking.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GARY J. PALMER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 12, 2019

Mr. PALMER. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay on Roll Call No. 439.

IN RECOGNITION OF COACH RICKY GRIFFIN

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 12, 2019

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Ricky Griffin, an outstanding North Texas educator and coach. Coach Griffin, from Argyle High School, was one of eleven coaches in the United States named National Coach of the Year by the American Baseball Coaches Association.

Coach Griffin guided the Argyle Eagles to their second consecutive Class 4-A title this season and posted a 77-1-1 record over the last two years. Under his direction, Argyle High School become the first school in Texas UIL history to follow up an undefeated state title season with another state championship. Argyle had two outstanding winning seasons: 37-0 in 2018 and 40-1-1 in 2019. Under Coach Griffin's leadership, the Eagles have a combined 130-10-2 record for the last four seasons—an unprecedented accomplishment. In this case, coaching is a family affair. Coach Griffin's son, Storm Griffin, recently joined his father on the Argyle coaching staff.

In addition to his remarkable career as head coach of the Eagles baseball team, Coach Griffin also serves as the defensive backs coach for the Eagles football team. Notably, the Argyle football coaches have established a football program that dominates the Texas 4-A high school football scene. With one state title under their belt and ranking as one of the top football programs for the upcoming season, the Argyle Eagles and their fans should credit their coaches, including Ricky Griffin, for leading Argyle students to success.

While Coach Griffin has compiled a long list of achievements, his professional mission goes beyond the field as he strives to develop his students into remarkable young men. Winning seasons, state championships, and national recognition have been the icing on the cake. For his efforts, Coach Griffin will be honored at the annual ABCA convention in January 2020 in Nashville, TN.

It is my privilege to recognize Coach Ricky Griffin for leadership of the Argyle Eagles baseball team and our North Texas community, and I wish him continued success.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 11, 2019

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2500) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Chair, for over 25 years, I have made multiple oral and written requests to federal contracting authorities including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to explain why our labor unions have been systematically excluded from contract awards—especially at military installations like the Joint Base in New Jersey.

Over the years, everyone we've met in meeting after meeting on the federal side have always been polite and courteous, but the bottom line—the highly trained unionized women and men don't get the jobs.

Most recently, I brought labor leaders including Mike Maloney—Business Manager for the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 9, Mike Ricca—Business Agent of IBEW Local 400, and others to meet with the Corps of Engineers regarding contracting processes that make it near impossible for union members to get work on the base.

I—we—raised deep concerns that nonunion contractors may purposely be misclassifying workers in order to low bid, which if true could be a serious violation of federal law and contrary to Davis Bacon.

We are concerned that irresponsible contractors and subcontractors may be engaging in two different types of misclassification: craft misclassification and independent contractor misclassification. Craft misclassification occurs when dishonest contractors misclassify high-skilled workers as general laborers or lower wage classifications in order to avoid paying the higher prevailing wage rate applicable to the high-skilled work actually performed. Independent contractor misclassification occurs when contractors misclassify employees as independent contractors to avoid paying prevailing wages in order to reduce labor costs and avoid state and federal taxes.

Today, I am offering an amendment, joined by my good friend and colleague DONALD NORCROSS, to task the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate the contracting practices of the Corps of Engi-

neers, with a specific focus on how the Corps complies with and enforces the requirement to pay prevailing wages on federally financed construction jobs, and its probe will include:

Any programs or protocols the Corps of Engineers has in place for the purpose of carrying out its Davis-Bacon Act enforcement obligations as set forth in the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

Any programs or protocols the Corps of Engineers has in place for the purpose of identifying and addressing independent contractor misclassification on projects subject to the Davis-Bacon Act.

The frequency with which the Corps of Engineers conducts site visits on each covered project to monitor Davis-Bacon Act compliance.

The frequency with which the Corps of Engineers monitors certified payroll reports submitted by contractors and subcontractors on each covered project.

Whether the Corps of Engineers accepts and investigates complaints of Davis-Bacon Act violations submitted by third parties, such as contractors and workers' rights organizations.

Whether the Corps of Engineers maintains a database listing all contractors and subcontractors who have, in one way or another, violated the Davis-Bacon Act and whether the Corps consults this database as part of its contract award process.

The frequency, over the last five years, with which the Corps of Engineers penalized, disqualified, terminated, or moved for debarment of a contractor for Davis-Bacon violations.

How the Corps of Engineers verifies that the contractors it hires for its projects are properly licensed.

This amendment will require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit a report to Congress summarizing the results of their findings, in addition to any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action that would improve the efforts of enforcing the requirement to pay prevailing wages on federally financed construction jobs.

Our military installations deserve quality workmanship, not substandard facilities that could create potential hazards and diminish readiness.

The bill, to which I am adding this amendment, authorizes \$11.5 billion for military construction projects for fiscal year 2020. Madam Chair, we need to ensure that taxpayer dollars—and critical investment in military infrastructure—are being spent in accordance with the law, including Davis Bacon.

HONORING THE WORLD WAR II, KOREAN WAR, AND VIETNAM WAR VETERANS OF ILLINOIS

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 12, 2019

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans who traveled to Washington, D.C. on July 10, 2019 with Honor Flight Chicago, a program that provides World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans the opportunity to visit their memorials on The National Mall in Washington, D.C.