

request of Director Rostropovich, to commemorate his last season as director of the Washington, DC, National Symphony Orchestra.

Gould served as president of ASCAP [American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers] from 1986 to 1994. He has been an ASCAP member since 1935 and a board member since 1959.

Certainly we have all benefited over the years from his work and know that future generations will benefit as well. Please join me today in honoring one of America's truest virtuosos.

SALUTE TO MR. ROBERT HEENAN

HON. THOMAS M. FOGLIETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 1995

Mr. FOGLIETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Robert T. Heenan, the business manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 542, who is the 1995 recipient of the Salute to Labor Gold Medal Award.

Mr. Heenan joined the Operating Engineers Local 542 in 1948 after completing his service with the U.S. Army. He has served as the business agent, collection manager for the welfare and pension fund and the business manager for local 542.

In addition to his work with local 542, Mr. Heenan has served with distinction on the Pennsylvania State Housing Authority, the CETA board of Bucks County, PA and the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority. Mr. Heenan is the current vice president of the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council and the Pennsylvania State AFL-CIO Council.

Mr. Heenan's commitment to community service has led to significant strides in neighborhoods throughout the Philadelphia region. Under Mr. Heenan's leadership, local 542's apprenticeship program has donated a great deal of assistance to local nonprofit groups. For example, Mr. Heenan is responsible for the reconstruction of two ballfields at seventh and Packer Streets in Philadelphia.

Mr. Heenan is also a long-time supporter of UNICO Charities the American Diabetes Association, and the Marine Corps League's toys for tots campaign.

I join the Philadelphia chapter on UNICO, Bob's wonderful wife Mary Heenan, and the Heenan children and grandchildren in recognizing Mr. Robert Heenan for his fine contributions to his country and community. I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors and am confident that he will continue to be a great contributor to communities throughout the Delaware Valley.

THE MILITARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1995

HON. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 1995

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing H.R. 1611, the Military

Housing Assistance Act of 1995. The purpose of this measure is to enable active duty military personnel to purchase homes for themselves and their families in areas where the supply of suitable military housing is inadequate. As a result, the Department of Defense's on-base housing costs could be significantly reduced. This joint Department of Veterans' Affairs/Department of Defense [VA/DOD] program would be an excellent example of Federal agencies working together to enhance the lives of our armed services personnel while reducing DOD construction expenditures.

Under this program, DOD would be authorized to buy down the interest rate for certain active duty personnel purchasing off-base housing using the VA guaranteed home loan. This buydown would lower the monthly mortgage payment during the first 3 years of the loan. Loans covered by this proposal would, as is currently the case with VA home loans, be made by private lenders. The escrowed funds needed for the buydown would be provided to the lender by the VA. DOD would then reimburse the VA. These loans would be processed in the same way as any other VA loan which includes a buydown except that these loans would be underwritten at the second-year rate rather than at the full note rate, thus enabling more individuals to qualify for the loans. Additionally, DOD would be authorized to indemnify mortgagees against any loss, thereby covering the difference between the VA guaranty and any actual loss on the sale of the property.

Eligibility for these loans would be limited to all enlisted members and officers in the pay grade O-3 or below who are first-time users of the VA home loan program. Application for participation in this program would be made within 12 months of assignment to a housing shortage area. The service Secretaries would designate those bases that have a housing shortage.

An important component of this bill would require individuals participating in the program to participate in comprehensive prepurchase counseling. It has been demonstrated that counseling of this type results in borrowers who are better prepared to assume the responsibilities of homeownership. Additionally, VA would be authorized to assign qualified VA loan guaranty personnel to the bases designated as having housing shortages. These VA personnel would provide prepurchase counseling and loan servicing assistance and assist GI's with the purchase and subsequent sale of their homes.

After consulting with and obtaining the agreement of the VA, DOD would be authorized to transfer its property management jurisdiction to the VA. Thirty VA FTEE would be authorized to fulfill these responsibilities.

Under this bill, DOD would be authorized \$104 million and \$6 million would be authorized for the VA. VA estimates these amounts would provide for 32,000 loans per year.

I believe the Military Housing Assistance Act of 1995 would establish an excellent program, and I urge my colleagues who would like to cosponsor this measure to contact Bo Maske at 225-5031 or Beth Kilker at 225-9756.

REMARKS BY MAJ. GEN. VANG PAO AT THE VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL CEREMONY IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL OF SAIGON

HON. ROBERT K. DORNAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 1995

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, April 30, I was at the Vietnam Memorial here in Washington. I met personally with many Vietnam veterans and their families at the Wall there to remember the sacrifices of our soldiers and the 20th anniversary of the tragic fall of South Vietnam to communism.

One of the important ceremonies that I attended at the Wall was held by the Counterparts organization where thousands of Montagnards, Hmong, Laotians and Vietnamese attended to mark the 20th anniversary of the tragic and bloody Communist takeover of their homelands. Some of those in attendance at this somber and important event were Grant McClure, Commanding Officer of Counterparts and former advisor to the Montagnards in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam, Ambassador Bill Colby former director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Maj. Gen. Homer Smith head of the Defense Attaché Office during the fateful last hours in Saigon; Brig. Gen. Kor Ksor, a Montagnard leader; Maj. Gen. Vang Pao, Commander of Military Region II for the Royal Lao Army and head of Hmong Special Forces; General Thonglit Chokbenbun, Royal Lao Army Commander; Dr. Jane Hamilton-Merritt the distinguished Lao/Hmong scholar, author and photojournalist; and Philip Smith, Senior Legislative Assistant to former U.S. Congressman Don Ritter and current Director of the Center for Public Policy Analysis.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is crucial for the United States and Thailand not to forget the tremendous sacrifices of our former Vietnamese, Montagnard, Hmong and Laotian allies during the Vietnam War. I call upon all Vietnam veterans and Americans to oppose the current U.S. State Department and Thai policy of forcibly repatriating many of these former Hmong and Vietnamese Special Forces Commandos and combat veterans from refugee camps back to the repressive Communist regimes that they fled.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to make a part of the public record the speech that Maj. Gen. Vang Pao gave at the 20th Anniversary Ceremony which describes so well the major contribution made by many of our former allies and so many American soldiers during the Vietnam war.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL VANG PAO

Dear Honorable Guests, Fellow Veterans, Ladies and Gentlemen: We are gathered here today at this ceremony to mark the 20th Anniversary of the tragic fall of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to invading Communist forces. But, we are also gathered here to recognize and honor those men and women who sacrificed and lost their lives in the Vietnam War—the Second Indochina War—fighting for freedom, democracy, and for the peace and security of Southeast Asia and the United States.

Tens of thousands of Lao and Hmong soldiers and their families who fought against the invading Soviet-backed North Vietnamese Army during the war are buried in unmarked graves in Laos and Vietnam. They