

HONORING A FAMILY'S
DEDICATED SERVICE TO AMERICA

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 16, 2010

Mr. —WOLF. Madam Speaker, this past weekend I had the privilege of visiting with the Piedmont Republican Women's Club (PRWC) which was celebrating its 50th anniversary. The PRWC, whose first president was Anita Brower, was founded in Fauquier County in 1960. They are a volunteer grassroots organization, with more than 80 members, affiliated with the National Federation of Republican Women and the Virginia Federation of Republican Women. Mrs. Patricia Rice was in attendance at the luncheon. She and her husband Scott Rice are the parents of six remarkable children who have served our country in immeasurable ways.

All six of the Rice children are currently serving or have served in the armed forces. Their commitment is extraordinary. The Rice family's story is one of unwavering strength and devotion to this country.

Rebecca L. Rice Johnson served five years in the Air Force during which time she attained the rank of senior airman. She also received the Air Force Commendation with Valor for her heroic efforts on the scene of a car accident. After serving in the Air Force she graduated from George Mason University and is now married to a Marine.

Sergeant Patrick McMahon Rice served as a radio tech from 1999–2003 and served in Iraq, fighting in the battle for An Nasiriyah for which he received a Presidential Unit Citation. After receiving an associate's degree he re-enlisted and is currently stationed at New River Air Station, North Carolina, with 2nd Platoon, Military Police Company, Marine Wing Support Group 2/7.

Mary Ann Rice was commissioned in the Army Nurse Corps and is a second lieutenant currently stationed at Tripler Army Hospital in Hawaii.

First Lieutenant Elisabeth Claire Rice, who was previously stationed at Tripler Army Hospital, was deployed to Afghanistan on a Forward Surgical Team. She has recently been treating many Afghan civilians—women and children—some in need of basic medical service and others who are victims of IED explosions.

Lance Corporal Christopher Scott Rice was diagnosed with an inoperable brainstem glioma at age 2, but fortunately had successful radiation treatments. After six months in Afghanistan with the Second Marines, Combat Logistics Group 6 in support of 1/6, he recently returned home. During his tour he provided convoy service in Helmand. He was involved in two separate incidents where IEDs went off but fortunately escaped without harm in a mine resistant vehicle.

Corporal Philip Kenneth Rice is a U.S. Marine who trained in intelligence at Cory Station, Florida. He is now receiving additional training in radio Recon.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to represent the Rice family of Warrenton, Virginia. This family has demonstrated unsurpassed devotion, leadership, and sacrifice in their service to our Nation. I

salute them for their unyielding patriotism and love of country.

TRIBUTE TO KENNETH WALTER

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 16, 2010

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Kenneth Walter, a World War II Navy veteran from Boone County, Iowa, and to express my appreciation for his dedication and commitment to his country.

The Boone News Republican is currently running a series of articles that honors one Boone County veteran every Tuesday from Memorial Day to Veterans Day. Kenneth Walter was recognized on Tuesday, September 7. Below is the article in its entirety:

BOONE COUNTY VETERANS: KENNETH WALTER

(By Greg Eckstrom)

History is best learned from experience.

Living through it, feeling it and seeing it from your own eyes.

As a former American history teacher, Kenneth Walter, who has lived in Boone for 50 years now and is a retired United administrator, would likely be the best teacher you can find for World War II history from the Pacific.

Learning about Kamikaze pilots? Walter's boat was hit by one. The flag raising on Mount Suribachi during the battle of Iwo Jima? They came to Walter's boat first looking for a spare flag, and ended up getting the one from the boat next to him.

Walter's experiences brought him through some historic moments in World War II, but as far as sharing this in his classrooms after returning to the United States, he stuck to teaching rather than sharing stories.

"In my years of teaching I don't ever recall an instance of recounting the fact that I was in the service," he said. "Everybody had been in the service. You did it and never gave it too much thought."

Born in Keokuk, Walter graduated high school in Cincinnati, Ohio, before enlisting into the service.

"What choice was there for a young man, 16 or 17?" he recalled of signing up for the Navy. "You got in just as quick as you could . . . at least I did."

And once he was in, Walter took pleasure in the little things . . . the basic things.

"On most every occasion I had a bed. On most every occasion, somebody else prepared my meal," he said with a laugh. "And beyond that, I had a great job in the Navy. I was a quartermaster, which is not a quartermaster in the Army. A quartermaster in the Navy is the master of the quarter deck, which is the bridge. Quartermasters were in charge of navigation. As a quartermaster, you had to be able to do the same things a radio man did, the same things a signal man did. I also got qualified as a radar man. We had to do all sorts of things. We supervised the other enlisted staff on the bridge. But of course, we were always managed by officers. Navigation and communication were primary responsibilities."

Walter found himself aboard a Tank Landing Ship, the LST-477, a long ship—about 325 feet—used to carry massive amounts of cargo.

"We went to Guam and did landings there, landings at Gilbert Islands. Our major action was in Iwo [Jima] when we got into the ac-

tion big time," he said. "We had a kamikaze hit us. That's when I lost my place to sleep."

At the time, Walter's ship was carrying 25 tanks that were to be discharged on the first day of the Battle of Iwo Jima—a very heavy load.

"We were struck maybe 75 feet back from the bow," he said. "It was carrying a bomb in addition to itself as a missile, and it penetrated the side and we went down on our nose. We couldn't get in because of our bow being low. So we had to wait two days. Finally, on the fourth day, we made it in."

Another vivid memory for Walter was the flag raising at Mount Suribachi.

"We were one of the ships they came to looking for a flag to put up on Mount Suribachi on Iwo, and the ship next to us had a flag extra, and we didn't happen to," he said. "But we did get to see the event from our ship. We blew our horns and everything like that. The Marines let us know what they'd done, because we had Marines who were unloading tanks at that particular time."

Walter also recalled the final day of World War II. His ship had been remodeled to be a hospital ship for the invasion of Japan.

"We had doctors and nurses aboard," he said. "They put a couple operating rooms down where we usually carry tanks. So we were not unhappy to see the war be over. We were amongst those that were pleased that the atom bombs stopped the war. We knew what was going to happen to us."

After the war ended, Walter traveled to Korea with a construction battalion, and then back to Japan. His boat had been decommissioned, and he found himself as part of the group giving his boat to those they had previously been fighting.

"It was an odd feeling," he said. "There's nothing in any history book about the United States helping the Japanese in that kind of way. I think it's one of those typical things Americans do . . . give the beaten people a better chance to get by. And what happened to our ship, it was turned over to some Japanese fishermen. We gave them about two days worth of training on how to run the ship and gave it to them. On March 13, 1946, we did that. That's when I started my long trek home. I got out in July of 1946. I took a ship, another ship, back home."

After his service, Walter moved to Illinois, then Boone, where he has lived for the past 50 years. He most recently went on the Honor Flight to Washington, DC. Although he had been there several times in the past, it was the first time he had seen the World War II Memorial.

"That's spectacular," he said. "It really is."

When recalling the history he's lived through, Walter doesn't give the highlights typically heard of service men and women of their travels.

"Yeah, I went to Japan and Korea and Australia and so on," he said. "But it's not like being a tourist. You're not a tourist. There are a lot of places I was where I never stepped foot on the ground. You were just . . . it's like flying over Iowa."

For Walter, he recalls the friendships that were formed with those aboard his ship. Since World War II, they have held reunions, and he has had friends from the service visit him in Boone.

"Lasting friendship," he said. "Not deep friendship, just lasting. The service experience is something altogether different. There isn't anything to explain it."

I commend Kenneth Walter for his many years of loyalty and service to our great nation. It is an immense honor to represent him in the United States Congress, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.