

for a more civilized future, a hope that "never again" will the world look the other way in the face of such evil.

For if there is one thing the world has learned, it is that peaceful nations cannot close their eyes or sit idly by in the face of genocide. It took a war, the most terrible war in history, to end the horrors that we remember today. It was a war that Winston Churchill called "The Unnecessary War" because he believed that a firm and concerted policy by the peaceful nations of the world could have stopped Hitler early on. But it was a war that became necessary to save the world from what he correctly called "the abyss of a new dark age, made more sinister . . . by the lights of a perverted science."

This truth we also know—that war, even a just and noble war, is horrible for everyone it touches. War is not something Americans seek, nor something we will ever grow to like. Throughout our history, we have waged it reluctantly, but we have pursued it as a duty when it was necessary.

Our own Civil War was one of the bloodiest the world had known up to its time. And it too was fought to end a great evil. As that war was nearing its bloody close, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to the nation hoping that the war would end soon, but saying that it would continue if necessary "until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword."

Two months after the Battle of Antietam, where the number of American dead was four times the number that fell on the beaches of Normandy, President Lincoln told members of the U.S. Congress that those who "hold the power, and bear the responsibility" could not escape the burden of history, "We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

Americans have fought often to liberate others from slavery and tyranny in order to protect our own freedom. Cemeteries from France to North Africa, with their rows of Christian crosses and Stars of David, attest to that truth.

When Americans have taken up arms, it was believing that, in the end, it is never just about us alone, knowing that woven into our liberty is a mantle of responsibility, knowing that the whole world benefits when people are free to realize their dreams and develop their talents.

Today, we remember the people who fell victim to tyranny because of their political views, their heritage or their religion, in places where human slaughter was perfected as an efficient and systematic industry of state. We can only imagine how different our lives would be had those millions of lost souls had the chance to live out their dreams.

Today, we also pay tribute to all the soldiers of many Allied nations who participated in the liberation of the Nazi death camps, for their courage and sacrifice and for the care they provided to the survivors.

We are proud of the role of our own American soldiers, the so-called "young old men" of 19 and 20 years of age, who fought through their own horrors at Anzio and Normandy and Bastogne and who thought that a world of evil no longer held surprises for them, but who were astonished to the deepest part of their souls when they confronted the human ruins of Nazi tyranny in the spring of 1945.

Just one week before the end of the war in Europe, the U.S. Seventh Army would reach Dachau. Lt. Colonel Walther Fellenz described what he saw as the 42nd Infantry Division neared the main gate of that concentration camp, it was "a mass of cheering, half-mad men, women and children . . . their liberators had come! The noise was beyond comprehension," he said. And "our hearts wept as we saw the tears of happiness fall from their cheeks."

Sensing the approach of victory, General Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander, was unprepared for what greeted him at the camp at Ohrdruf as he walked past thousands of corpses in shallow graves and saw the instruments of torture used by the SS, he was moved to anger and to action.

He cabled Army Chief of Staff George Marshall words which are now engraved at the entrance of the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.: "The things I saw," Eisenhower wrote, "beggared description . . . the visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were so overpowering." He insisted on looking into one particular room that contained piles of skeletal, naked men, killed through starvation. "I made the visit deliberately," he said, "in order to be in a position to give firsthand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations to 'propaganda.'"

Eisenhower wanted others to see this crime against humanity. So, he urged American Congressmen and journalists to go to the camps. He directed that a film record the reality and that it be shown widely to German citizens. And he ordered that as many GIs as possible see the camps. American soldiers became what one writer called "reluctant archeologists of man's most inhuman possibilities."

Jack Hallet was one of the soldiers who liberated Dachau found that it was difficult to separate the living from the dead. As he looked closer at a stack of corpses, he noticed that deep within the pile, he could see sets of eyes still blinking.

Dan Evers was in the 286th Combat Engineer Battalion at Dachau: "The gas chamber door was closed," he recalled, "but the ovens were still open. There was a sign in German overhead which said: 'Wash your hands after work.'"

Another soldier wrote to his parents, asking them to keep his letter, because "it is my personal memorandum of something I personally want to remember but would like to forget."

From Ebensee, Captain Timothy Brennan of the Third Cavalry wrote to his wife and child: "You cannot imagine that such things exist in a civilized world."

From Mauthausen in Austria, Sergeant Fred Friendly wrote to his mother: "I want you to never forget or let our disbelieving friends forget, that your flesh and blood saw this . . . Your son saw this with his own eyes and in doing so aged 10 years."

Beyond the shock and horror, American and Russian and other Allied soldiers who liberated the camps were also witnesses to hope. Tomorrow, you will have the opportunity to hear an American GI tell one such story. Tomorrow Lt. John Withers, of the all African-American Quartermaster Truck Company 3512, will speak about how he and his soldiers changed the lives of two young boys forever who were rescued from Dachau.

Yet, as proud as we are of the role our soldiers played in the liberation of the concentration camps, we know that we all arrived too late for most of the victims.

Just last week, a great Polish patriot passed away. During World War II, Jan Nowak, who was not Jewish, risked his life to leave Poland to bring news of the Nazi genocide to the West. I was privileged to meet Jan Nowak in his Warsaw apartment just three months ago. He recalled that after the war when he was able to see the records of his secret meetings with Western officials, there was no mention of what he had told them about Poland's Jews. Nowak put it down to "wartime inconvenience." He was telling truths that people wanted not to know.

And, despite our fervent promises never to forget, we know that there have been far too

many occasions in the six decades since the liberation of the concentration camps, when the world ignored inconvenient truths so that it would not have to act, or acted too late.

We have agreed today to set aside contemporary political issues, in order to reflect on those events of sixty years ago in a spirit of unanimity. But let us do so with a unanimous resolve to give real meaning to those words "never forget." And with a resolve that even when we may find it too difficult to act, we at least have an obligation at least to face the truth.

Last Thursday, as he began his second term in office, President George Bush expressed his belief that our nation's interests cannot be separated from the aspirations of others to be free from tyranny and oppression. "America's vital interests," he said, "and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time."

Americans remain committed to working with all nations of good will to alleviate the suffering of our time. And we remain hopeful that when generations to come look back on this time they will see that we in it were dedicated to fulfilling the pledge that arose from the ashes of man's inhumanity toward man—Never again.

Never again and never forget. We must keep remembering to continue to speak about unspeakable things. So we commend the United Nations for a remembrance of the Holocaust befitting its significance in human history. In doing so, perhaps we can help avoid such inhumanity and the warfare that is so often the result.

Thank you very much.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ARTHUR BENSON

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and memory of a great Western New Yorker; businessman, community leader, and friend, Mr. Art Benson of Springville, NY. Mr. Benson was 75 years old when he died of cancer on January 21, 2005.

Art Benson was a man who held himself to the highest standard of excellence in service to his community and generosity in his personal life. He served as President of the U.S. Route 219 Association and the Springville Chamber of Commerce. In 1977, he was awarded the title "Citizen of the Year" based on his demonstration of the difference one person can make in his community. In his private life he was committed to helping others battle alcoholism with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Art's success came from his optimism, his passion for civic involvement, and his magnetic personality. He spent his youth working as a bellhop in Buffalo's Hotel Statler, befriending famous actors and politicians that came to stay. President Truman thought so highly of Art that he appointed him his personal aide during his 1948 Presidential campaign.

In his adult life, Art had a long and successful career in the auto sales business. He purchased a Ford dealership in 1965, which he sold in 1982 to become Emerling Ford and Mercury. Following the sale of his business, he worked as a sales representative for Towne Lincoln-Mercury in Orchard Park, NY.

The success that Art's work ethic and affable nature led to in the private sector brought him even more success in the public sector. A strong believer in the economic benefits that expanding U.S. route 219 would bring to western New York, politicians and development officials nicknamed Art, "Mr. 219." He was the road's most influential advocate, making public statements on its expansion even in his final days.

His leadership did not end with route 219. As president of the Springville Chamber of Commerce, he pressed for the creation of Springville's Pre-School Learning Center for the Handicapped. He was also a driving force behind the establishment of the Town of Concord Industrial Development Agency.

As I noted earlier, perhaps some of Art's greatest contributions to his community were made in his private life. A former alcoholic, Art beat the disease 37 years ago and has been a friend and counselor to other recovering alcoholics ever since. According to his son, Michael, Art would do anything in his power to help alcoholics, even when it meant leaving home in the middle of the night to offer support.

But the aspect of Art's life which made him most proud was his family. Art was the husband of the former Marie Chute, who passed away in 2000, and is survived by his sons Michael, Arthur, Robert, and Claytus, daughters Marie Pitello, Colleen Benson, and Kathleen Benson. Arthur also leaves behind his great prides and joy—his 16 grandchildren.

Citizens of Art Benson's caliber are hard to come by. Whether it was through the gifts he was born with or his personal struggles, he consistently found ways to give to his community. Many in western New York will miss his leadership, enthusiasm, and friendship. I was proud to call Art Benson my friend and I am pleased to honor his memory today.

CONGRATULATIONS TO McMINN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, this month, the McMinn County, Tennessee Soil and Water Conservation District will celebrate its 50th anniversary. This milestone is much more than a birthday. It is a celebration of a voluntary conservation program that has involved more than 30,000 farmers, and other land users.

This program has benefited thousands of East Tennesseans by implementing flood prevention plans, creating recreation areas, and putting many other soil conservation projects in place.

I have enjoyed working with the McMinn County Social and Water Conservation District in the sixteen years I have served in the House. My father also worked closely with this program when he served in this seat from 1964 to 1988.

Mr. Speaker, let me again congratulate the McMinn County Soil and Water Conservation for fifty years of excellent service to east Tennessee. I have enclosed a written history of the program that I would like to call to the attention of my fellow members and other readers of the RECORD.

THE HISTORY OF THE McMINN COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The McMinn County Soil Conservation District was founded on December 28, 1954. The original charter members were Rex Moses, Clarence Miller, Carl D. Stager, J. G. Wilson, and J. K. Pickens.

Conservation Districts are local government subdivisions established under state law to carry out a program for the conservation, use and development of soil, water and related resources.

In 1972, The McMinn County Soil Conservation District, along with nine other sister districts, took an active part in the drive to establish the ten county Southeast Tennessee Resource Conservation and Development Districts. We met with other SCD Boards several times in making and submitting an application to the Secretary of Agriculture for and RC&D project. This project was approved and funded in September 1972. The Board asked for and received active support on this project from the County Council, City Governments, Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and others interested in the resources of McMinn County.

The Sweetwater Creek Watershed District was organized in 1958 by local landowners with the help of the three sponsoring organizations—McMinn, Monroe, Loudon Soil Conservation Districts. A flood prevention plan for the Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia and all the low-lying land along the Sweetwater Creek from its origin in McMinn County to the outlet at the Tennessee River in Loudon County was completed in 1970.

Sweetwater Creek Watershed Program is a local project with technical and financial assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture. The principal problems were floodwater and sediment damage to agricultural lands, industrial, commercial and residential properties and roads. There are 37,460 acres in this watershed.

With the help of the sponsoring districts the watershed board requested funding from the three counties and the City of Sweetwater for operational and maintenance expenses in the amount of \$6,600.00 annually. Funding was provided in 1974.

Congress authorized funding for the Sweetwater Creek Watershed Project in July 1972. Without the help of the Honorable John Duncan, Sr., the project would not have been funded.

The McMinn Board of Supervisors asked the County Council to budget \$600 per year for maintenance of dams on the Sweetwater project. The council was very happy to comply with this request.

Four flood retarding structures have been completed in McMinn County, channelization for the creek in the City of Philadelphia, and 9 miles of clearing and snagging of the creek between the Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia. The construction on the first flood retarding structure begins in October 1975. In 1989 the fourth flood retarding structure was completed. This was the final phase of the project for federal funding. The total cost of the work was 4.6 million dollars. Benefits to the area have been substantial. The Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia have not been flooded since the structures were built and the channelization complete.

Every year the watershed board maintains the flood retarding structures and the channel. The retarding structures are mowed an-

nually; any trees removed from the embankment, and eroding areas are seeded. The channel is inspected and cleared of any fallen trees, logs or trash that may cause problems. Sand bars are removed from the channel.

Benefits to the area have been substantial. The Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia have not been flooded since the structures were built and the channelization completed. Preventing damage to the agricultural, industrial, commercial and residential properties has saved millions of dollars.

The McMinn County Soil Conservation started Tree Day in March 1972. We gave away 10,000 white pines which were donated by Bowater. The District requested the assistance of the City of Athens to distribute the trees in 19—. Later, Arbor Day and the State Forest Service absorbed Tree Day. Citizens National Bank joined the District and City in sponsoring this event, which continues today.

The County Council requested the District assist in planning and implementing a nine-acre recreation area at the County Landfill. The District supplied tuff-cote Bermuda sprigs for the ball fields and supervised planting and land grading. The District Board assisted in three seminars on landfill operations, and site selection at the request of the County Council, for visiting county officials, schools, health departments, etc.

In 1982, the Chestuee Creek Special ACP Demonstration Area was co-sponsored by the Soil Conservation District. Approximately thirty-five thousand (35,000) acres of land in the McMinn County Soil Conservation District is within this watershed. At a dedication ceremony held in April, over 500 people from East and Middle Tennessee attended to close out this project. The Board of Supervisors was very proud to have had a part in the success of the Chestuee Creek project. This project brought over \$1,250,000 in federal funds to the area. Many conservation practices were installed by local farmers, which they would not have otherwise been able to accomplish.

The District signed a Memorandum of Understanding with McMinn County in March 1983. The Memorandum spells out the responsibilities of both parties in our joint conservation efforts. The district has been able to lead the state in many areas of conservation application because of the support of our County and City officials. The commitment to the conservation effort by these groups makes the job much easier and satisfying.

The orphan strip mines continued to be a problem in the county. The District completed an inventory of these mines in 1984. Special funds were requested to reclaim these areas through a Special ACP funding for critical area treatment. We are awaiting approval of this project.

Our Conservation District was pleased to have our local nominee named as a Five Star Farmer by TVA for outstanding soil conservation accomplishment. Lowry Dougherty won the award for the excellent progress to controlling erosion on his 240-acre dairy farm.

In 1984, the Upper Oostanaula Creek Special ACP Demonstration Area was co-sponsored by the Soil Conservation District. Approximately twelve thousand acres of land in the McMinn County Soil Conservation District is within this watershed. This is the second national project that has been approved for McMinn County. The Board of Supervisors was very proud to have had a part in the success of the Oostanaula Creek Project which brought over one million dollars in federal funds to the area. Many conservation practices were installed by local farmers, which they would not have otherwise been able to accomplish.