

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL STEPHEN M. "STEPH" TWITTY

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 23, 2020

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great leader, an exceptional officer, and a dear friend. Lieutenant General Stephen M. "Steph" Twitty, my fellow South Carolina State University (SCSU) alumnus and Omega Psi Phi fraternity brother, will soon retire after more than 36 years in the U.S. Army, and I commend him for his extraordinary service to our country.

Lt. Gen. Twitty is a native of Chesnee, South Carolina and his hometown has honored him by naming State Highway 11 in his honor. The local American Legion Post 48 proudly displays signage proclaiming him as a native son.

While growing up as a self-proclaimed "country boy," Steph fell in love with the military. His grandfather, Spc. Carson Mackerson, served 11 years in the segregated U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. As a child, his grandfather ran him through infantry maneuvers in the yard and inspired him to join the National Guard as a junior in high school.

He matriculated at SCSU and joined the Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program, which had about 600 cadets at that time. Lt. Gen. Twitty graduated among the top

of his ROTC class in 1985, and having a choice of any assignment, he chose to follow in his grandfather's footsteps and become an Army infantryman.

He is part of a proud tradition at SCSU which boasts of 22 ROTC graduates who have attained the rank of general officer. Lt. Gen. Twitty is a shining example of a dedication to excellence and leadership that SCSU's ROTC program instills in its cadets. He was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2004 and inducted into the SCSU ROTC Hall of Fame in 2009. He has given back by establishing a program in which senior Army officers provide mentorships and leadership development to ROTC cadets at SCSU.

Lt. Gen. Twitty has earned a master's degree in Public Administration from Central Michigan University and a master's in National Security Strategy from the National Defense University. He has served five combat tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. His service has taken him to 174 countries and every continent except Antarctica, and he has held some of the most critical positions in defense of our nation.

After his first assignment with the 101st Airborne Division at Ft. Campbell, he deployed with the 24 Infantry Division during Operation Desert Storm. He has commanded infantry units at the company, battalion, and brigade levels. Lt. Gen. Twitty's assignments as a general officer include deputy commander and commander of the 1st Armored Division, Deputy Chief of Staff of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and commander of the First United States Army.

For the past two years, Lt. Gen. Twitty has been the deputy commander of United States European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. During this period of extraordinary change and challenge in Europe's security environment. He improved relationships with NATO allies and European partners and through his strategic vision, Lt. Gen. Twitty successfully led his command through some of the most complex national security issues facing the United States. The foundations he established will allow NATO and our Armed Forces to meet every mission requirement in Europe. According to Forces Command Commanding General Robert Abrams, "Lt. Gen. Twitty has provided outstanding leadership, advice, and sound professional judgment."

His numerous awards and decorations include the Silver Star Medal, the nation's third highest award for valor. He received the honor for his extraordinary combat leadership of the 3rd Infantry Division's 3rd Battalion 15th Infantry Regiment during the initial assault on Baghdad, Iraq in 2003. He was inducted in the U.S. Army ROTC Hall of Fame in 2018.

Lt. Gen. Twitty is married to the former Karen Wilson. They have two daughters, Ashley and Brooke. The family has served alongside him throughout his career, and their service is appreciated as well.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in thanking Lt. Gen. Twitty for his commitment to service, sacrifices for, and contribution to this great nation and wishes of success in his future endeavors.