

RECOGNIZING THE LAS VEGAS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's Hispanic American Resource Team's (H.A.R.T.) 10th Academy for their efforts to combat crimes against Hispanic-Americans, while building good will and trust between the city's police department and the Hispanic community.

For more than a decade, H.A.R.T. has fulfilled and exceeded its mission, "to build and maintain positive relationships between the Hispanic community and the police through compassion and innovative thinking." At its core, the H.A.R.T. program trains and places talented officers who are fluent in English and Spanish to work directly with Spanish-dominant community members. It is through language ability, cultural competence, and dedication that H.A.R.T. maintains public safety for the broader community regardless of language capability or immigration status.

A centerpiece of the educational services H.A.R.T. provides is the Hispanic Citizens Academy which offers an intensive 12-week training program in Spanish to non-English speaking community members to impart knowledge on how to navigate through routine law enforcement protocols, including knowing their legal rights and how to contact the police in case of an emergency. The Hispanic Citizens Academy helps strengthen the partnership between the Hispanic immigrant community and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. In fact, the National League of Cities recognized Las Vegas and the H.A.R.T. program as one of the top 17 U.S. police departments for good practices in a June 2011 report. H.A.R.T.'s work serves as a model for other police departments across the Nation to ensure public safety in immigrant communities by keeping them informed and engaged.

On May 23, 2012, H.A.R.T. will be celebrating the graduation of individuals serving in the 10th Hispanic Citizens Academy, a stage shared by more than 500 alumni of the program. I am a proud supporter of the H.A.R.T. program, and I applaud the leadership and dedication law enforcement officers have demonstrated to the growing Hispanic population of my home State of Nevada. I ask my colleagues to please join me in congratulating the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and its H.A.R.T. initiative as they celebrate the 10th Hispanic Citizens Academy. I wish H.A.R.T. continued success in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES CECIL

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, today I wish to honor Mr. James Cecil, who is believed to be the last living member of the 729th Platoon of the 2nd

Marine Division, known as the Lexington Platoon. Mr. Cecil and 69 other men from the central Kentucky area formed the Platoon in 1942, 8 months after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. These young men went on to fight in some of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific, including in Okinawa, Saipan, Tinian, and Guadalcanal.

The Lexington Platoon was honored on Thursday, May 17 at the Lexington Urban City Council meeting, with Mr. Cecil being the only member present. Lexington Mayor Jim Gray proclaimed it James Cecil Day, and Councilman Jay McChord spoke about his interviews with Mr. Cecil while writing his 2010 book, *A Veteran's Legacy: Field Kit Journal*.

James Cecil grew up on a tobacco farm, and chose to join the Marines when the United States entered the war rather than being drafted. He was promoted from private to corporal after killing a Japanese officer and obtaining his map of artillery positions, and received a Purple Heart for injuries suffered during the battle of Saipan in June 1944.

Although Mr. Cecil was recommended for officer candidate school in August 1945, he never got the chance to attend, as in the weeks following, the United States bombed Japan, thus ending World War II.

After his service, Mr. Cecil moved to Ohio and became the owner of a successful trucking company. He moved back to Lexington after the death of his wife, Janet, in 1988. Today, Mr. Cecil is in good health and still often reflects on his wartime experiences. He says that he feels "honored and proud that [he] served [his] country."

I would like to ask at this time for my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to join me in recognizing Mr. James Cecil for his brave service to our Nation during World War II. There was recently an article published in the Lexington Herald-Leader highlighting Mr. Cecil's valorous service and his platoon's legacy. I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

[From the Lexington Herald-Leader, May 15, 2012]

SOLE SURVIVING MARINES' LEXINGTON PLATOON MEMBER TO BE HONORED  
(By Tom Eblen)

Eight months after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, hundreds of people gathered around the steps of the Fayette County Courthouse to honor James T. Cecil and 69 other local boys.

The recent graduates of Henry Clay, Lafayette and other central Kentucky high schools were forming the Lexington Platoon of the United States Marine Corps. Mayor T. Ward Havely and other dignitaries spoke at the mass-induction ceremony. A young lady sang the Marine Hymn, and women and children wept, the Lexington Herald and Leader reported in late August 1942.

Platoon members left in buses that day for processing in Louisville and training in San Diego. From there, they joined some of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific Theater: Okinawa, Saipan, Tinian and Guadalcanal.

The Lexington Platoon will be honored again Thursday at the Urban County Council meeting. This time, Cecil, 88, will be the only platoon member present. "As best we can tell, I'm the only one left," he said.

Mayor Jim Gray will present a proclamation declaring James Cecil Day. Councilman Jay McChord will speak about how he met Cecil and other World War II veterans while writing and illustrating his 2010 book, *A Veteran's Legacy: Field Kit Journal*.

"We're losing so many of these guys every day, it's good any time we can honor them," McChord said. "We need to remind ourselves of who they are and what they did."

Cecil and Mitch Alcorn, his Lafayette High School buddy and the longtime Midway postmaster, began tracking down their fellow Lexington Platoon members several years ago, searching the Internet and running ads in veterans magazines.

By this time last year, the group had dwindled to the two of them and Elwood Watkins, who earned a Silver Star and three Purple Hearts in battle. Watkins died July 12. Alcorn, who earned a Purple Heart and later fought in the Korean and Vietnam wars as an Army officer, died February 18.

Cecil grew up on a tobacco farm off Nicholasville Road. "We didn't have any money, but we had plenty to eat," he said. "We had milk cows, chickens and a big garden."

When the war came, he decided to join the Marines rather than wait to be drafted. After training, platoon members were scattered to various units of the 2nd Marine Division, although Cecil served alongside Alcorn and a few others from Lexington. "We were just like a big family," he said.

As I talked with Cecil last week, he pulled out a small envelope. Inside was a portrait of a Japanese officer he killed, and money and a ration card he found in the officer's pocket. That wasn't all: The officer was carrying a map of artillery positions, a find that got Cecil promoted from private to corporal.

Cecil earned a Purple Heart for wounds suffered in the battle of Saipan on June 20, 1944. He survived several Japanese suicide attacks on his camps at night.

"The next morning you couldn't walk without walking on a dead Marine or a dead Japanese," he said.

At the battle of Okinawa, a Japanese suicide pilot hit the USS *Hinsdale* before Cecil's unit could land on the beach. Cecil spent 45 minutes in the cold water, watching for sharks, before a Navy destroyer rescued him.

"We had so many killed and wounded," Cecil said. "Every battle, you just didn't know who was going to be next."

Cecil's only trip stateside came in August 1945, when he was recommended for officer candidate school. Before he could begin, though, U.S. forces dropped atomic bombs on Japan, and World War II ended.

After the war, Cecil had a successful career as the owner of an Ohio-based trucking company. He moved back to Lexington after Janet, his wife of 52 years, died in 1998. In his apartment, he proudly displays photos of her, their sons and their grandsons.

Cecil's health is good, his mind sharp. He finds himself thinking a lot these days about his wartime experiences, including the occasional nightmare with Japanese soldiers "getting after me."

"I just felt honored and proud that I served my country," Cecil said. "Coming off a tobacco patch and going into battle, that was a hell of a change. We were just a bunch of brave boys."

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Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam President, earlier today the