

The Senator from Florida, Mr. LEMIEUX.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 99-498, as amended by Public Law 110-315, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, appoints the following individuals to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance:

David Gruen of Wyoming.

William Luckey of Kentucky.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### THE TENACIOUS WARRIOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, America is about people. Who we are and what we are is because of the people who are Americans. They are individuals who have lived and died and influenced the rest of us because of their tenacious spirit and determination.

Madam Speaker, I am a history fan. I love American history. I also love Texas history. Not the history of dates and movements, but the history of the lives of individual Americans who have made a difference.

Roy Benavidez was one of those Americans. Roy Benavidez was born in south Texas in a small town called Cuero on August 5, 1935. He was the son of a sharecropper. He was an orphan, and he had mixed blood of Yaqui Indian and Hispanic. He was raised by his uncle after he lost his own family, and eventually he dropped out of school when he was 15. He was a migrant farm worker to take care of his family. He worked all over Texas and part of Colorado in the sugar beet fields and the cotton fields.

Eventually he decided to join the Texas National Guard and then the United States Army in 1955. He joined up in Houston, Texas. And in 1965, he was sent to Vietnam as a member of the 82nd Airborne.

While serving as an adviser to the South Vietnamese Army, he stepped on a land mine in South Vietnam. U.S. Army doctors at Brooke Army Medical Center told him he would never walk again. But he did walk. And not only that, he volunteered and returned back to Vietnam as a staff sergeant in the Army Special Forces; we call them the Green Berets.

On May 2, 1968, his life and the lives of his fellow troopers changed forever. It is a story that is almost unbelievable.

On the morning of May 2, 1968, a 12-man Special Forces team was inserted into Cambodia to observe a large-scale North Vietnamese troop movement. They were eventually discovered by the

enemy. Most of the team members were very close friends of Roy Benavidez, who was the forward operating officer in Loc Ninh, Vietnam.

Three helicopters were sent to rescue the 12-man team, but they were unable to land because of the heavy enemy concentration. When a second attempt was made to reach the stranded team, Benavidez jumped on board one of the helicopters armed only with a bowie knife.

As the helicopters reached the landing zone, Benavidez realized the team members were likely too severely wounded to move to the helicopters, so by himself he ran through heavy small-arms fire to the wounded soldiers. He was wounded himself in the leg, the face, and the head in the process. He reorganized the team and signaled helicopters to land. Despite his injuries, Benavidez was able to carry off half the wounded men to the helicopters. He then collected the classified documents held by a now-dead team leader. As he completed this task, he was wounded again by an exploding grenade in the back, and then he was shot in the stomach.

At that moment, the waiting helicopter pilot was also mortally wounded, and the helicopter crashed. Benavidez ran to collect the stunned crash survivors and form a perimeter. He directed air support. He ordered another extraction attempt, and was wounded again when shot in the thigh. At this point he was losing so much blood from his face wounds that his vision became blurred. Finally, another helicopter landed and as Benavidez carried a wounded friend to it, he was clubbed in the head with a rifle butt by an enemy soldier and then bayoneted twice.

Madam Speaker, Benavidez was wounded in that one battle in that one day 37 times. He had seven gunshot wounds, he had mortar fragments in his back, and two bayonet wounds. But he saved the lives of eight of his fellow troopers.

Later he was presumed dead and zipped up in a body bag; but right before they zipped up the bag, he spit in the doctor's face letting the doctor know yes, he was still alive. Amazing people, these young guns of the Green Berets.

Madam Speaker, this is a photograph of Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez. He eventually recovered from all of those wounds and received the Distinguished Service Cross, and many years later Ronald Reagan presented him with the medal he wears around his neck in this photograph, the Congressional Medal of Honor. President Reagan stated here in Washington, D.C., on presentation of that medal that if this were a movie, no one would really believe it could ever happen. What Roy Benavidez did that day is unbelievable. I will insert the Medal of Honor citation for Roy Benavidez.

After he retired from the military, this seventh-grade dropout went

around America talking about the importance of education. He talked to young gang members, he talked to the Hispanic youth, telling them to stay in school and get an education. He was an amazing individual. A Navy ship has been named after him. Several elementary schools in Texas have been named after Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez, and even a toy company has issued the Roy Benavidez G.I. Joe action figure.

□ 1915

In Texas there are a disproportionately high number of Hispanic Americans who volunteer for the military. They are American Patriots. Some legal immigrants even join and serve in Iraq and Afghanistan in the hope they will become U.S. citizens. Madam Speaker, as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, one of those great Hispanic Americans was Roy Benavidez, and he lived the American dream the way he wanted to.

And that's just the way it is.

BENAVIDEZ, ROY P.

Citation: Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. Benavidez United States Army, who distinguished himself by a series of daring and extremely valorous actions on 2 May 1968 while assigned to Detachment B56, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Republic of Vietnam. On the morning of 2 May 1968, a 12-man Special Forces Reconnaissance Team was inserted by helicopters in a dense jungle area west of Loc Ninh, Vietnam to gather intelligence information about confirmed large-scale enemy activity. This area was controlled and routinely patrolled by the North Vietnamese Army. After a short period of time on the ground, the team met heavy enemy resistance, and requested emergency extraction. Three helicopters attempted extraction, but were unable to land due to intense enemy small arms and anti-aircraft fire. Sergeant Benavidez was at the Forward Operating Base in Loc Ninh monitoring the operation by radio when these helicopters returned to off-load wounded crewmembers and to assess aircraft damage. Sergeant Benavidez voluntarily boarded a returning aircraft to assist in another extraction attempt. Realizing that all the team members were either dead or wounded and unable to move to the pick-up zone, he directed the aircraft to a nearby clearing where he jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team. Prior to reaching the team's position he was wounded in his right leg, face, and head. Despite these painful injuries, he took charge, repositioning the team members and directing their fire to facilitate the landing of an extraction aircraft, and the loading of wounded and dead team members. He then threw smoke canisters to direct the aircraft to the team's position. Despite his severe wounds and under intense enemy fire, he carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the awaiting aircraft. He then provided protective fire by running alongside the aircraft as it moved to pick up the remaining team members. As the enemy's fire intensified, he hurried to recover the body and classified documents on the dead team leader. When he reached the leader's body, Sergeant Benavidez was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back. At nearly the same moment, the aircraft pilot was mortally wounded, and his helicopter crashed. Although in extremely critical condition due to his multiple wounds, Sergeant