

HONORING THE 102ND INFANTRY AND THE 250TH ENGINEER COMPANY OF THE CONNECTICUT ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the deployment of 102nd Infantry Battalion and the 250th Engineer Company. On November 15, 2009, Connecticut sent off 700 soldiers from the two Connecticut National Guard units to be deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The logistical and tactical work that the Connecticut soldiers will do in Iraq and Afghanistan is critical to the Nation's success in the two conflicts. The 102nd Infantry will deploy to Afghanistan to partner with the Afghan security forces to assist, train and mentor the Afghan Army, Police, and Border Police forces in order to strengthen, stabilize and legitimize the Government of Afghanistan. The 250th Engineer Company will work in Iraq to provide bridging support for theater mobility, and to ensure rapid emplacement of bridging assets in the event that routes in their area of operations become impassable.

The Connecticut National Guard currently has nearly 500 Soldiers and Airmen mobilized and deployed to Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan in support of counterterrorism missions. This is the largest single deployment of Connecticut Army National Guardsmen since the Korean War and will bring our total number of deployed Soldiers and Airmen to 1,200.

The 250th Engineer Company, commanded by Captain Charles Taylor of Hamden is based in my district out of New London. The unit's motto is "No Bridge too Far," which refers to its primary mission of supporting our combat forces by literally building bridges over otherwise inaccessible terrain and rivers. In Iraq, the 250th will be a part of the drawdown of our forces and equipment there—a massive, historic undertaking in the history of our military.

This will be no easy feat—about 3.1 million pieces of equipment of all sorts, over 100,000 vehicles, military and civilian, 24,000 short tons of ammunition, over 120,000 containers of supplies, and around 120,000 U.S. military personnel that have to be moved out of Iraq, mostly through Kuwait.

This past weekend, I had the honor of joining many of my colleagues in the Connecticut Congressional Delegation, state officials and Adjutant General Thaddeus Martin in a moving and well attended "send off" ceremony for the 102nd and 250th. The ceremony, of course, was one of mixed emotions. On the one hand, these men and women represent the best of what our State and Nation has to offer. They have trained and worked to be the very best at what they do—and we are so proud of them. However, on the other hand, Connecticut is sending its own to do a hard and dangerous job.

The eyes of Connecticut and the families of these soldiers are on them, eagerly awaiting their safe return. But soon, the eyes of the world will be on them. And all of us in Connecticut will be so proud to watch the work that they do. Their missions in Iraq and Af-

ghanistan are critical to America's mission to secure and keep the peace in the world's most troubled regions, and all of us from Connecticut are proud to say these dedicated men and women are our fellow citizens."

I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in honoring these men and women who defend our Nation every day. We thank them for their service and look forward to welcoming them home again after a successful deployment.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES EDWARD MCNEIL

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, the City of Mobile recently lost a dear friend with the passing of Charles Edward McNeil, and I rise today to pay tribute to his memory. Mr. McNeil was a remarkable businessman, active citizen and committed U.S. Army Air Force pilot. He will be remembered by all as a man devoted to his family, his faith, and his country.

A graduate of Marion Military Institute, Mr. McNeil later attended the University of Alabama before volunteering for the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. A decorated pilot, he was captured behind enemy lines after being shot down by the Germans and remained in captivity until the end of the war.

Coming home with two bronze stars, the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and two Purple Hearts, Mr. McNeil began a life of entrepreneurship that was as impressive as his dedication to his country.

His resume included a career with Protective Life Insurance Company, co-founder and director of Commercial Guaranty Bank, board member of SouthTrust Bank, and founding co-partner in the McNeil, Jackson and Ahrens Financial group. He also held membership in the Million Dollar Roundtable since 1946. But that was just the beginning.

Mr. McNeil also found the time to serve his community as president of the Mobile County School Board for no less than 17 years and he maintained active membership in many philanthropic, civic clubs and service agency boards.

An avid sportsman and outdoorsman, Mr. McNeil exemplified the indomitable spirit of our Gulf Coast community. His love of life and tireless devotion to uplifting the lives of so many around him will be missed.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering a dedicated and generous community leader and a dear friend. Our condolences go out to his wife, Evelyn Adelia Bell; his children, Millie McNeil, Marilyn Peyronni, Charles McNeil and John McNeil; and his seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Mobile—and indeed our entire state—lost a true leader and our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

RECOGNIZING IDA FIORELLA FOR HER UPCOMING BIRTHDAY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Ida Fiorella, a longtime Buffalo resident who will be celebrating her 95th birthday this December 26th.

Ida was born in Buffalo's West Side on December 26th, 1914. The daughter of Italian immigrants Joseph Pizzuto and Maria Cordaro Pizzuto, Ida attended Buffalo's public schools and went on to work in her family-owned grocery store at the intersection of Prospect and Virginia located in Buffalo, New York.

Ida's brother Russell Pizzuto, now deceased, served honorably and was wounded in World War II; he was the father of six children.

Ida and her family were parishioners at St. Anthony's Church where she married her husband, Vincent (Jimmy) Fiorella on November 11th, 1940. Together Ida and Jim raised their three children, Russell, Bonnie, and Joseph, on Buffalo's West Side. Their marriage spanned 50 years until Jim passed away on March 19th, 1991.

When her children were grown, Ida went on to a successful career in retail sales. She spent a number of years at Hengerer's downtown, then at the Sample Shop on Hertel Avenue, and finally at Joseph's on Delaware Avenue, all located in Buffalo.

Ida is a wonderful homemaker, avid Italian cook, and premier pie maker. One of her proudest accomplishments was encouraging all of her children to go on to receive a college education.

Ida loves meeting and entertaining people and is very independent. Even to this day she does all of her own cooking, baking, and only stopped driving after her car was no longer road worthy. Ida still attends church and is a very devoted Catholic.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Ms. Ida Fiorella as she approaches the celebration of her 95th birthday. I congratulate Ida for her many contributions to her family, friends, and community and wish her many more years of happiness.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF DRAUGAS

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Draugas newspaper on its 100th year of daily publication.

Draugas was founded in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in 1909 as a Lithuanian language Roman Catholic paper and moved to Chicago in 1916. The location changed a few times in its early years, but Draugas has been located at 4545 W. 63rd St. in Chicago since 1957. Many Lithuanian-Americans live on the Southwest Side of Chicago and in the surrounding suburbs I represent, and they greatly appreciate the reporting and cultural commentary that Draugas provides.