

our Armed Services. He improved the overseas school feeding program, the military family program, and encouraged youth by establishing a coupon program and Savings Bond drawing to recognize those achieving good grades.

General Bates has expanded business partnerships, improved cooperation among DOD resale activities, and partnered with other services to develop exchange-wide credit card services. He has also advanced AAFES significantly in the application of technology. Internet sales have grown by leaps and bounds to \$24.2 million in 1999. AAFES' Information Systems Directorate has won 13 major national awards and opened a state of the art Enterprise Technology Center.

General Bates has made customer service a priority, positioning AAFES as a "customer driven company." At the same time, he has focused on developing, training and caring for AAFES employees. The results tell the story: customer service has improved 25%, and associate satisfaction has increased by 14%.

I've been impressed with the work of General Bates on two vastly different fronts. On a recent trip to Bosnia I shopped at a great PX at Eagle Base in Tuzla. This kind of operation is what AAFES has become known for—they go wherever our soldiers go. General Bates has inspired his team to provide great service on all the U.S. contingency missions. His commitment to be there for the troops was most evident when AAFES established a presence in Albania just five days after our forces arrived there.

At the request of AAFES retirees, I worked personally with General Bates to guarantee the security of the AAFES retirement plan. He was courageous and unyielding in his fight to ensure that the retirement plan was protected for all AAFES retirees and associates.

General Bates has positioned AAFES solidly for the future. His extraordinary leadership and business acumen have set a standard in Texas for quality operations that will ensure quality morale, welfare, and recreation programs for our Army and Air Force for years to come.

A soldier's soldier, General Bates is now returning to Korea to command Army troops in that volatile part of the world. On the occasion of his departure, I want to thank him for helping Congress take care of the troops and their families, for caring for many of my constituents—the wonderful employees of AAFES, and for serving his Army so effectively as the Commander of AAFES. I ask all Members to join me in wishing General Bates success in his new position.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF MICHAEL R.
OBLEMAN

HON. JOHN M. McHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. McHUGH. Mr. Speaker, on 9 February, 2000 Chief Master Sergeant Michael R. Obleman retired as the Chief of the Munitions Element for the 174th Fighter Wing, Hancock Field, New York Air National Guard in Syracuse NY. He assumed leadership of the Munitions Element as a Master Sergeant in January of 1982. Previously he worked as a Supervisor for the Weapons Loading Section.

Chief Obleman was born on 1 April, 1948 in Pulaski, New York where he still resides. He graduated from North Syracuse Central High School in June of 1967. In August 1967 he joined the United States Marine Corp where he was an Aviation Ordnance Man. He served in Vietnam from 18 June, 1969 through 9 June, 1970. He was discharged from the Marines in August of 1971. In the Marine Corp he attained the rank of E-5. In the Marines he received the following awards and decorations: National Defense Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross w/palm, the Vietnamese Service Medal with 1 device, the Purple heart, the Good Conduct Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with device.

After his discharge from the Marines he worked a civilian job at Rumsey Distributing from October 1971 to December of 1974. In April 1973 he joined the 174th Fighter Wing as a traditional guardsman. On 22 December, 1974 he became a full time technician in the Weapons Loading Section. He worked in Weapons Loading until June of 1982 when he assumed leadership of the Munitions element as a Master Sergeant. He achieved the rank of Senior Master Sergeant on 15 November, 1987. On 31 August, 1990 he was awarded the rank of Chief Master Sergeant.

As Chief of the Munitions element he recognized that the current procedure for uploading 30-millimeter ammo onto the A-10 aircraft could be accomplished in a safer and more efficient manner. He initiated a design change to the GFU-7 loading system for use with the 30-millimeter GPU-5 gun pods. This design change allowed the GPU-5 gun pod to be loaded in the Munitions Storage Area instead of the flight line resulting in less people and aircraft being exposed to a potentially dangerous explosive operation. High levels of Command visited the 174th Fighter Wing to observe the new method he developed. The GPU-5 30-millimeter gun pod was combat tested during Operation Desert Storm.

Under his leadership the Munitions Element received excellent ratings on all major inspections. Chief Obleman was instrumental in the planning of the initial setup and the successful ongoing operation of the Forward Operating Location at Wheeler-Sack Air Field for the A-10 and F-16 aircraft, part of the only live fire range in the Northeast.

Chief Master Sergeant Michael R. Obleman has 32 years, 6 months and 1 day of dedicated military service. Four years of this service was with the Marines and the remainder of service was with the 174th Fighter Wing, Hancock Field. His Air Force Awards and Decorations include the Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Medal with 6 devices, the Air Force Longevity Service Award with 6 devices, the National Defense Service Medal with 1 device, the South West Asia Service Medal with 2 devices, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 1 Device, the Kuwait Liberation Medal Saudi Arabia, the Kuwait Liberation Medal Kuwait, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 4 devices and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Chief Obleman married Nancy Condon on 10 May, 1969. He has three children Michael, Lorianne, and John. Lorianne is married to Trevor Quig, and are the parents of his granddaughter, Adrianna.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MINE PRESERVATIONIST BURTON BOYUM

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding volunteer for his work in preserving the grand history of mining in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Burton Boyum is a shining example of how giving to one's community brightens the lot for many. Mr. Boyum has selflessly given his time and served in various capacities designed to better the lives of residents and improve their understanding of the area's economic and cultural history.

For decades, the Upper Peninsula was dotted with mines that drew iron ore and copper from the tree-covered hills. The resources, however, were exhausted and now the area is witness to little mining. All that remains of this former economic mainstay, which provided thousands of jobs to hardworking citizens, are the stories of former miners and some dilapidated structures. Gratefully, communities in the Upper Peninsula have been graced by the energy and dedication of Burton Boyum. He has been determined to preserve the historic structures of Michigan's mining past and retain the anecdotes that illustrated miners' lives.

Following his graduation from the University of Minnesota in 1941, Mr. Boyum moved to the Upper Peninsula, where he worked as a Mining Engineer for Cleveland Cliffs International until his retirement in 1984. During that period and beyond, Mr. Boyum worked diligently to capture the history of mining. In 1961, he founded the Quincy Mine Hoist Association, a non-profit organization, and served as President of the Board of Directors from 1973 to 1998. Most notably, in 1998, the Quincy Mine Hoist Association honored this distinguished community member by creating the Burton H. Boyum Award.

Mr. Boyum has contributed to the community in many other laudable ways. He served as a member of the Marquette County Historical Society, where he wrote and published two books: *Saga of Iron Mining in Michigan's Upper Peninsula* and *The Mather Mine*. He worked tirelessly to create the United States National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan, which is housed in an award-winning structure that beautifully enhances the interpretation of skiing in our country. Finally, Mr. Boyum played a large role in creating the Great Lakes Olympic Education Training Center, which trains athletes for various events in the world's athletic showcase. I have worked on matters concerning the National Ski Hall of Fame and the Great Lakes Olympic Education Training Center and can appreciate the initiative and devotion displayed by Mr. Boyum toward both creating and strengthening these facilities.

Although Mr. Boyum recently suffered a stroke, I am sure that his passion for civic involvement and his appreciation for mining history in the Upper Peninsula will remain steadfast. I ask you Mr. Speaker to join me in this salute to Burton Boyum.