

MAJOR HENRY A. COMMISKEY, SR.
POST OFFICE BUILDING

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE TAYLOR

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to present H.R. 2438, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 115 West Pine Street in Hattiesburg, Mississippi as the "Major Henry A. Commiskey, Sr. Post Office Building". The Hattiesburg City Council and the Forrest County Board of Supervisors requested through official resolutions that the downtown Hattiesburg Post Office be named for the late Major Commiskey, who received the Medal of Honor during his lifetime.

Henry Alfred Commiskey, Sr. was born in Hattiesburg on January 10, 1927. He attended the Sacred Heart School there and worked as a brakeman on the Illinois Central Railroad before joining the Marine Corps on January 12, 1944, two days after his 17th birthday. Commiskey participated in the February 1945 invasion of Iwo Jima during World War II, where he earned the Purple Heart for being wounded in action. He also received the Letter of Commendation for "exhibiting high qualities of leadership and courage in the face of a stubborn and fanatical enemy."

Commiskey remained in the Corps after the war and rose to the rank of staff sergeant to become a drill instructor at the Parris Island boot camp in South Carolina. He later graduated from Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a second lieutenant on September 10, 1949. He volunteered for combat service at the outbreak of the Korean War and was sent to Korea with the 1st Marine Regiment in August of 1950, where he participated in the Inchon landing. A few days later, on September 20, 1950, Commiskey earned the Medal of Honor for his heroism atop Hill 85 near Yongdungp'o, Korea, on the outskirts of Seoul.

Serving as a platoon leader in Company C, First Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division (reinforced), Second Lieutenant Commiskey spearheaded the assault that was ordered on forces that were well dug in on Hill 85. Charging up the steep slopes on the run into heavy enemy machine-gun and small arms fire, he ran ahead of his men and was the first to reach the crest of their objective. Armed only with a pistol, he jumped into a hostile machine-gun emplacement occupied by five enemy soldiers, engaged in hand-to-hand combat, and killed them all. He then moved to the next emplacement, where he killed two more enemy soldiers before leading his men on further to route their adversaries and take the hill.

Although Commiskey miraculously escaped harm during the assault on Hill 85, he was wounded a week later and then again on December 8, 1950. He was then returned to the United States for hospitalization and later promoted to first lieutenant in June of 1951. Commiskey was presented the Medal of Honor by President Truman at a White House ceremony on August 1, 1951, becoming the first Marine to be so awarded for extraordinary heroism in the Korean conflict. Commiskey then became a student naval aviator in Sep-

tember of 1951 at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida. He received his wings at Corpus Christi, Texas in June of 1953 and later completed jet training at El Toro, California. He was promoted to captain in July of 1953. In April of 1954, Commiskey returned to Korea as a pilot with Marine Attack Squadron 21, Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Commiskey returned to the United States in September of 1954 and continued his service as a recruitment officer and as an instructor for the Marine Corps School at Quantico, Virginia. He was promoted to the rank of major in July of 1959 and retired from active duty in August of 1966. Major Henry A. Commiskey, Sr. died in Meridian, Mississippi on August 15, 1971.

Last year, I originally introduced House Resolution 5495, a bill that was identical to the measure currently before us. The previous bill passed the House at the very end of the 107th Congress, but did not make it through the Senate before time ran out and the session ended. Due to that fact, I then reintroduced the bill for the 108th Congress, and it was designated with a new number. The entire Mississippi House delegation signed on as original cosponsors of both bills, for which I am very grateful. I also thank both the majority and minority leadership of the House of Representatives and the Government Reform Committee for shepherding the bill through the House once more.

On behalf of our Nation, the State of Mississippi, the citizens of the Hattiesburg area, the local officials there, and the Commiskey family, it is my privilege to present this legislation to the United States Congress in honor of Major Henry A. Commiskey, Sr., his sacrifice, and his awe-inspiring service to his country.

RECOGNIZING CONTINUED IMPORTANCE OF TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP AND PROMOTING STRONGER RELATIONS WITH EUROPE

SPEECH OF

HON. JO ANN DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 2003

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 390, which passed the House last night, and wish to commend the Chairman of the Europe Subcommittee for his efforts to bring this important measure to the House.

As the Chairman noted, the recent debate over Iraq was a particularly difficult time for overall transatlantic relations. As my Colleague correctly pointed out, it is important to recognize that this dispute was with four nations in particular and not the whole of Europe. France and Germany are important friends and allies and it was particularly frustrating that we were having such a disagreement with them. However, we must not ignore the contributions and sacrifices the British, the Italians, the Spanish, the Poles and the many others who did stand beside us, provided during this difficult and dangerous time. And while some of us may have consumed "freedom fries" and avoided Bordeaux wines or Bittberger beer, many of us were happy to

travel to Prague for the NATO summit or to Rome for the Legislators' Dialogue in order to assess the state of our relationship and to work on ways to reenergize the U.S.-European partnership.

Now, however, it is time to move on. We must work to reestablish the kind of strong transatlantic relationship with all of Europe which is necessary if we are to deal effectively with those international issues which effect us on both sides of the Atlantic. The resolution before us recognizes that both the United States and Europe face serious challenges at home and abroad and that to meet these challenges we must adapt and strengthen the transatlantic partnership into a transatlantic community of action. As the resolution correctly states, the transatlantic relationship is much too important to allow an issue such as Iraq, however difficult, to result in both the United States and Europe drifting apart or worse, becoming rivals.

As Chair of the U.S. delegation to the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue, I am especially pleased that the resolution mentions the importance of this organization and the kind of dialogue the TLD promotes with our counterparts in the European Parliament. As my Colleagues may know, in July, after the bitter debate over Iraq subsided, we had a very successful meeting of the TLD. During that meeting, both delegations pledged to rededicate ourselves to strengthening the transatlantic partnership by renewing our pursuit of common values such as democracy, human rights and open markets and societies and by reinforcing inter-parliamentary contacts.

At that meeting we also agreed to try to enhance the effectiveness of our operations by establishing new consultative mechanisms which would serve as an "early-warning" system designed to allow intensified dialogue on possible contentious issues at early stages of the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, next week our Colleagues from the Parliament will be coming to the United States to continue our discussions. I believe we all understand and appreciate the importance of this dialogue and the need to continue to support stronger relations with Europe and its Union through mechanisms such as these Parliamentary exchanges.

I urge passage of this resolution.

COMMENDING THE AMERICAN VITILIGO RESEARCH FOUNDATION

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 2003

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a little-known but debilitating disease that profoundly impacts its victims.

Vitiligo is an auto-immune disorder which causes the skin to lose its pigmentation, resulting in the development of white patches around the bodies of those afflicted with it. Although its physical effects are neither as severe nor life-threatening as some diseases, vitiligo profoundly impacts the social and psychological well-being of its victims, particularly children and African-Americans.

Vitiligo may physically be painless, but the discrimination it precipitates hurts nonetheless. The more than 5 million American men,