

soldiers and the work force. I was pleased to work with him in Congress to secure funds to make a host of needed repairs to Range building and workplaces, as well as improvements to roads and water and sewer projects. These efforts made White Sands Missile Range a finalist for the Presidential Quality Award. Further, he canonized the Hembriillo Battlefield where the 10th Cavalry fought a heroic campaign in the late 1800s by requesting its inclusion as a place on the National Register of Historic Places. He also continued the time-honored tradition to remember the New Mexico Veterans of the World War II Bataan Death March by recreating an annual march (begun in the early 1990s) through 25 miles of surrounding Range desert in tribute to the heroes of Bataan.

Throughout the past 18 months, Gen. Gatanas has effectively and continuously led White Sands and its work force on a journey of continuous improvement. He created a foundation of technical and infrastructure improvements which will serve the Range for generations and instilled a true spirit of professionalism and pride throughout the work force. The general's efforts have been noted throughout the work force. The General's efforts have been noted throughout the entire Materiel Development Community, the Army Staff, the Department of Defense and the U.S. Congress. His dedication to duty, selfless service and outstanding leadership mark him as a truly successful commander. These accomplishments are deserving of the highest attention and accolades, and it is only appropriate that after the completion of next week's change-of-command ceremony, Brigadier General Harry Gatanas will be promoted to the rank of Major General and will depart to take command of his next assignment as the Commanding General of the U.S. Army's Test and Evaluation Command in Alexandria, Virginia.

All of us in New Mexico have been blessed by an impressive cadre of commanding generals who have taken charge of the reins at White Sands since its founding in World War II. I've been pleased to work with each Commanding General at the Range for the past two decades.

Next month, the Range will celebrate its final firing of the century. Established on July 9, 1945, the first atomic bomb explosion occurred on the Range one week later, on July 16th at Trinity site. Since that time, over 42-thousand test firings have occurred at White Sands, which have included the initial test flights of all of the Army's missile systems including the V-2 rocket, the Nike Hercules, the Nike Zeus, the Redstone, the Hawk and the Pershing II.

I look forward to working with soon-to-be Major General Gatanas and the rest of the Army leadership in continuing the impressive technological contributions to our national security throughout tests, evaluations and operations conducted at White Sands Missile Range.

COMMENDING THE IRS LAGUNA NIGUEL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE OFFICE

**HON. GARY G. MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 10, 1999*

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, there are few jobs in the federal government for which public gratitude is a less common response than for those who are tasked with collecting our taxes. Not only must these public servants enforce our ever-burgeoning, byzantine Internal Revenue Code, they are expected to do so in a manner that is professional, responsive and fair to all.

During the past year, I have been witness to the performance of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Taxpayer Advocate Office in Laguna Niguel, California, headed by Ms. Connie Adams. This office, which services the 41st Congressional District and the surrounding region, is responsible for resolving difficult, complicated tax disputes between taxpayers and the IRS, and doing so in a manner that stresses, to the utmost, service and fairness to the American taxpayer.

It gives me great pleasure to commend the IRS Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office for meeting this difficult challenge during the past year. In handling over thirty complicated tax disputes which I received from constituents in my congressional district, the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office performed its duties expeditiously, with due diligence, and attention to detail. I would especially like to express my appreciation to the staff members at the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office, including Ms. Maryanne McGoldrick, Ms. Deborah Mata, Ms. Mary Haven, Ms. Katie Williams and Ms. Kim Alfrey for their responsiveness and consummate professionalism in performing their duties.

The preliminary evidence in my congressional district is that the IRS has responded with conviction to the reform requirements mandated by the 105th Congress. There are certainly other agencies in the federal government which would do well to learn from the laudatory example set by the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office. Again, my hat is off to these fine public servants for a job well done.

IN HONOR OF THE 75TH BIRTHDAY OF JUDGE J. JEROME PLUNKETT

**HON. CHRISTOPHER COX**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 10, 1999*

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of a great man who has achieved a great milestone: the Honorable J. Jerome Plunkett, who will celebrate his 75th birthday tomorrow, November 11.

A distinguished jurist, a decorated soldier, a patron of education, and a devoted husband and father of eight children, Judge Plunkett has throughout his life been a leader for his nation, his state, his community, and his family.

Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, one of five children of James P. and Anne Plunkett, the

young boy's early experiences helped shape his extraordinary life. For his eighth birthday he traveled to Washington, D.C.—by train, for James P. was the Solicitor General for the Great Northern Railroad—to watch his father argue a case before the nine Justices of the United States Supreme Court. Barely beginning third grade, Jerry Plunkett could not have known then that a quarter century later he would begin his own career as a judge. But without doubt that lasting memory was one of several influences that propelled him to the law and the bench.

That autumn Washington day in 1932, as every one of Jerry Plunkett's 75 birthdays, was Armistice Day. On the first Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, Americans had celebrated the end of World War I, which officially concluded when the armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. But the "war to end all wars" had done no such thing. Just months after graduating from St. Thomas Military Academy in St. Paul, Jerry—then 18 years old—entered the United States Army, as the storm clouds of World War II cast their dark shadow on America.

He enrolled in the Infantry Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and rapidly rose through the ranks. By 1944, he was a First Lieutenant with the Second Infantry Division, destined to participate in the Allied invasion of France to liberate Europe.

Lt. Plunkett, the infantryman, was wounded during the monumental struggle with Nazi forces at Normandy, code-named "Operation Overlord," and commanded by General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He would later be decorated not only with a Purple Heart but the Bronze Star, but in June 1944 he continued to punch inland, securing safe landing zones for reinforcements, and waged the campaign through France and into Germany. The German failure to successfully defend the Normandy area from the Allied liberation forces in essence doomed Hitler's dream of "Fortress Europe," and marked the beginning of the end for the Nazis.

While Jerry survived the war, one of his two brothers, James F. Plunkett, did not. He was killed in action in France in 1944.

With victory came peace, and Jerry Plunkett returned home like so many other veterans to start a new life, and begin a career. He chose the law.

When he earned his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Minnesota, he went to work as a legal editor for the West Publishing Company, even then a long-established firm (founded in 1876) and the leading national provider of case law and statutes for all U.S. jurisdictions. His interest in the law was matched, however, by his interest in people and solving real-world problems, and barely two years later he had landed his first job in public policy, as the Assistant City Attorney for the City of St. Paul.

As barrister for the state capital, Jerry Plunkett earned experience in prosecuting criminals and managing civil cases in the courtroom. By 1954, he was presiding over those same cases as the Honorable Jerome Plunkett, appointed by the Municipal Court bench by then-Minnesota Governor C. Elmer Anderson.

His progress and accomplishments on the bench were as swift and commendable as they had been on the battlefield. He was made Chief Administrator of the court system.