

billion worth of goods through all 50 states. Additionally, ports move 99.4 percent of overseas cargo volume by weight and generate \$3.95 trillion in international trade. These numbers speak for themselves: ports are a crucial component of our national economy, and they deserve Congress' attention.

This resolution honors both the tremendous contribution ports make to our national economy and the extraordinary service of Americans employed at our nation's ports. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution in order to advance our national dialogue on ports.

HONORING U.S. ARMY STAFF SERGEANT JORDAN L. BEAR'S SERVICE IN AFGHANISTAN

HON. REID J. RIBBLE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Mr. RIBBLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor the life and sacrifice of Staff Sergeant Jordan L. Bear. A resident of Elton, Wisconsin, Staff Sergeant Bear died while serving our country in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was assigned to B Company, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Jordan Bear died protecting the freedoms we take for granted every day. His heroic sacrifice will not soon be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, Staff Sergeant Bear embodied the best qualities of a true American soldier. He served this country with honor and exhibited profound bravery and selflessness. Staff Sergeant Bear was a loving son, a devoted father and now he will forever be known as an American hero. He is remembered by friends and family as a man with a courageous and strong spirit who earned the unwavering respect of his peers. Although the loss of Staff Sergeant Bear left a void in the hearts of many, his dedication and exemplary service has made Northeast Wisconsin and his country proud.

It is my honor to commemorate him and I urge my colleagues to join me today in honoring the life of Staff Sergeant Bear for the sacrifice he made for the United States of America.

DYESS AIR FORCE BASE
MILESTONES

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the work of the men and women of Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, we are a country that has been at war for over 10 years. Whether it is the 317th Airlift Group delivering troops and supplies to the front lines, or the 7th Bomb Wing putting metal on target, the missions at Dyess have played indispensable roles in the war against terror. Today I would like to honor two recent major milestones that have been achieved by these exemplary airmen.

Earlier this month the B-1 bomber flew its 10,000th combat mission. Since 2001, the B-1 has been providing intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and close air support to our troops on the ground nearly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In fact, at this very moment, there is a B-1 in the air over southwest Asia. Able to carry a larger payload than any other aircraft in the military, one supersonic B-1 can do the same job of multiple aircraft. It is truly a workhorse in our military.

Additionally, March 7th marked the 3,000th consecutive day of deployment for the 317th Airlift Group. Since December of 2003, more than 7,000 airmen from this unit have been put in harm's way. The air mobility mission is one of the most important missions in the modern military. Operations that used to take weeks or months now take days or hours. The 317th has often been labeled the "busiest C-130 unit" in the Air Force, and this current deployed streak is another honored mark in the long history of Dyess Airlifters.

Mr. Speaker, I have come to the floor today to recognize and celebrate these achievements, and to honor the sacrifices the men and women of Dyess have made. And I am a firm believer that when one member of the family serves this country—the whole family serves. Deployments across the globe over the last decade have meant many missed birthdays, holidays, and special moments for our soldiers and their families. May we never take for granted the sacrifices our men and women in uniform make every day for our freedom and security.

I ask that the two attached articles also be made a part of the RECORD.

[Feb. 27, 2012]

THE BONE NOTCHES 10,000 COMBAT MISSIONS

(By Philip Ewing)

America's favorite low-flying, long-loitering, wing-swinging bomber has flown its 10,000th combat mission, Boeing announced Monday.

The B-1B Lancer in question flew its sortie over Afghanistan—where the Bone has had a second career supporting troops on the ground—and returned to its base in, er, "Southwest Asia," Boeing announced. (The bases in Qatar and the UAE aren't actually there, and the Air Force clings to that non-fact like a vise.)

Here's more of what Big B said:

The heavy bomber entered service with the U.S. Air Force on June 29, 1985, and has been in nearly continuous combat for the past 10 years. The milestone mission took off from a base in Southwest Asia and was flown in support of operations over Afghanistan before returning to base.

"The B-1 brings tremendous flexibility to our nation's defense," said Lt. Col. Alejandro Gomez, mission team lead. "In any mission, the B-1 has the ability to loiter, dash, positively identify targets, show force, and strike targets precisely. Whatever our aircrews are asked to do, they can perform with this aircraft."

B-1 crews in Southwest Asia fly a variety of missions, including close air support for troops on the ground, giving them cover and alerting them to threats they cannot see. On-site maintainers keep the fleet ready to fly.

"10,000 conventional combat missions for a relatively small fleet of 66 B-1s is a major milestone and a testament to the men and women who built, sustain and modernize the fleet, including the U.S. Air Force, Boeing and our subcontractors," said Rick Greenwell, Boeing B-1 program director. "We

continue to draw on expertise and experience from across Boeing to enhance our support of this amazing aircraft."

The B-1 bomber has advanced over the years as it is modified for current needs. The aircraft began as a nuclear bomber and moved into a solely conventional role in the 1990s. It carries the largest payload in the Air Force's long-range bomber fleet—during Operation Iraqi Freedom, it dropped 40 percent of all weapons while flying only 5 percent of the sorties.

Today's B-1 can carry a mixed load of weapons in each of its three bays. Its long range allows it to base far from the conflict and loiter unrefueled for long periods. Its swept wings allow it to fly fast, slow, low or high as the situation demands. With only four crewmembers required, missions can rapidly be adjusted in flight to keep up with adversaries. The radar and targeting pod can be used for positive target identification and the aircraft can employ a variety of other weapons, including Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs), Laser JDAMs, Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles-Extended Range, and BLU-129 warheads.

"The B-1 fleet and crews have readily adapted to an ever-changing environment to accomplish this 10,000th combat sortie milestone," said Greenwell. "This aircraft has proven its ability to continue to evolve and be effective well into the future."

And as the B-1's adopted parent, Boeing isn't the only one pleased with its performance. The Air Force appears to have quietly shelved its onetime idea of beginning to pare back bombers to save money, at least in the near term. Its fiscal 2013 budget submission this month included this unambiguous sentence: "The Air Force does not plan to retire any bomber aircraft in FY 2013."

That will mean ever more combat missions for the Lancer fleet, at least for now.

DYESS' 317TH AIRLIFT GROUP CELEBRATES
3,000 CONTINUOUS DAYS OF DEPLOYMENT
TODAY

(By Brian Bethel)

They call Dyess Air Force Base's 317th Airlift Group "purple ops" these days, said Maj. Jason Anderson, who bears the lengthy title of 317th operation support squadron assistant director of operations.

"We called the 40th blue squadron, the 39th red squadron," Anderson said, musing about the tail colors that once graced the C-130s of the base's 39th and 40th Airlift Squadrons.

But now the 317th, which today at the base marked 3,000 days of continuous deployment, is one. Since Dec. 20, 2003, Dyess' 317th has had "folks in the theater fighting the war," Anderson said.

"The tails changed," Anderson said. "They're now both red and blue. And the attitudes changed. It's one team fighting for one another."

It takes a four-month on, four-month off rotation to keep up that tempo, he said, with both squadrons, a "maintenance package," and numerous others, from tactics to intelligence, working together to keep planes flying and missions running smoothly.

In general, "a little over 200" people from the 317th Airlift Group are deployed at any time, with more than 7,000 airmen deployed over the 3,000-day period, Anderson said.

"There's always a squadron that's out there at any given time," he said.

Gray Bridwell, an honorary commander for the 317th Airlift Group, said that when the initial deployment began, he was honorary commander for the 317th Maintenance Squadron and "as a civilian" had little understanding about "massive deployments of this nature."