

Monti saw a group of fighters closing in fast. When they came within 30 feet, he threw a grenade in their path. He then took a head count. Private Brian Bradbury, who had been near the tree line, was missing.

A DARK ENDING

Monti called out for him over the din of the battle. He called again. Finally, the 22-year-old from Lowville, N.Y., replied weakly that he was badly injured and couldn't move. He was lying about 30 feet away, where Monti couldn't see him, but directly in the enemy's sights.

Monti told Bradbury he was coming to get him. He handed off his radio, tightened the chin strap of his helmet, and ran out into the open. The woods, about 100 feet past Bradbury, immediately erupted with more gunfire and RPGs.

Moving low and fast, according to the testimony of his fellow soldiers, Monti got within less than a dozen feet of Bradbury before he had to dive behind the low stone wall where Lybert lay dead. After a brief pause, he made another attempt but the shooting was even more intense. He scrambled back behind the low wall.

He prepared to make another attempt to save Bradbury, this time asking some of his men to cover him with more gun fire trained on the woods. But as he lunged toward Bradbury the third time, an RPG exploded in his path.

The blast blew off his legs, but Monti struggled to get back to the stone wall, his men calling out in encouragement. With his last breaths, his soldiers later reported, Monti said he made his peace with God. And right before he died he asked them to tell his family he loved them.

As darkness fell over the valley, the mortar rounds Monti called for began to hit the enemy positions. US aircraft also dropped several bombs into the woods.

"Monti's selfless act of courage rallied the patrol to defeat the enemy attack," the Army concluded.

It was dark by the time Bradbury was pulled to safety and treated by the medic. A helicopter arrived but couldn't land because of the rough terrain. Staff Sergeant Heath Craig, 28, a medic from Severn, Md., was lowered to Bradbury, who had a team of doctors waiting to treat him back at the base. But as they were being hoisted up, the winch broke. Both fell to their deaths.

Berkoff remembered standing in front of the field hospital and thinking, "Could anything possibly go right today?"

Monti was posthumously promoted to sergeant first class.

As she prepares to accept the Medal of Honor from the president for her son's sacrifice, Janet Monti says she can't help but wonder what Jared would think about it. "He would say this medal isn't just for me. He would want to share this medal with everybody who died that day."

HONORING RICHARD KUCKENBECKER

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Richard Kuckenbecker upon being named by the Madera District Chamber of Commerce as a 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award Honoree. Mr. Kuckenbecker will be recognized on Wednesday, August 26, 2009 at the Fifth An-

nual Lifetime Achievement Awards and Installation Dinner.

Richard Kuckenbecker was born in Sanger, California. At the age of five, he began to spend time in his father's business, Kuckenbecker Tractor Company. As a young man, he would assist by sweeping the floors, cleaning the lavatory and completing tasks that needed to be done around the shop. Upon graduating from high school, Mr. Kuckenbecker attended Fresno State, where he played baseball. Just shy of completing his Bachelor's Degree, he left school and returned to the family business. Mr. Kuckenbecker was twenty-one years old when he took over Kuckenbecker Tractor Company, he was the youngest tractor dealer in the nation. During college he met Lynn Bashian, and in May 1964 they were married and promptly moved to Madera from Fresno. Kuckenbecker Trucking Company has been in the family for sixty-five years. Since Mr. Kuckenbecker took the reigns the business has changed locations and expanded to include a dealership in Fresno in 1982.

Mr. Kuckenbecker has always been dedicated to his community. He is a founding member and President of the Madera County Ag Boosters, serves on the board of the California State University, Fresno Ag One. He is a member of the Far West Equipment Dealers Association, National Association of Farm Equipment Dealers, Ford Motor Company Dealer Council, Madera Historical Society. Mr. Kuckenbecker served as a judge for the Fresno Bee Excellence in Business award. He has also won the Madera District Fair Blue Ribbon award. For his civic duty, he served on the Madera Planning Commission. For all that he has done for the community, Mr. Kuckenbecker was selected as the first Madera District Chamber of Commerce Agribusiness Person of the Year. He has received the Fresno County Farm Bureau Distinguished Service award and the Fresno Bee Excellence in Business Award for Agriculture.

Mr. Kuckenbecker and his wife Lynn have three children and five grandchildren, with another grandchild on the way. He continues to own and operate Kuckenbecker Trucking Company in Madera and Fresno.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Richard Kuckenbecker upon being honored as the Madera Chamber of Commerce 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Kuckenbecker many years of continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHASE SIMMONS

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to thank a member of my staff who is leaving us to move back to "our" home state of Texas. After earning a degree in Psychology from Texas A&M University, Chase Simmons came to Washington and spent the last 4 years here on Capitol Hill. He served as a Senior Staff Assistant for the Committee on Energy and Commerce and joined the Committee on Science and Technology in 2007 as

our Committee Clerk. Chase first came to Capitol Hill in 2005 serving as an intern in my office.

Chase has worked hard to help me serve the people of the 4th District of Texas and assisted the Members of Congress serving on the Committee on Science and Technology.

I thank him for his efforts and wish him well in the future.

AGAINST THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE OTEEN POST OFFICE IN ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, as the son of a rural postal carrier, I was raised with the United States Postal Service as an integral part of my community, my family, and my life. I grew up understanding the vital role a rural post office can play in terms of jobs, small businesses, and local economies. Today the Postal Service is in jeopardy. With increasing reliance on electronic communication, fewer and fewer citizens are using standard mail to send and receive correspondence.

To counter the reduction in usage and their enormous deficit, the United States Postal Service has been forced to implement difficult cost-cutting measures. Among these measures is the consolidation of numerous post office branches throughout the country. In my postal region alone, the Mid-Carolinas District, 6 of the 80 post offices that service the area have been closed in the past year. The Post Master General estimates that over the next year, approximately 300 post offices nationwide will be forced to shut their doors. This will result in job losses and reduced community access to postal services for individuals and businesses.

I am particularly concerned about the Oteen Post Office in Asheville, which is currently under review for consolidation in my district. There has been tremendous local resistance to the possible closing of the Oteen Post Office, especially because the facility is located directly across the street from the Charles George Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The VA hospital is reliant on the Oteen Post Office to meet the correspondence needs of its patients, as well as the critical administrative needs of the medical center staff. For example, the Oteen facility provides fee-based presorting services to 18 different departments of the VA hospital and early mail pick-up to expedite the delivery of vital medical paperwork. Should the facility close, employees of the VA hospital and citizens in the area would have to drive almost 14 miles roundtrip to access the nearest retail postal facility.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that many elderly and rural citizens, poor people and people without permanent residences rely solely on post office boxes to receive their mail. By closing the Oteen Post Office, as with many post offices around the country, we are complicating access to these post office boxes and putting further strain on our veterans, senior citizens, and those with limited means.

Consolidation of post offices is not the best solution to this crisis. In many instances, it is detrimental. Rather than shutting post office