

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOATING LAW ADMINISTRATORS

HON. BEN CHANDLER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. CHANDLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, NASBLA, a Lexington, Kentucky based nonprofit organization.

Recreational boating is one of our Nation's most popular pastimes, with an estimated 78 million recreational boaters in the United States and nearly 13 million recreational vessels registered. In my State of Kentucky alone, there are nearly 200,000 registered boats and hundreds of thousands of Kentuckians who enjoy this great recreational activity.

In 1958, Congress passed the Federal Boating Act, which authorized the states to take over specific boating safety functions. This, in turn, led to the creation of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, NASBLA, in 1960. NASBLA is a national, nonprofit association of state officials responsible for the development and implementation of state boating programs.

NASBLA's mission is to strengthen the ability of state and territorial boating authorities to reduce death, injury and property damage associated with recreational boating and ensure a safe, secure, and enjoyable boating environment. NASBLA addresses its mission by fostering partnerships among and between the states, the Coast Guard and others, crafting model boating laws, maintaining national education and training standards, providing members with critical knowledge and skills, assisting in the homeland security challenges on our waterways, and advocating for the needs of the state boating programs before Congress and federal agencies.

The number of recreational boating fatalities has declined by more than half since 1970, thanks in part to the increased use of life jackets, cooperative boating safety education, enforcement efforts between the Coast Guard and state governments, and safer vessels and equipment manufactured in accordance with Coast Guard standards. Continued emphasis on accident prevention can reduce recreational boating fatalities still further, and in particular, deaths by drowning which remain the leading cause of recreational boating fatalities.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating and recognizing the accomplishments of this Kentucky nonprofit, which in its 50 years, has significantly contributed to the safety of this popular pastime for all Americans.

COLONEL JEFFREY A. "TANK" KOCH RETIRES AFTER 22 YEARS SERVICE WITH THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. McKEON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to COL Jeff "Tank" Koch on the occasion of his retirement from the United States Air Force.

I have had the pleasure of working with Colonel Koch on a number of occasions during his tenure here in the House, and have greatly appreciated his professionalism, knowledge, and dedication, which I know has benefited me personally, as well as numerous other members, and countless staff.

So it goes without saying that Colonel Koch's professional achievements are numerous, but I know would be the first to state that none of them would have been possible without the love and support of his wife and family. Throughout Colonel Koch's service to our country, his wife, Tracey, has been his mainstay and a selfless partner. Her balance and calm has seen their family through multiple moves to military bases within the U.S. and overseas. Together with their children, Caleb and Abby, the Koch family has endured the challenges and sacrifice of family separation and relocations. Each member of the Koch family has made a significant contribution to the U.S. Air Force and our great Nation.

Colonel Koch has led an enviable career. After receiving his commission through the Reserve Officers Training Corps at Troy State University in 1987, Colonel Koch proceeded to numerous distinguished assignments. With his new pilot wings and assignment to the A-10 Thunderbolt fighter jet, Colonel Koch served in the 92nd Tactical Fighter Squadron at RAF Bentwaters, UK flying 37 operational combat missions over Northern Iraq in direct support of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. With help from the 92nd's armed reconnaissance and close air support missions, thousands of starving Kurdish refugees received life-sustaining food and supplies.

After this, Colonel Koch served as an instructor pilot at the U.S. Air Force Academy, returned to the A-10 to fly missions in Korea, and instructed at the same Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program he completed earlier in his career. Colonel Koch also served as flight commander in the 358th Fighter Squadron, executive officer for two commanders of the 12th Air Force, and Chief of Offensive Operations at the AFSOUTH Combined Air and Space Operations Center. He also served as a Presidential Advance Team Agent—and a Capitol Hill Fellow for Congressman Jim Gibbons of Nevada. This successful arc continued with a stint in the Air Force's Programs Directorate as the Chief of the Joint Strike Fighter Programming office and command of the 557th Flying Training Squadron. These successful milestones were recognized with assignment to one of DoD's most challenging senior developmental education opportunities, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Following ICAF, Colonel Koch received a follow-on assignment back to the Pentagon as a Senior Readiness Analyst for the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness.

Perhaps the most challenging assignment was his final one as Chief of the Air Force House Legislative Liaison Office. This seasoned aviator and Command Pilot with more than 3,000 flight hours in five different aircraft has been a trusted and articulate voice for the Air Force on Capitol Hill.

Colonel Koch has excelled throughout his distinguished career and I am honored to pay tribute to this Airman. Madam Speaker, on behalf of Congress and the United States of America, I thank COL Jeff Koch, his wife Tracey and their children, Caleb and Abbey, for their service to our country. I wish them Godspeed, and continued happiness as they start a new chapter in their lives.

A TRIBUTE TO THE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES FOR THE KENTUCKY OFFICE FOR THE BLIND

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Independent Living Services for the Kentucky Office for the Blind.

Independent Living Services is a rehabilitation program administered by the Kentucky Office for the Blind and provides a broad range of services. They value self-determination and encourage individuals to learn skills that will allow them to achieve their desired level of independence.

In September of this year, the Independent Living Services will celebrate 30 years of dedication to helping individuals throughout the commonwealth with vision impairments achieve their maximum level of independence.

Through the effective leadership of the Office for the Blind and the dedication of Independent Living Counselors, thousands of Kentuckians have realized their goal of greater independence in their homes, communities and workplaces.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 30th anniversary of the Independent Living Services and thank the individuals who have committed so much of themselves to help ensure all Kentuckians are given the resources they need to succeed.

NAZARETH DER TAVITIAN: A GENOCIDE SURVIVOR STORY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to memorialize and record a courageous story of survival of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide, perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, resulted in the death of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau documented at the time, it was a campaign of "race extermination."

The campaign to annihilate the Armenian people failed, as illustrated by the proud Armenian nation and prosperous diaspora. It is difficult if not impossible to find an Armenian

family not touched by the genocide, and while there are some survivors still with us, it is imperative that we record their stories. Through the Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project, I hope to document the harrowing stories of the survivors in an effort to preserve their accounts and to help educate the Members of Congress now and in the future of the necessity of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

This is one of those stories:

(By Sarkis DerTavitian)

My grandfather Nazareth Der Tavitian was born in Malatya, Turkey. His family consisted of his wife, three sons and two daughters. The eldest child, my aunt was born in 1900. My father followed as the eldest son; he was born in 1903. Next in line was the youngest of the daughters and she was born in 1907, followed by my uncle Kevork in 1910. The youngest son, Hampartsoum was born in 1913.

My grandfather was a successful merchant in Malatya, Turkey. His wealth included large tobacco and opium fields, as well as the export of various goods such as leather, and dried fruits to Europe and America. He often traveled to Aleppo and Istanbul in order to conduct his business. At the brink of WWI in 1914, a Turkish friend of my grandfather informed him that the situation was not looking good for Turkish-Armenians, he advised that he, along with his eldest son—my father make a temporary move to Istanbul, in hopes that the move would keep them safe until the situation had calmed within the provinces. My grandfather, uncomfortable with the idea of leaving the rest of the family during precarious times, conveyed these worries to a dear friend, who at the time was the military general of Malatya. The general assured him that as long as he remained in his position, no Turkish citizen or official could bring harm to him or his family. As the war progressed and the Young Turks solidified their power they ordered the replacement of all leading generals in the provinces, including Malatya—the aim being to break the power of the provisional leaders. My grandfather's dear friend was soon replaced. The alteration of leadership happened abruptly, therefore the opportunity to migrate was infeasible to all those who resided in Malatya.

As soon as my grandfather's friend was replaced as the military general of Malatya, my grandfather was arrested and taken into custody. He had been imprisoned for two weeks when the chief of police gave him an ultimatum—abandon your religion or go under the sword. My grandfather refused to renounce his religion therefore he was murdered instantly. (This story was conveyed to my father by those who were jailed with my grandfather, they had converted in order to save their lives).

Having been one of the more successful residents of Malatya, my grandfather had an apprentice whom he regarded both as a friend and apprentice. It was his way of giving back to the community, which until the Genocide had offered him and his family the utmost comfort and good. This friend was aware of the wealth that was kept in my grandfather's home. He came to see if assistance was needed, as he was not a Turkish-Armenian, but rather a Turk by heritage. To his surprise he found that my grandfather had already been taken into custody, and my grandmother was in hiding in the basement of the family home, she had escaped the mandatory deportation of Malatya. He as-

sured them that he would be back once he can figure out how he could best be of service. Comforted by his statement, the family continued to stay in hiding as they eagerly awaited his return.

Unfortunately, the loyalty of my grandfather's apprentice was not to be trusted. Upon leaving my father's family home, he went to the local police and informed them that my grandmother, along with the children were in hiding and had escaped the mandatory deportation. He provided the local police with the proper address and location, as well as the background information pertaining to my family.

My grandmother had taken precautions and had told my father along with the eldest of the daughters where the family fortune was hidden. Having heard and seen the horrific experience of mass murder and deportation my grandmother was well aware that her family would not stay intact. In the likely chance that she would be taken into arrest, she had hoped that the large amount of family savings would either help the children sustain themselves or buy their safety.

Soon thereafter, my grandmother was taken into exile. My father recalls her carrying a child as the police forced her out of the home; leaving the remaining children orphaned. My grandmother was never to be heard from again. The fate of my grandmother and her infant remains unknown. That was the last they saw or heard of their mother. The children were not sent into exile. They continued to hide in the basement of the family home.

After my grandmother was taken away my grandfather's apprentice rushed to the house. Seeing the children, distraught, alone and in tears he assured them that he would find their mother and return her to safety. He left only to return in a couple of days. We concluded that the two-day absence would assure that no other family member was present to care for the children. Upon his return, he lied to the children and told them that he was able to find their mother that she was well, but in need of their help. He told the children that their mother asked that they gather the hidden family wealth, in order to bail her out of jail. Their father's apprentice would take care of the procedure. The eldest child my aunt, obliged in trust and showed my grandfather's apprentice where the wealth was hidden. The family wealth amounted to two barrels of 20,000 gold coins. The average yearly salary in Malatya at the time of the Armenian Genocide was two gold coins—the salary of 10,000 Turkish workers. As the children eagerly awaited their mother's return, my grandfather's apprentice enjoyed the sudden lavishness of wealth. Out of immense guilt, my aunt, the eldest child of Nazareth DerTavitian became severely ill. She died at the age of 15.

A year after the murder of my grandfather and grandmother, the Turkish police came to the family home and took my father, his two brothers and his sister into government headquarters. They demanded that they convert to Islam or their fate would resemble that of their parents. My father, now being the eldest spoke for the entire family. He decided that the safety of his brothers and sister was of the utmost importance. They all converted to Islam and circumcised in accordance to Muslim tradition. They now held new identities, a new religion and new names. My father Kevork became Bakeer. They continued to live in Malatya in hopes of regaining the ownership of their father's land. They thought that that hopeful day

had come when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk ratified a law in which whoever held the certificate to the land on which they resided could claim ownership of that land. My father was able to find the necessary certificates to the family home and took them to the provincial government of Malatya. To my father's devastation they would not allow him to have ownership of his land, because he himself was not Nazaret Der Tavitian. By statute, the lands could not be claimed by the living children of the deceased. Under this new law my father along with his siblings was left homeless. They would either live on the streets of Malatya or leave Turkey and start a new life in Aleppo, a safe haven for Armenian refugees. Their obstacles were many. In addition to having limited amount of resources, a law of conversion hindered the arduous road ahead. Converted persons were not allowed to leave Turkey; therefore they had to risk their physical safety by escaping out of the country. The family was separated in order to secure a safe departure. Riding on mules they individually reached Aleppo, around 1924. They were reunited in the refugee camps of Aleppo.

In 1959, when I was barely 16 years old, the sister of a dear friend of my father's came to visit her brother from Malatya. I, along with my parents went to welcome her. There, I overheard her recall to my father that his father's three story home was still standing and had been converted into an orphanage. The elaborate Damascene hand woven wooden front door, which was the mark of the DerTavitian household, was still standing.

This story, which I just relayed to you, is but one story in the devastating events of the Armenian genocide. The price of which we continue to pay. My father passed 34 years ago. He led an incredibly difficult life. The events of 1915 continued to haunt him. He was unable to surrender the thoughts, emotions and images that followed him throughout his life. I believe that if my father was alive today, his one desire would be to assure that no other peoples or nation suffer under the same fate that he had seen and experienced. I hope that this testimony will play a small, yet significant part of our most basic human quest, that of human rights.

I thank you for taking on this endeavor. Through your actions, you assure that your character is great. For you not only honor and love justice, but rather, work towards its fulfillment.

HONORING 100 YEARS OF SCOUTING

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America. As Scouts from across America gather this week for their 2010 National Scout Jamboree, I rise to congratulate them on their long-standing success, and thank the Scouts for all the work they have done over the years to build our young men into upstanding and trustworthy citizens.