

“BAND OF BROTHERS”: THE
STORY OF EASY COMPANY, 101ST
AIRBORNE DIVISION

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, it was during the early morning hours prior to the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944 that the men of Easy Company parachuted into Normandy. Company E, as was their official designation, was part of the 101st Airborne Division that carried out many objectives during World War II. Their acts of heroism begin with their participation in Operation Market Garden and continue on to the climactic Battle of the Bulge. Their service continued through Germany, ending with the capture of “Eagle’s Nest,” Adolf Hitler’s mountain fortress. Their brave deeds, documented in Stephen Ambrose’s book, “Band of Brothers” is now an HBO television mini-series.

On Monday, September 24, 2001, we had the opportunity to meet many of the great members of Easy Company. They came from far and wide to share, with Members of Congress, their story of defending freedom across Europe. In these trying times, their story is an inspiration to the men and women of the Armed Forces.

Last evening we watched in a special screening of the television mini-series as Easy Company landed behind the German battlements and took out an artillery battery that was firing on the Allied forces at Utah Beach. By destroying four 105mm guns, and killing or running off 60 soldiers, Easy Company significantly contributed to the successful landing of Allied forces on D-Day. Because of the overwhelming success of this mission, Easy Company’s maneuvers are still studied at West Point today.

Those Members of Congress who represent the veterans of Easy Company were privileged to speak briefly of these heroes. It is my pleasure to represent Major Dick Winters. He was the commanding officer of Easy Company, and perhaps best represented the heroism of Easy Company through his courage, character, and charisma. Unfortunately, Dick could not make the event from his home in Hershey, Pennsylvania, but he sent me his remarks which I was honored to read.

Here are the kind words written by Major Winters about his fellow soldiers, “In 1942, I was assigned by Colonel Sink to Company E. Ever since then the men of Company E have been my buddies in combat, my friends, my family—forever. I shall never forget them.”

At the conclusion of the event, everyone in attendance rose in applause for several minutes to praise the heroic efforts of Easy Company. Among Members of Congress, top military personnel and guests alike, dry eyes were few and far between.

The story of Easy Company is testament to the Allied forces’ fight for freedom in World War II. Today, we benefit from their sacrifices made nearly sixty years ago, and for that, we are all eternally grateful. I know that the House of Representatives joins me in honoring these brave soldiers. Let us never forget their story.

WISR 680 AM

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, during the past 60 years, we have gone to war four times, landed on the moon, seen the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall. During the past 60 years, presidents have been shot and assassinated, computers were invented, presidents resigned and were impeached and the pope was shot. During the past 60 years, we’ve added two states to the union and amended the U.S. Constitution six times.

During the past 60 years, WISR 680 AM has kept residents of Butler County up to date on those events and more, becoming a part of the community in the process. WISR brought visits to Butler County by figures such as First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and presidential candidate John F. Kennedy into people’s homes as well as provided an outlet for opinions by local residents.

WISR was licensed to broadcast by the Federal Communications Commission on Sept. 26, 1941. It was one of the first radio stations in northwestern Pennsylvania to focus on regional, local and community news as well as broadcast local editorials. It was also the first in the area to develop a local talk radio format. Hosts such as Dave Malarkey and before him Larry Berg offered the community a valuable outlet for the views.

The Rosenblum family owned the station for 55 years and the station call letters stand for Isaac Samuel Rosenblum, the father of the station founder, David. As a local, family run station, the station has supported and continues to back countless charity and community events.

I join the Butler area community in congratulating WISR for delivering quality news and talk radio to the area for 60 years. As a radio station, WISR was not only responsible for delivering the news but also took on an important role in shaping our community. I hope that the future allows many, many more generations of Butler area residents to learn to tune into to WISR.

HONORING TWO REMARKABLE INDIVIDUALS DURING HISPANIC HERITAGE WEEK

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, a wonderful thing about our country is how we celebrate each other in art, custom, food and friendship.

A “nation of immigrants” might have been blighted had Pilgrims not learned from Native Americans. Proof? Check the menu for the first Thanksgiving Dinner.

Now almost everyone samples each other’s traditional dishes, catches the color and feeling of each other’s special days, senses the human goodness in each heritage and faith. This is how strangers turn into neighbors in so many ways that our ways of getting along have become unique in the world.

It is so American no one else even comes close.

Now we are joyfully in another such season of sharing and appreciation.

On September 17, 1968, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives adopted House Joint Resolution 1299, creating an Hispanic Heritage Week. Twenty years later, Public Law 90–498 was enacted expanding the Week to a month eventually stretching from September 15 through October 15 each year. The period includes the anniversary of Mexican Independence and “birthdays” of many other Latin American countries.

Cultural sharing will take many forms across the United States of America. At heart, it will reveal itself in real people not only glad they are who they are but glad to be here.

LOS AMIGOS OF ORANGE COUNTY, persons who have met weekly for 23 years to talk over community concerns in my district, asked that the two following stories be shared. Millions of people create a blur but sketches of two—a book creator and a bookseller—are offered in the hope they will convey very personal, human glimpses of America’s lively, evolving Hispanic Heritage.

[From *La Voz*, Nov. 16, 2000]

LIFE’S AN OPEN BOOK? CRACK IT

(By Galal Kernahan)

Miami? A big city in Florida? A river in Ohio?

Or is it someplace baked and a little bleached? Is it where the sun is a presence, winds sometimes mutter and deer browse on the other side of the hill? Is it where you could read the day away in an outhouse with no more interruption than a buzzing fly?

Rueben, the first of the five boys and two girls of Cipriano Marfinez and Rometia Rivas de Martinez, was born in Miami, Arizona, in 1940. There he grew to young manhood. His parents were transplanted Chihuahuenses. One took root. The other didn’t.

The children attached their mother to that small copper town, but their father blew away on the notes of an alto saxophone. He made it big with Big Bands like the Glenn Miller Orchestra. By the time the road and that life got old and he got old, his boys and girls were men and women who remembered him no more clearly than he did them.

Rueben came to love books during his school years. He took them everywhere. They took him everywhere. All in Miami.

When he was 10, the town, like other Southwestern copper towns, was coming off its World War II-hyped mining high. By the time he graduated from high school, nothing was being hauled to the smelter anymore. At 18, he went to East Los Angeles.

Beside what books taught him, what did Miami teach? What has stayed with him? “My grade school was segregated to Apaches and Mexicans, but the teachers were good. I loved shop,” remembers Rueben. “And Miami? It was so ugly, it was beautiful.”

In California, he worked and read, got married and read, attended East Los Angeles Community College and read, had children and read and got divorced and read. Also, he raised three teenagers and read and lived to tell the tale.

Then he read and read and looked up to see he had nine grandchildren.

Rueben is more than 40 years a barber, more than 25 in Santa Ana. There were places and times in human history when barbers probably ran everything. They certainly knew everything that went on.

If they loved reading, too, they were formidable forces in the life of their communities. Rueben is a formidable force in the Orange County Latino community and far beyond.

Locally? Consider that most Latino candidates for any political office hold fundraisers in his Santa Ana bookstore. And now