

RESTORING THE LAFAYETTE- ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, a little over a month ago I brought to the attention of my colleagues the deteriorating state of the Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial, which honors all United States aviators who flew for France in World War I.

On June 17, a wreath laying ceremony will take place at the memorial to commemorate the 85th anniversary of its dedication. Tomorrow I will be introducing a resolution in honor of the 68 Americans who were memorialized or buried on the site and to honor all our fallen aviators of World War I. In addition, the resolution will express support for the funding needed to restore this hallowed site.

In a poster right here, this storyboard depicts the history of the Lafayette-Escadrille and their "Heritage of Valor and Sacrifice." Seven Americans formed the original American squadron. When the Escadrille, which means squadron, transferred to United States command in 1918, 265 American volunteers had served in the French Air Service with 180 of those having flown combat missions. In all, the Escadrille flew 3,000 combat sorties, amassing nearly 200 victories. In fact, the Escadrille became the birth of the United States Air Force.

A joint French-American committee was organized at the end of World War I to locate a final resting place for these American aviators. With the land donated by the French Government, the Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial was dedicated on July 4, 1928. The picture in the middle is the front of the memorial. It encompasses an arch of triumph with a series of columns placed on either side. Indeed, it is a sight to behold.

The memorial also contains a sanctuary and a burial crypt. Sunlight fills the tomb by way of 13 stained glass windows. Each of these works of art depicts the Escadrille flying its many missions over the battlefields of Europe. One of the most striking stained glass works depicts the U.S. aviators, escorted by an eagle, on a symbolic flight across the Atlantic to come to the aid of France.

Sadly, the memorial is in desperate need of repair. The structure sits in a meadow with a high water table. Heavy rains flood the tomb, exacerbated by the poor functioning drains and water leaking through the terrace behind the memorial. Structural repairs are needed for the crypt and the overall foundation, and double glass is needed to protect the remarkable, remarkable stained glass windows.

If we look again at the center, we will see that the front of the memorial is cracked and stained with pollution.

Let me show my colleagues the next poster. This graphic here shows the de-

terioration inside the crypt. The crumbling masonry and stucco and overall structural damage is evident.

Here we can see additional damage on the ceiling. Furthermore, the stained glass windows, like the one we see here, are not protected. These beautiful works of art could be lost forever if the structural deterioration is allowed to continue.

In 1930, U.S. Attorney Nelson Cromwell founded the Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial Foundation. He endowed the foundation with a \$1.5 million trust fund for maintenance, which has all been exhausted. Today, the foundation has a mirror organization in France and a pledge of monetary support to restore this memorial.

Although studies to estimate the cost of restoring the memorial are ongoing, it is obvious that the resources required will exceed the meager means of this foundation. The French Government has already indicated its willingness to assist, and it is time for the United States Government to do the same.

Combining the efforts of private industry and the United States Congress, it is my hope to join the French in restoring the memorial to its original beauty. It is the right thing to do to honor our fallen aviators of World War I and to demonstrate our respect for the sacrifices of all Americans in service to our Nation and our allies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join with me in supporting funding for the restoration of this great memorial.

MORE COMPARABLE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor today to, on one hand, compliment the other body which for over 2 days now has debated the legislation that I offered here in the House to create a more comparable education system within our various States.

I want to thank in particular the Senator from the great State of Connecticut, Senator DODD, and Senator BIDEN from Delaware, Senator REED from Rhode Island. I would like to also thank Senator BOXER and a host of other members, Senator CORZINE, and then the colleague who I served on the Web-based Education Commission with, Senator ENZI, who is a Republican Member of the Senate from the State of Wyoming.

I would expect that when the matter is brought for a vote after some more debate this week, there will be a lot of the other Members from the other body that I would want to thank.

But I also have some concern that this legislation, unfortunately, did not get a full hearing here in this House.

The Committee on Rules decided that, when we debated the education bill, that for some reason we were in a rush and that we could not offer amendments to title I as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

So even though the House Committee on Education and the Workforce under the leadership of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), my great friend, the majority chairman, gave me the opportunity to testify before the committee and to raise this concern, it was not afforded the opportunity rightfully to be debated and voted on here on the floor of the House.

But let me move to the substance of this matter because I think that we perpetrate a fraud on the Nation to talk about education reform and some discussion about the inequities that exist within our States between poor, rural and urban school districts and their wealthier suburban counterparts, for in almost every State in the Union, there has been and continues to be litigation brought by small, rural and impoverished school districts and large urban districts seeking from their State a fuller share of educational funding, an adequate share.

When we talk about education reform, we talk about testing every child every year in every school as if every child every year and in every school is afforded the same education opportunity. Well, we know that is not the case.

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We know that, for instance, in poorer school districts most of the children are being taught by teachers who are not certified in the subject that they are teaching; that, in fact, in math, in science, in the critical disciplines, that the teachers who are teaching the majority of the students in urban and rural school districts did not major nor minor in the subjects that they are teaching. So we have physical education teachers teaching science, and then we want to come along and test kids and compare them to others.

Now, I see my colleague, the newest of Members from the great State of California, where there has been plenty of litigation on this issue. Look at the example of Beverly Hills High, in which young people have the opportunity to have 23 advanced placement courses offered to them, but at Compton High not one advanced placement course is available to them. How can we create a situation where we are going to look at young people and say they are not performing as well as their counterparts when they are not given the same opportunity?

In Maryland, right next door, we have wide disparities on what is being spent in one district versus another. We have in the city of Baltimore 123 young people who had the opportunity to take AP courses; but in Montgomery County, the wealthiest suburb, 5,000 students had the opportunity to take AP courses.