

this resolution to President Clinton, the presiding officers of the House of Representatives and Senate, the majority leader of the Senate, and the Secretary of Defense.

AMERICA'S UNSUNG HEROES

HON. SONNY CALLAHAN

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 25, 1996

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, during his State of the Union Address this week, President Clinton recognized one of the heroes from last year's bombing in Oklahoma City. I believe this was a tradition begun by former President Reagan but regardless who started it, it is a practice which has great merit.

For all across America, there are countless unsung heroes—men and women, boys and girls—who rise to whatever occasion is necessary to lend a helping hand to one of their fellow citizens.

Such was the case in the early morning hours of New Year's day in the city of Robertsedale, AL. Then, one of my constituents, Mr. Floyd Smith, saw that his neighbor's house trailer was engulfed in flames and without regard for his own safety, rushed in to save the lives of this family.

If it were not for Mr. Smith, George and Doris Hammock, and their grandson, Adam, would no longer be with us today.

Clearly, Floyd Smith didn't wake up intending to be a hero that day. Like most Americans, he probably had other things on his mind on this first day of the new year.

But when he saw his neighbors were at risk, he raced over to try to awake the Hammocks by beating on the walls of their trailer. Then he helped the family escape the burning home through the window.

Once the Robertsedale Fire Department arrived, it took 45 minutes to totally extinguish out the fire. The Hammocks lost everything—their home, their clothes, their possessions—but thanks to Floyd Smith, they didn't lose the one thing which is truly irreplaceable—their lives.

Just like so many other heroes, Floyd Smith deserves to be recognized for his outstanding act of bravery. He put the life and well-being of others above his own. And he did so not because it was politically popular, but because it was the right thing to do.

Mr. Smith is truly an American hero and he deserves to be praised for his outstanding acts. Everyone can learn from his example and because of it, the Hammocks now have an opportunity to live out their New Year's resolutions with many more to come.

On behalf of the people of south Alabama, I salute Mr. Floyd Smith, and ask that a copy of this statement be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

TRIBUTE TO MAJ. GEN. EARL G.
PECK, USAF, RETIRED

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 25, 1996

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a man

who has served his country and his State for almost 50 years, Maj. Gen. Earl G. Peck. I have had the privilege of working with Earl for a number of years on issues of concern to veterans.

General Peck began his military service in 1948 and served for more than 36 years in the U.S. Air Force. He was a command pilot with more than 7,000 hours in fighters, bombers, tankers, and trainers. Earl received numerous military decorations, including the Defense and Air Force Distinguished Service Medals, the Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star, the Vietnam Service Medal with four campaign stars and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

During his distinguished military career, Earl held many different positions. He served as Chief of Staff, Strategic Air Command; Director, Intelligence and Space Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense; Deputy Commander, Sixth Allied Tactical Air Force, Izmir, Turkey; Chief, Office of Air Force History; Commandant, Squadron Officers School; Commander, 3902d Air Base Wing; Chief, Special Air Operations, Vietnam; and many others as a squadron pilot and staff officer.

When the general left the Air Force in 1985, he could have sat back and enjoyed his retirement. But as so often is the case with veterans, Earl continued to contribute to his community.

Since his retirement, he has been active in the Retired Officers Association, the Air Force Association, and the Order of Daedalians. He is also a member of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

In 1989, Earl was appointed as the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. Immediately preceding his appointment, he was Director of the Florida Division of Veterans' Affairs, the department's predecessor.

As an advocate for Florida's veterans, Earl has worked to improve the quality of life for all of the State's 1.73 million veterans. The resources of the department has increased by 400 percent, providing increased services to veterans. During his tenure, veterans' homes have been constructed in Lake City and Daytona Beach and more are planned. He has worked to elevate the VA's understanding of Florida's problems and to improve the resources and facilities available to our veterans. He has always been a valuable resource for our congressional delegation in Washington.

Earl is the outgoing President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. Secretary Jesse Brown presented Earl with the Secretary's Award for Outstanding State Director—a well-deserved honor.

In 1994, I was honored by the Association as "Man of the Year." I know he was instrumental in my selection for this award and I am grateful for his support.

As Earl prepares to retire from the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, I wanted to wish him the best of luck in his retirement. Although he may be retiring, I know Earl will remain a strong advocate for Florida's veterans.

GEORGE DYKSTRA: A GREAT
AMERICAN

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 25, 1996

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the life of George Dykstra, known as Mr. Sparta to people in the town he called home. George Dykstra lived a great American life: In good times and bad, he was always there to serve his family, his neighbors, and his country.

Born in Fulton, IL, in 1921, George grew up in Prospect Park, NJ. He served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps for 7 years and received a Purple Heart while serving in the Pacific Theater as a sergeant during World War II, which included action in Guadalcanal and the Philippines. After the war, George finally settled down and moved to the township of Sparta in the heart of Sussex County, NJ. Little did George know that he would dedicate the next 50 years of his life to serving the citizens of this small, mountainous town. Whether it was the Sparta VFW Post, the North Jersey Midget Football League, flood victims in Wilkes Barre, PA, or planting flowers in front of the municipal building, George Dykstra was there to lead the way or just lend a helping hand. According to Monsignor Charles C. Cassidy, the retired pastor of Our Lady of the Lake Roman Catholic Church in Sparta, "everything he did was for someone else."

George also made significant contributions through his service in municipal government. He was a member of the Sparta Township Council for 18 years, including four terms as mayor. It was through this venue that I first met George and came to know him as a straight-shooting, thoughtful, and caring man. Whether it was keeping tabs on the Superfund sight at A.O. Polymer or acting as a sounding board for local veterans as a valued member of my Veterans Round Table, George didn't tinker around the edges, he always got right to the point. He was someone I could trust. Sparta Councilwoman Dolores Blackburn put it perfectly when she said that "he cannot be replaced. The things he did were well-intentioned, whether you agreed with him or not. He was our local color."

I could not possibly name all of the organizations that George Dykstra was involved in during his years in Sparta, he was literally a part of everything that went on in the town. According to Pat, his wife of 22 years, "he just loved Sparta. He always wanted to stay here." David Ferguson worked along side George as Sparta's township manager and wholeheartedly agrees, stating that "He is 'Mr. Sparta.' I don't know anyone who cared more and loved Sparta more than George. He was the most dedicated individual I have ever known toward his community. He had a heart of gold and we all loved him." His fellow councilman, Michael Devine, aptly described him as "straightforward, uncomplicated and reliable as a man could be." Sparta always counted on George to come through for the community and he never let them down—he was a sure thing.

George Dykstra had a way with everyone—even reporters. Carole Hartman covered George for 4 years with the Sparta Independent and the New Jersey Herald and found out