

AN ADDRESS BY ROGER DURBIN CELEBRATING THE STAMP UNVEILING, NOVEMBER 19, 1998

Mr. Vice-President, Mr. Postmaster General, General Woerner, thank you for allowing me to share this honor with you today.

It's a double honor for me to participate in a ceremony to unveil a stamp commemorating World War II. In 1979, I retired from the U.S. Postal Service after spending 32 years as a rural carrier in Berkey, Ohio, near Toledo. I've been told that I am that last surviving member of branch 4408 of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

I am proud of my career as a letter carrier. But today, on the eve of Veteran's Day my thoughts are focused on a different uniform—one I wore in Europe in the 1940s. I was a member of the Tenth Armored Division and participated in the Battle of the Bulge, one of the costliest battles ever fought by Americans. I have memories of those cold bitter days that will be with me until I die.

One memory I wish to share with you is about the Battle for Metz. It was the first time Metz had been captured in 1,500 years. Three bridges had to be built to cross the Mozells River at Thionville, France, while the 4th and 90th Infantry established a bridgehead. They met a terrible resistance. During the night, civilians pointed out to the Germans where the Americans were sleeping. By morning, only one man was still alive from the German counter-attack. Later history called this attack the "Killing Fields of Kerling."

When daylight came, it was a terrible sight—a sight that cannot be forgotten by those who saw it. The American dead were neatly stacked in the ditches like cords of wood. The German dead were in their foxholes, eyes wide open still keeping their vigil of surveillance. The retreating Germans had body-trapped their dead. They had to be removed by our engineers. Right then I decided that those Germans were really trying to kill me.

"Saving Private Ryan" has brought attention to the horror of war to those born since World War II ended. The D-Day depicted was but one battle. Six hundred thousand American soldiers fought in the Battle of the Bulge. There were 91,000 casualties in just 30 days. The bitterness of that 1944 December cold cannot be forgotten. A wounded, bleeding soldier could be dead and frozen solid in just three hours. It was so cold that on Christmas night I had lain on top of the half-track transmission in an effort to get warm.

We moved back east of Metz after the battle had ended to draw new equipment and to get replacements. The replacements were eighteen and nineteen year old boys that had been home with families for Christmas dinner in 1944.

Those of us in the Tenth Armored Division who survived the Battle of the Bulge had the honor of being the first American soldiers from Patton's Third Army to cross the German border. The Tenth seized 450 towns and cities and earned more than 3,000 medals. But it was achieved at a terrible cost. When finished, the Tenth Armored had 8,381 killed, wounded, and missing casualties. There was a 78.5 percent turnover of personnel.

As a nation we must never forget that cost. The stamp we are unveiling today commemorates World War II as one of the most significant events of the Twentieth Century. It is a fitting tribute for all who were involved in this struggle for a way of life, a world. This was the war that had the involvement of almost the entire population.

Three years ago I had the honor of joining President Clinton in dedicating a World War II Memorial site on the Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. We sprinkled sacred soil from sixteen

overseas American cemeteries in which are buried thousands of Americans who were not as fortunate as I am. They never made it home.

Ground is to be broken in 2000 and the memorial dedicated in 2002. When Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur started the memorial legislation eleven years ago there were 13.5 million living World War II veterans. An average of 30,000 World War II veterans now die each month. Only 7 million remain of those alive twelve years ago. For most of those now remaining, this stamp will be the nation's tribute to their service.

LOPEZ FOODS, INC.—MBE
MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. John Lopez, an Arizona native and Hispanic-American leader. Recently, Mr. Lopez' company, Lopez Foods, Inc., was named the 1999 National Minority Manufacturing Firm of the Year by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

After beginning his career as an owner-operator of several McDonald's restaurants, seven years ago, Mr. Lopez sold them and obtained controlling interest of the company that now bears his name: Lopez Foods, Inc. As one of the select few beef and pork suppliers for McDonald's restaurants, this Oklahoma City company plays a vital role in the success of more than 25,000 McDonald's restaurants.

As the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Lopez Foods, Mr. Lopez has guided his company to great success. Under Mr. Lopez' leadership, this firm has steadily expanded their workforce diversity program. As a result, currently, nearly 55 percent of Lopez Foods employees are minorities. Because of his efforts, first as a McDonald's owner-operator, and now as the head of Lopez Foods, Mr. Lopez was selected by the National Hispanic Employee's Association as its 1997 Entrepreneur of the Year.

Throughout his career, Mr. Lopez has worked tirelessly to promote economic progress for minorities well beyond his own firm. He is a member of several influential boards, including: the McDonald's Supplier Diversity Council, the Oklahoma City Latino Community Development Agency, the National Advisory Board of the Hispanic American Commitment to Educational Resources, and the National Minority Supplier Development Council.

I applaud the Commerce Department for recognizing the outstanding efforts of Mr. John Lopez, and for designating Lopez Foods, Inc. as its 1999 National Minority Manufacturing Firm of the Year. In closing, I commend this gentleman for all of his admirable accomplishments and societal contributions.

IN HONOR OF MS. SUSAN CORRIGAN, RECIPIENT OF THE UNITED WAY'S CONGRESSWOMAN MARY T. NORTON MEMORIAL AWARD

HON. ROBERT MENEDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. MENEDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Susan Corrigan for winning the United Way's Congresswoman Mary T. Norton Memorial Award.

Initiated by the United Way of Hudson County in 1990, this award recognizes individuals who exhibit a deep commitment to community service as exemplified by Congresswoman Mary T. Norton during her 13 terms in the House of Representatives (1925–1950). A leader who championed thinking outside of the box, Congresswoman Norton advocated government action in areas, such as day care, fair employment practices, health care for veterans, and the inclusion of women in high levels of government service.

Ms. Corrigan, one of this year's award recipients, is the founder and President/CEO of Gifts In-Kind International, the world's leading charity in product philanthropy. Under her guidance, Gifts In-Kind International is now the 13th largest charity in the United States. And, as the organization has continued to have a very positive impact on the nonprofit sector, Ms. Corrigan has twice been named in The NonProfit Times' list of the Top 50 Most Influential Leaders in Philanthropy.

Because of her commitment to community service, Ms. Corrigan received the 1991 Cantor Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management from the Pacific Graduate School in Stanford, California, and the Samaritan Foundation's 1996 Humanitarian Partnership Award. In addition, she is a member of The Washington Center's Independent Sector Program Initiative Honorary Advisory Committee.

A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, Ms. Corrigan has served as Assistant to the President at United Way of America and is the author of several publications, including Establishing an In-Kind Program, The Business Sense of In-Kind Giving, and Employment Generating Services.

A well deserving award recipient who embodies the life work of Congresswoman Mary T. Norton, Ms. Corrigan has dedicated her life to community service. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Corrigan for all of her outstanding service to the community and for carrying on the work of Congresswoman Mary T. Norton.

YOUTH SUICIDE AWARENESS AND
PREVENTION WEEK

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support of H. Res. 286. The purpose of this legislation is to recognize the week of September 19–25, as Yellow Ribbon Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Week.

This resolution is important to any person who has children, and to any family that has

lost loved ones through suicide. The bill recognizes that there is a need to increase awareness about youth suicide and make it a national priority.

I would like to recognize the Light for Family Foundation of America and their founders, the Emme family, who tragically lost their teenage son, Michael, to suicide in 1994. It was through the vision of the Emme family that the Yellow Ribbon Program, which has helped save countless lives, has become an integral part of the fight against youth suicide.

Mr. Speaker, teenage suicide is extremely tragic. I hope and pray that this resolution can increase awareness and hopefully prevent the loss of more of our Nation's children.

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL K. WYRICK GIVES 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

HON. LARRY COMBEST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of our nation's finest military leaders. General Michael K. Wyrick proudly has given 30 years of uniformed service to our country, and now begins his retirement. Capping his stellar career by serving as Deputy Surgeon General of the United States Air Force, he is the only healthcare administrator in the Air Force to ever attain this position. It is both fitting and appropriate to take a moment to celebrate the accomplishments of this decorated officer.

General Wyrick, a young West Texas gentleman, entered the military in 1969 as a graduate of the Texas Christian University Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. General Wyrick displayed his natural leadership abilities in successful early, military assignments at Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina and Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. General Wyrick then earned a Master's Degree in Health Service Administration from Baylor University. His vast knowledge of administrative strategy and leadership was complemented by additional, highly competitive academic endeavors. Graduation from Air War College and participation in select leadership development programs at Duke University and Cornell University are included among his most recent academic accomplishments. Baylor University has since recognized General Wyrick with the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Graduate Program in Health Care Administration. Many additional honors have also been bestowed upon the General for his administrative excellence, including the Outstanding Federal Services Administrator Award from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States and the Healthcare Administration Award from the American Academy of Medical Administrators.

General Wyrick has held numerous key domestic and overseas assignments in the Air Force Medical Service. In addition to being named the Chief Administrator of four Air Force hospitals, he directed the medical programs and resources in the headquarters of the Office of the Surgeon General prior to being named the Deputy Surgeon General of the Air Force. As Chief of the Air Force Med-

ical Service Corps, General Wyrick's vital task was coordinating and executing the health care mission of the United States Air Force. The finesse with which he shoulders every responsibility has helped General Wyrick become such a highly decorated leader. Today, he proudly wears the Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters, and the prestigious Legion of Merit.

Major General Wyrick's wife, Carol, and children, Brian and Lauri, and his hometown of Amarillo, Texas look to General Wyrick as a source of great pride. He has brought honor to the distinguished uniform of the United States Air Force that he has proudly worn for the past 30 years. His unmatched leadership ability and strength of character set him apart as one of our nation's finest citizens and most valued military officers. It is my pleasure to recognize General Michael K. Wyrick's outstanding career of exemplary service.

SIKHS SHOULD NOT BE HARASSED FOR CARRYING A RELIGIOUS SYMBOL, THE KIRPAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, America is a country where everyone enjoys religious freedom. There are about 500,000 Sikhs in this country and they have every right to practice their religion in this country. Sikhs have contributed to America in many walks of life, from agriculture to medicine to law, among others. Sikhs participated in World War I and World War II, and a Sikh even served as a Member of Congress in the 1960s. His name was Dalip Singh Sand and he was from California.

When a Sikh is baptized, he or she is required to have five symbols called the five Ks. They are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a tracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). Sometimes law enforcement officers in this country consider a Kirpan a concealed weapon and arrest the Sikh carrying a Kirpan.

Earlier this week, Gurbachan Singh Bhatia, a 69-year-old Sikh, was arrested in the suburbs of Cleveland for carrying a concealed weapon. He is to appear at a pretrial hearing on October 4. I hope that the case against Mr. Bhatia will be dismissed.

A similar case happened in Cincinnati in 1996. The First Ohio District Court of Appeals overturned a municipal court conviction of a Sikh man for carrying a concealed weapon. Judge Mark Painter of that court wrote that "to be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Like Christianity, the Sikh religion is a monotheistic, divinely revealed and independent religion which believes in the equality of the whole human race, including gender equality. They pray, work hard to earn an honest living, and share their earnings with the needy.

I know many Sikhs in my district who are baptized and carry this symbol Kirpan. I would not like any of my constituents to be harassed for practicing their religion. We must educate our law-enforcement agencies regarding this religious symbol of the Sikhs.

Our Constitution grants religious freedom to all. We want Sikh Americans to practice their religion without any interference, even if we have to pass special legislation allowing the Sikhs to carry Kirpans.

I would like to put the Detroit News article on the Bhatia case into the RECORD.

[From the Detroit News, Sept. 23, 1999]

CAN A WEAPON BE A RELIGIOUS ICON?

MENTOR, OHIO—When he was baptized a Sikh in India, Gurbachan Singh Bhatia, now 69, vowed to always wear a kirpan, a 6-inch knife symbolizing his willingness to defend the faith.

But during investigation of a minor traffic mishap in this Cleveland suburb, Bhatia was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. At the time, he was returning home from a religious ceremony blessing the new home of a Sikh family.

Police Chief Richard Amriott said his officers acted properly in enforcing the law banning concealed weapons. "How can you describe for me the difference between a ceremonial knife and any knife?" he asked.

Bhatia must appear for a pretrial hearing Oct. 4. If convicted, he could face up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine. But Ron Graham, city prosecutor, said he may be willing to drop the charges if the Sikh priest can demonstrate that he is required by his religion to carry the kirpan.

Although state law does not allow for exceptions, Graham said, "We don't want to prosecute anyone for exercising religious freedom."

In a similar case in Cincinnati in 1996, the 1st Ohio District Court of Appeals overturned a municipal court conviction of a Sikh man for carrying a concealed weapon.

"To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon," Judge Mark Painter wrote.

RECOGNITION OF JOANNA LUBKIN AND THE STUDENT HISTORIC PRESERVATION TEAM

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to your attention an event in which I participated celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and to bring recognition to the remarkable young girl I met and the group to which she belongs.

On July 22, 1999, I joined civic and conservation leaders on a bicycle tour of Mine Falls Park in Nashua, New Hampshire, which has received four separate state-side grants totaling \$684,496. During the tour, we stopped at a gatehouse built in 1886. Fairgrounds Junior High School student Joanna Lubkin told us about her involvement with the Student Historic Preservation Team (SHPT) and their efforts to restore the building.

The team's restoration efforts began last May with the removal of graffiti from the building's exterior. Once the removal is complete, the students plan to landscape the area surrounding the building and create inside a museum. The museum would highlight the gates that regulated the flow of water into a canal that runs from Mine falls to Nashua's millyard, providing power to the textile mills that were a vital part of Nashua's development as a manufacturing center in the 19th century.