

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 23, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1119) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, the amendment to H.R. 1119 that I bring to the desk requires the Defense Department, by January 1, 1998, to submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and desirability of converting active guard reserve (AGR) personnel (active duty reservists who are involved with organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training other reservists) to dual-status technicians.

Mr. Chairman, my involvement in this issue comes from the best example of the democratic process at work; a constituent request. During the 105th Congress, a constituent implored me to look into this program, ask for a study that would hopefully lead to a change in it by converting AGR personnel to dual-status technicians in order to save the tax payer more than 2.61 billion dollars per year. This number has been confirmed by General Accounting Office studies and should not be ignored. Therefore, I ask that Congress require the Secretary of Defense to conduct its own study which I and many others believe, will yield the same evidence from the G.A.O. and Rand Corporation studies.

In the current political climate where Federal governmental agencies and programs like N.E.A. and welfare are being scrutinized for their relevance and cost-effectiveness—Pentagon programs should be subject to the same scrutiny and analysis, DOD should be required to undergo the same type of introspection, study and analysis. My amendment requiring the DOD to undertake this study is non-controversial, pragmatic and necessary if Congress is to gain a full and objective picture of the age—dual status technician issue and its possible reform. I thank you for your consideration of this amendment.

VETERANS' CEMETERY PROTECTION ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 23, 1997

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the House Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee, I know that our military men and women devote years of service to our country. We must honor our commitment to our current military, but must not forget about our veterans. To do so would be to abandon the very things that our veterans have fought so hard to preserve.

The American Government entered into a compact with the men and women who put

their lives on the line for our freedom. We must make sure that the Government lives up to its end of the bargain. We owe our veterans the respect they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women buried at national cemeteries across the country deserve our deepest respect and thanks. Unfortunately, vandals and thieves have made a mockery of their final resting places by desecrating Riverside National Cemetery, which is located just outside of my district in Riverside County, and most recently, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii.

I applaud my colleague from Riverside for his swift work to introduce and bring to the floor H.R. 1532, the Veterans' Cemetery Protection Act. Ken Calvert recognized that deliberate acts of vandalism against America's fallen comrades must not be tolerated. Demeaning and degrading the final resting place of veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for the Nation strikes at all veterans and all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, as a former naval officer, these acts of vandalism touch me directly. I firmly believe that criminal penalties for theft and vandalism and National Cemeteries must be imposed. The Veterans' Cemetery Protection Act will do just that. I strongly encourage all of my colleagues to support this important legislation. Our veterans gave their all for our country. We must give them nothing less in return.

THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF MISSION SAN JUAN BAUTISTA, ONE OF CALIFORNIA'S GREAT TREASURES

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 1997

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, today is the 200th anniversary of Mission San Juan Bautista, which was founded on June 24, 1797, by Father Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, a Spanish basque Franciscan priest. It was the feast day of Saint John the Baptist.

As we go about our daily business in the Capitol, we frequently see the statue of Junipero Serra, the founder of what became the 21-mission system which begins in the south at San Diego and extends over 600 miles to the north.

Father Serra had the vision of missions that would be the centers of Christian education and practice in their particular area. The missions were ultimately also the educators and the producers and manufacturers of the clothes and food needed in what was to become the State of California in 1850.

In modern management terminology, Father Serra was the visionary chairman of the board/chief executive officer. Father Lasuen was the quietly effective chief operating officer with the talent and organizational skills to carry out the vision. With the death of Serra in 1784, Lasuen soon became his most energetic successor. In 1 year, Lasuen founded four missions including San Juan Bautista. Given the difficulties of transportation and communication that was a remarkable feat.

San Juan Bautista is the largest mission in continuous service since its founding. It is the only mission with three aisles. Some of the

other missions are in ruins. Still others, such as Santa Barbara, have been beautifully restored after an earthquake in 1925. Fortunately, San Juan Bautista is still in its original condition, despite being within a mile of the San Andreas Fault. Eight miles away is Hollister, the county seat of San Benito County. That community of 20,000 is known as "the earthquake capital of California." The Franciscan priests were architects, builders, administrators, and educators, among their numerous roles. With foresight, the mission is constructed of large adobe bricks. They have now withstood the tremors of two centuries.

The bicentennial festivities were spread over the period from Friday, June 20 through Wednesday, June 25. Friday began with a 6:30 p.m. Kiddie Parade.

Sunday was not only a beautiful day to celebrate the continuity provided by the mission but also the first formal recognition of the role of Father Lasuen.

All of us were delighted that a delegation of community leaders from Vitoria, Spain, were able to join us. Father Lasuen grew up in Vitoria, the capital of a largely Basque province. A relative of the distinguished American author of the history of the Basque people read a letter from his uncle, Robert Laxalt, author of the *Sweet Promised Land*. Laxalt described Lasuen as "The Quiet Legend who was seasoned by experience, a wise administrator and a spiritual leader tempered by reality."

Under the dedicated and able leadership of Bicentennial Committee Chairman Leonard Caetano, who with the help of his wife—and my classmate—Rosemary (Mim), and a hard-working group of committee members an amazing array of activities were arranged for the several thousand who participated in this unique celebration.

Some of the Sunday events included:

6:30 a.m.—Re-enactment of the founding of the mission.

7:00 a.m.—Bilingual mass followed by a pancake breakfast.

10:00 a.m.—A parade which included bands, dancers, horses and wagons, one of which was masterfully driven by Romaldo Martin of the M & M Farms who was joined by his friend George Nunes. They ably made it through the streets with this U.S. Representative, who grew up on a ranch five miles from the mission, standing up and waving to a friendly crowd.

11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.—A chicken barbecue.

3:00 p.m.—Dedication of the bronze bust of Father Lasuen.

4:00 p.m.—Grand prize drawing for a pickup truck. This is still farm country.

The dedication was particularly moving. The Native Sons of the Golden West, the Native Daughters of the Golden West, and the Daughters of the American Revolution presented generous checks for the restoration fund. Besides myself, Assemblyman Peter Frusetta made a formal presentation on behalf of the California State Assembly. A representative of State Senator McPherson made a similar presentation on behalf of the State Senate.

The crowd was pleased to hear from the current priest Father Edward Fitz-Henry. His predecessor was Father Maximilian Santa Maria, who inspired the community to celebrate this significant milestone in the history of the mission. His humor was enjoyed by all. He