

business, automobile dealerships, marinas, restaurants, and most notably the houseboat industry where Jim and Mary Jo are recognized as the pioneers of the industry.

As successful as Mary Jo and Jim were in their business life, their real sense of pride and love was found in their family. They raised four children and nine grandchildren. Mary Jo, or "Mim" as her grandchildren call her, was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and the rock of the family. She was the heart, soul and guiding light helping to lead her children and grandchildren through the trials and tribulations of life. "Mim" was the eternal optimist always giving encouraging advice and making those around her a better person.

Mary Jo's other great love was for her church, First Baptist Church of Somerset. Jim and Mary Jo were married at First Baptist Church on April 4th, 1950. She was a lifelong member and taught the junior and senior girls Sunday school class. Mary Jo was instrumental in the construction of the new sanctuary for the church and was also the "Happy Birthday Voice" for First Baptist's outreach program.

In addition to raising her family and church duties, Mary Jo found time to be president of the local PTA and contribute in various ways to the educational system throughout her life. She also loved to sing and did so on local radio stations and at numerous weddings and funerals.

Mary Jo Sharpe was a graceful, friendly, caring, patriotic, beautiful woman. She believed that "positive things happen to positive people". Mary Jo was a Christian woman and an angel on earth and she is now basking in the glory of her Savior.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Mary Jo Sharpe. She will be sorely missed, but her legacy and character will continue to live on in the hearts and minds of her loving family and friends.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2008*

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker unfortunately last night, September 15, 2008, I was unable to cast my votes on H. Res. 1200, H. Con. Res. 390, and H.R. 6889, and wish the record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 589 on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 1200, honoring the dedication and outstanding work of military support groups across the country for their steadfast support of the members of our Armed Forces and their families, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 590 on suspending the rules and passing H. Con. Res. 390, honoring the 28th Infantry Division for serving and protecting the United States, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 591 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 6889, to extend the authority of the Secretary of Education to purchase guaranteed student loans for an additional year, and for other purposes, I would have voted "aye."

IN RECOGNIZING OF THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAVAL AIR STATION WHITING FIELD

### HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2008*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the 65th anniversary of Naval Air Station, NAS, Whiting Field. The anniversary was quietly marked by a simple cake-cutting ceremony attended by over 100 northwest Florida dignitaries, Navy and Marine Corps League representatives, military personnel, Government civilians, and other base employees on July 16, 2008. This ceremony celebrated a long-lasting friendship between the base and surrounding community and served to further forge their wonderful relationship for many years to come. A much larger, formal ceremony will be held on October 25, 2008.

According to historian and U.S. Navy Retired CDR Doug Seigfried, the 65-year-old NAS Whiting Field is the busiest field in the Training Command and home to Training Wing Five's three T-34C primary/intermediate maritime prop squadrons, two TH-57B/C Sea Ranger helicopter training squadrons and the helicopter and fixed-wing instructor instructional units. Eighty-three percent of all student Naval aviators conduct a portion of their initial flight training at Whiting, which averages over 350 flights a day.

Construction began on the largest of Pensacola's auxiliary fields in early 1943 and was completed in November. The new field, located 35 miles northeast of Pensacola and 6 miles north of Milton, was planned to incorporate two individual fields about a mile from one another with base facilities located between them. Both Whiting's North and South Fields featured four 6,000-foot runways, a large parking mat and two big red-brick hangars. Despite the fact that construction was not yet complete and assigned personnel were temporarily living in tents, the field was officially dedicated by RADM George D. Murray, commandant of the Naval Air Training Center, Pensacola, on July 16, 1943. In attendance at the ceremony was the recent widow of Captain Kenneth Whiting, Naval Aviator Number 16, for whom the field was named.

Fifteen days earlier, SNJs (the Navy's version of the North American T-6 Texan) of VN-3A and VN-3B from Chevalier and Saufley Fields had arrived at their new South Field home to inaugurate operations in basic and radio instrument instruction as part of the intermediate phase of the World War II training program. With the two fields completed, VN-8C and its large fleet of SNBs (Navy designated Beech Aircraft TC-45s) arrived at North Field from NAS Corry in November 1943. The squadron moved back to Corry in December 1944 and was replaced by operational training squadron VB4 OTU 4, flying Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberators. With all the multi-engine and basic instrument instruction conducted at the base, a large building was constructed to house the numerous Link trainers and six big Link celestial navigation trainers manned by WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service).

After the war, Whiting became a naval air station under control of the new Naval Air Advanced Training Command, Jacksonville, Flor-

ida. Based at Whiting from 1946 to almost the end of 1947 were VB-2 and VB-4 advanced training units flying Consolidated PB4Y-2 Privateers and Lockheed PV-2 Venturas; the advanced carrier qualification and Landing Signals Officer training unit flying F6F Hellcats, SB2C Helldivers, TBM Avengers and SNJ-3/5Cs; and two photo training units flying the PB4Y-1P and F6F-5P.

Over the next several years, Whiting survived through reorganization of its missions and promotion of its newer facilities and longer runways. The first jets assigned to the Training Command were sent to Whiting Field in July 1948. From 1951 to 1956 Whiting Field devoted its total efforts to primary instruction. It was during this period that the Training Command introduced new aircraft, consolidated bases and made major syllabus changes to respond to the Navy's predominantly jet-equipped air wings and squadrons. In addition, in December 1959, the multi-engine training group, METG, the pre-helicopter instrument phase, moved its operations to Whiting from Forrest Sherman NAS Pensacola.

During the 1960s, Whiting concentrated on T-28 basic prop training and in January 1965 began parallel T-28 basic instructional programs due to the increased number of students required to meet the augmented pilot training rate prompted by the Vietnam war. In 1965, the field underwent a major facelift as new living spaces replaced old WW II-era "splintervilles," together with a new training building and upgrades to both fields' runways and ramp areas.

In January 1972, as a result of yet another major reorganization of the Training Command, Whiting Field became the home of Training Air Wing 5. After 30 years of working with fixed-wing aviators, Whiting began rotary-wing activities. In November 1977, the first of the new T-34C Turbo Mentors arrived at Training Air Wing 5 to replace the primary-phase T-34B and the basic-phase T-28. By 1983, the last T-28 had been retired and all three North Field squadrons conducted primary and intermediate prop training. In the 1990s, VT-3's Red Knights were designated as the first joint primary training squadron. The era of joint Navy/USAF flight training had begun.

Madam Speaker, no one can deny the honorable and significant contributions NAS Whiting Field has made since it was dedicated in 1943. On behalf of the United States Congress and a grateful Nation, I wish to thank the men and women on NAS Whiting Field, both past and present, for 65 years of unwavering support of our Nation's defense.

#### TRIBUTE TO HOWARD DUVALL, JR.

### HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2008*

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a tremendous public servant, Howard Duvall, Jr. After 21 years of stellar service and visionary leadership, Howard is retiring from the South Carolina Municipal Association. His retirement is a great loss to the cities and towns of South Carolina, but we thank Howard for his dedication for so many years.