

was not accurately depicted in history. Their names were not mentioned, their achievements were not celebrated, and their sacrifices were not honored. He considered it his mission to correct the historical omissions of the role of African American soldiers, and he developed a comprehensive collection of historical information, including visual displays and artifacts that he used during lectures to community groups and to the many schools where he was invited to speak.

He would speak about the contributions of African Americans in battle that history did not record. He told about the Tuskegee Airmen, the Red Ball Express, and the lesser-known Fighting 369th—a group of African Americans, largely from New York City, who valiantly chose to fight for a country that gave them only minimal civil rights and would not even allow them to carry arms or participate in battle. But this band of patriots would not be deterred, and eventually fought as Americans for our ally, the French. They were so fierce in battle, in fact, that the enemy called them “The Hell-Fighters,” and they would later come to be known as The Harlem Hell-Fighters.

He was tenacious in his attempts to have the recognition due African American soldiers afforded them, and was the catalyst for the movement that eventually led President Clinton to recognize those soldiers; as a result, a number of African American soldiers who had been overlooked for the Purple Heart were later awarded that medal in recognition of their service in WWII. Purple Hearts were not the only awards withheld from African American soldiers. President Eisenhower, when presenting Letters of Commendation, chose to send Letters to white soldiers only. My Uncle John was directly responsible for President Clinton's decision to award Letters of Commendation to those African American soldiers who participated in the D-Day Invasion and whose service had gone unmentioned and unrecognized for decades.

One of my uncle's most treasured experiences, capping off his life's work, was visiting Washington last Memorial Day weekend for the official dedication of the long-awaited World War II Memorial. As a veteran of the war, he and his wonderful wife Ruth, who were married over 60 years, were able to view the moving ceremony from special seats and also mingled with the crowds, enjoying great camaraderie with other World War II veterans gathered together for this historic occasion.

John Garrett, Jr. lived life to the fullest. When he and his wife attended my Annual Congressional Ball in March, they danced the night away, outlasting most of the others on the dance floor. He also made a point of traveling to Washington every fall to participate in the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference.

Mr. Speaker, let us honor John Garrett, Jr. for his patriotism and his service to our country. He was tireless in his fight to ensure that all our soldiers received the honor that was due them. He was a role model for our community, enlightening thousands of school children with the true story of the role African Americans played in our Nation's history, and instilling in them pride for the legacy of their ancestors. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Ruth, his son Kenny and his granddaughter, Cindy.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF BETH
ISRAEL—THE WEST TEMPLE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Beth Israel—The West Temple, in commemoration of its 50th anniversary. Beth Israel was organized in April 1954 by Abe Silverstein, an early director of the NASA Lewis Research Center and 25 founding families, to provide a religious center for Reform Jews living on Cleveland's west side. The congregation's first service, Rosh Hashanah, was on September 27, 1954, at the First Universalist Church in North Olmsted. For the next three years, services were held at either the Universalist Church or the North Olmsted Community Club House. Following the merger with the West Side Jewish Center in October 1957, Beth Israel occupied the Center's newly completed building at 14308 Triskett Road in Ohio's 10th Congressional District. The building was dedicated on May 11, 1958. The congregation continues to worship there today.

For its first seven years, Beth Israel was served by a succession of six student rabbis from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Among them was Daniel Litt who became Beth Israel's first full-time rabbi, serving from 1961 to 1965. The year 1965 also brought the construction of a new eight-room, two-story wing and the first of two Cleveland Foundation library grants. The library and its volunteer staff have provided services for the congregation as well as colleges, schools, and churches throughout western Cuyahoga County. By 1995, the library contained more than 6,000 volumes and audio-visual materials.

Beth Israel draws its members from Cleveland's west side and western suburbs in Ohio's 10th Congressional District. It prides itself on its commitment to education and social action. Its school, staffed by volunteers, covers preschool through grade 12 and has more than 100 students enrolled. Among its alumni is Sally Priesand, who went on to become the first woman ordained to the rabbinate in the United States and to serve as Beth Israel's rabbi. As an outgrowth of the temple Social Action Committee, Beth Israel's members found the Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism. Council founder Lou Rosenberg became a leader in the national movement to assist Soviet Jewry. Beth Israel's current rabbi, Alan Lettovsky, remains active in local affairs and has spoken out at interfaith rallies to save local hospitals and on other issues of concern to the people of Ohio's 10th District.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Beth Israel—The West Temple for its 50 years of service to, and a center of worship and community for, my Jewish constituents on Cleveland's west side and western suburbs. Please join me in marking this auspicious occasion.

FREEDOM FOR REGIS IGLESIAS
RAMÍREZ

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Regis Iglesias Ramirez, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Iglesias Ramirez is a member of the Christian Liberation Movement. Because of his belief in freedom of religion, democracy and human rights, Mr. Iglesias Ramirez is an opponent of the nightmare that is the Castro regime. Despite the constant threat of retribution by the dictatorship, he has continually demanded his inalienable human rights.

Unfortunately, in March 2003, as part of the regime's heinous crackdown on peaceful, pro-democracy activists, Mr. Iglesias Ramirez was arrested. In a sham trial, he was sentenced to 18 years in the totalitarian gulag.

Mr. Iglesias Ramirez is languishing in an inhuman, grotesque gulag simply because of his religious convictions and his desire to live in liberty. According to Amnesty International, he has been threatened and harassed because he persists in studying his Bible while incarcerated by the regime. It is reprehensible that, at the dawn of the 21st Century, men and women like Mr. Iglesias Ramirez are still locked in dank dungeons because of the tenets of their faith.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is May 20, and on that day, 103 years ago, the Cuban people obtained their independence; the Republic of Cuba was born. Today the Cuban people, led by heroic activists such as Mr. Iglesias Ramirez, continue to fight for freedom. It is my fervent hope that next year, on May 20, the Cuban people will be able to celebrate the anniversary of Cuba's independence and also celebrate the return of freedom to that long suffering island.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable that peaceful Cubans of all genders, creeds and colors are locked in Castro's barbarous gulag because they believe in a free Cuba. While the entire world sits by and ignores the suffering of the Cuban people, brave men and women like Mr. Iglesias Ramirez represent the best of mankind. My Colleagues, we must demand freedom and human rights for all people, especially those who live under the darkness of totalitarian regimes. We must demand immediate and unconditional freedom for Regis Iglesias Ramirez and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

COMMEMORATING THE 64TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF
CRETE

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 64th anniversary of the Battle of Crete by introducing this House Resolution which recognizes and appreciates the historical significance of the people of Crete during World War II.