

last survivors of World War I. He has got photographs of all of them, of recent date, of those who have died—some of them have died—and he has done research on all of them. As I mentioned, there are only three from all over the world who fought from all nations, Frank Buckles being one of those. Some other individuals are encouraging Congress to give the authority to build this memorial.

In Kingwood, Texas, which is one of the places I represent down in Texas, there is an educator there by the name of Jan York. Jan York loves America like educators do. She got her Creekwood Middle School kids to do research a couple of years ago on World War I and on its last survivors, and that's when they came up with Frank Buckles. They, too, are passionate about making sure that a memorial is built on The Mall for all who served in World War I. Let me mention this:

There are memorials for the World War I veterans in different places in the United States. There is one in Kansas City. But can we have too many? Should we not have one on The Mall? I mean this is Washington, D.C. When you go through Washington, D.C., you see memorials and monuments for all kinds of people—wonderful people. Some of them aren't even Americans. The memorials and monuments are appropriate. They're needed. But should we not build a memorial on The Mall for all of those who served in World War I—the war that was supposed to end all wars? I think that we should.

Anyway, Jan York has helped her school get involved in this, and the Creekwood Middle School folks and other schools in the country are encouraging Congress to help build a memorial. This memorial is not going to be funded by taxpayer money. Don't get me wrong. This is not something the taxpayers are going to be required to contribute to. All Congress has to do is authorize its being built and there being a commission, and then private funds will be collected from groups like the Creekwood Middle School.

I want to thank Senator ROCKEFELLER, who is down the hall in the Senate. He is helping to promote legislation that will allow us to move forward and have congressional approval to build this memorial on The Mall—this appropriate memorial for people like Frank Buckles, who is the lone survivor.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is imperative that we as a Nation understand our history. Many of us don't think about the past. We only think about the future. We think, unfortunately, many times: What can America give us? What can America do for us? as opposed to: What can we do for America? What can we do for people who have served our great country in the military, and what should we do as a Nation to honor those individuals?

America has always had to defend who we are as a Nation. I carry in my pocket, like maybe most Members of

Congress, this little book, the Constitution of the United States, which has not only the Constitution but the Declaration of Independence in it as well.

If we just remember a little bit of history, just a little bit, back in the colonial days, in 1776, there were these Americans who did not like being treated a certain way by the most powerful empire that had ever existed in the history of the world—the British Empire. It was the most powerful empire at the time, and it was led by the most powerful king, King George. They got together, and they said, You know, we are going to liberate ourselves from this type of tyranny, which is how they looked at it. So they came up with this Declaration of Independence.

Now, in legal terms, what that meant was they indicted the King of England for crimes against the United States. Their remedy, the punishment for the King and for England, was to separate. They concluded their Declaration of Independence, that important document that later led to the Constitution, with this phrase:

“And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

Then they had to fight for what they believed in—7, 8 years of long war to get this country free. Then it was the War of 1812, the Spanish-American War, the war with Mexico, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and we are still engaged in two great wars today.

In all of those wars, Mr. Speaker, it has been America's youth who has gone to war to protect the rest of us. Unlike other countries, it has been said that America goes to war not to conquer but to liberate. That is true. We've got troops fighting right now, not to conquer but to liberate. America goes to battle so that others will live in freedom. Our enemies go to battle so that others will die in tyranny. That is what is happening in Afghanistan and Iraq. It has always been the American warrior who has had to protect this document—people like Frank Buckles.

Today, occasionally, we get to see those great warriors from the current wars. They come back to this Capitol, and we see them. Many Members go visit the wounded warriors. I have had the honor to be in Iraq and Afghanistan and see our military in action. The finest military that has ever existed in the history of the world represents us today.

Yet, to some extent, at home, America is disengaged. We are more interested, unfortunately it seems, in what is in it for us as opposed to what is in it for America. Frank Buckles and the generations before him and after him have always asked: What is in it for America? What can we do for America?—not what America can do for us.

So it seems to me we owe it to Frank Buckles and we owe it to those dough-

boys who have all died, who have all passed away except him, to build and honor them for what they did for the rest of us—for without them, we certainly would not be here. Without each generation that has been called upon to bear arms to protect our Nation, we would not be here. Many of them died at young ages, including those 600,000 Americans who died in the Civil War, which is when our country went to war within itself.

It would be appropriate that we honor these individuals by approving this memorial on The Mall. It would be equally as important that we remember Frank Buckles, his being the lone survivor. I hope he lives a long time. He told David DeJonge not too long ago, I'm headed to 115.

Well, the way he is, he may get it. He's just that way.

Yet, when he passes away, we should honor him as the last doughboy. He should lie in state here in the Capitol rotunda. He should be buried with full military honors. Our Nation should remember him, as it is important we should remember all those who served throughout the United States, by building and approving the memorial here on The Mall.

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You know, when they went overseas, they said they weren't coming back until it was over over there. They did not come back until it was over over there, and they came back victorious. We over here have the obligation and the opportunity to get it right over here. And the way we get it right is to honor Frank Buckles and honor all of those who served in the great World War I, those that served and did not come home and those that served and did come home, to continue the American way of life and preserving this little document called the Constitution of the United States of America.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the ordering of a 5-minute Special Order speech in favor of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is vacated.

CONGRESSMAN ETHERIDGE BIDS FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the House. I will be leaving Congress at the conclusion of this term, and I want to take a few minutes to speak to my colleagues and the people of North Carolina's Second