

John's other uncle Joseph Pieracci also served in the Army during the Korean War. John's grandfather, Anthony Grasso, also served as a medic in WWII. John's cousin Wilmer Olivencia received a Purple Heart, which I had the honor of presenting him with in 2015 at the Grease Pole festival, for wounds sustained while serving in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, a war in which John's uncle, Tony Grasso, also served with the 1st Cavalry. John's cousin Louis Rodriguez, Rafael's son, served in Vietnam and is currently retired from the U.S. Army and is now living outside of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. John's nephew Michael Kerr is currently a member of the Reserves after serving in the U.S. Air force.

After joining the Army, John was assigned as a medic with the 299th Engineer Battalion upon completion of his basic training at Fort Knox Kentucky and his medical training in Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. John Acevedo rose through the ranks and eventually became a Sergeant First Class and earned the nickname "Doc" because he oversaw 120 other medics. Sergeant First Class John Acevedo served nearly 5½ years overseas in a combat zone. He served 5 tours of duty in Egypt, Afghanistan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

During his lengthy military career, John served in the same Task Force as Medal of Honor recipient David Bellavia, while in the 2nd Brigade Combat, 2nd Infantry Division. They were part of the Fall of Fallujah, a critical turning point in the war in Iraq. He also was selected by Command Sergeant Major of the 10th Mountain Division to be an escort for former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his Commander picked him to escort Oliver North. John also escorted several entertainers such as those from World Wrestling Entertainment owned by Vincent McMahon.

Today we recognize John Acevedo for his 26 years of military service earning him a total of 28 medals and ribbons including the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (2nd Award), Joint Service Commendation Medal (2nd Award), and the prestigious Combat Medical Badge. His highest award, the Bronze Star Medal, was for actions he took as a medic in Iraqi Freedom. While he was assigned as the Brigade Sergeants NCO they came under fire. When he heard a blast in the distance, he grabbed his gear and medic bag and ran toward the explosion. He simultaneously searched for casualties and participated in the counter attack. In doing so, he put his own life in jeopardy to prevent further casualties, while saving as many of his fellow soldiers as possible who were injured while fighting off the enemy. These awards embody the Staff Sergeant's unparalleled talent, unwavering courage, and insurmountable willpower in advancing American interests in places of violent conflict.

After serving our country for over 26 years, Sergeant First Class John Acevedo officially retired from the Army on March 31, 2015. John's father once told him that when he was on the battlefield, he is an American, but he should never forget his roots as a Hispanic American. John returned to his family and friends in Buffalo and went on to further serve his community, this time much closer to home. He is currently employed on a nursing team at the VA Hospital in Buffalo. He is also very active with veteran organizations throughout our community. He is an Alumni of the Wounded

Warrior Project. He is also a member of the Ft. Drum Retiree Council and a life member of the Association of the United States Army. John Anthony Acevedo has 4 children John Jr., Jorge, Deborah and Ana Maria and two grandchildren Arayna and Lyric. Several of John's family members are currently serving, continuing his family's proud legacy of military service. John's daughter Deborah is joining the US Air Force and his nephew Michael Kerr served in the Air Force and is currently in the Reserves. John's cousin Pedro Pabon currently serves in the Army Reserves.

Today we recognize John Acevedo, as a true patriot who dedicated his life to serving our country, serving our community. John is a great example of the dedication that Hispanic Americans have for their country and their community.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 4, 2019*

Mr. HUFFMAN. Madam Speaker, I regret that I had a conflict that caused me to miss the following vote. I would have voted "aye" on roll call vote 555.

#### CONGRATULATING AND WELCOMING AMERICA'S NEWEST CITIZENS

### HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 4, 2019*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and sincerity that I take this time to congratulate thirty individuals who will take their oaths of citizenship on October 4, 2019. This memorable occasion will be held at the United States Courthouse and Federal Building in Hammond, Indiana.

America is a country founded by immigrants. From its beginning, settlers have come from countries around the world to the United States in search of better lives for their families. Oath ceremonies are a shining example of what is so great about the United States of America—that people from all over the world can come together and unite as members of a free, democratic nation. These individuals realize that nowhere else in the world offers a better opportunity for success than here in America.

On October 4, 2019, the following people, representing many nations throughout the world, will take their oaths of citizenship in Hammond, Indiana: Shania Shamar Perry, Johan Jacques Taljaard, Cirilo Favela, Claude Mihai Butnaru, Qays Jinan Matti Karo, Gabriela Hernandez, Steven Esat Karagoz, Armando Wu, Ravindra Babu Bhogadula, Maria Mhango, Argelia Cristina Fagre-Rivas, Ljube Shurdoski, Indiana Jankowski, Fernando Hernandez, Juan Nieto, Irma Ruiz, Jessica Tirado Ochoa, Sirak Kifle Negash, Sarah Hughes, Urmil Raj Kashyap, Guoyun Liu, Mihaela Roxana Layman, Ana G. Dunnett, Santiago Loera, Sonia Menchaca, Julieta Grino Pingol, Lucy Wambui Kiruki, Margaret

Matilda Brewster, Idalia Patricia Ramirez, and Mehulkumar Soni.

Although each individual has sought to become a citizen of the United States for his or her own reasons, be it for education, occupation, or to offer their loved ones better lives, each is inspired by the fact that the United States of America is, as Abraham Lincoln described it, a country ". . . of the people, by the people, and for the people." They realize that the United States is truly a free nation. By seeking American citizenship, they have made the decision that they want to live in a place where, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, they can practice religion as they choose, speak their minds without fear of punishment, and assemble in peaceful protest should they choose to do so.

Madam Speaker, I respectfully ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating these individuals who will become citizens of the United States of America on October 4, 2019. They, too, will be American citizens, guaranteed the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We, as a free and democratic nation, congratulate them and welcome them.

#### DEDICATING FAIRFIELD-VACAVILLE HANNIGAN TRAIN STATION

### HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 4, 2019*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, we rise today to celebrate the naming of the Fairfield-Vacaville train station after our dear friend, Assemblyman Tom Hannigan.

Tom was elected to the Assembly in 1978 to represent his home town of Fairfield. Recognizing the importance of connecting our state capitol with the economic engine of the San Francisco Bay Area, Hannigan authored and passed legislation that created a plan for the development of an intercity commuter train system to connect the cities. In just four years, Hannigan was able to turn this plan into reality with the establishment of the Capitol Corridor train service that we know today.

Today more than 1.7 million passengers use the Capitol Corridor annually to commute along the 168-mile long route, which connects an entire region between San Jose and Auburn. Publicly managed by Amtrak, the train route maintains some of the highest ridership rates in our country.

Commissioned in 2008 by the city of Fairfield, the Fairfield-Vacaville Hannigan Train Station opened to its first passengers in November 2017. Over the past two years, the station has established itself as a model of the Capitol Corridor's community-oriented transportation system, with more than 3,600 passengers who originate their trips from the station every month.

By the time of his passing in 2018, Tom Hannigan had faithfully served his country in the United States Marine Corps and his community at the city, county, and state government levels for more than a quarter of a century. The dedication of the Fairfield-Vacaville Hannigan Train Station is a fitting memorialization of the legacy he has left behind for his hometown and all of those who continue to benefit from the Capitol Corridor train service.