

Retired Army Sergeant (SGT) Douglas Kennard, SGT Kennard's father, recently said his son grew up living on military bases in the United States and Germany. SGT Kennard graduated from General H.H. Arnold High School in Weisbaden, Germany in 2002. SGT Kennard followed in his father's footsteps when he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2003. "He wanted to join the Army," Mr. Kennard said. "I am extremely proud of him. I was always proud of him."

Pamela Pleasant, SGT Kennard's aunt, said she was always proud of her nephew. "He was an awesome kid," Mrs. Pleasant said. "He had a smile that would light up a room. He was so humble. I miss him terribly."

SGT Kennard was remembered by a fellow soldier on a memorial website. "I will always remember your smile, Kennard," Sergeant (SGT) Michele Martin wrote. "He is a very special person and a soldier. He was always there for his fellow comrades. When you were down, his smile always cheered you up. I will always cherish Kennard in my heart and always remember the great sacrifice he took for this great nation and his family to be free."

A funeral was held for SGT Kennard at Mount Pelier Missionary Baptist Church in Starkville, Mississippi. SGT Kennard was laid to rest at Memorial Garden Park, which is located near Mississippi State University in Starkville.

SGT Kennard is survived by his parents, Douglas and Darlene Kennard; his brother, Jamahl Kennard; and his aunt, Pamela Pleasant.

SGT Kennard gave his life to protect our nation. His service will always be remembered.

HONORING RONALD JOHNSON

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the longstanding career of Ronald Johnson, a fearless leader for more than three decades in the fight against HIV/AIDS. His leadership spans numerous esteemed organizations and agencies including the Gay Men's Health Crisis, Minority Task Force on AIDS, City of New York, Presidential Advisory Council, AIDS Action, and United AIDS from which he is now retiring.

Following the Stonewall Uprising in 1969, the gay community of New York City witnessed the rising swell of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Throughout the 1980's, the number of AIDS-related deaths climbed higher each year. In 1981, amidst widespread fear and uncertainty, Dr. Lawrence Mass and Larry Kramer founded the first New York City nonprofit devoted to HIV and AIDS awareness, testing, education, advocacy, and prevention. They called it the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC).

Mr. Johnson began volunteering with GMHC in 1984, while continuing his service as the Assistant Executive Director of the University Settlement, a nonprofit social service program that assisted immigrants and low-income families with fulfilling their health, education, and housing needs. After volunteering for a few years, Mr. Johnson was invited to join the GMHC's Board of Directors.

Mr. Johnson served as Executive Director of the Minority Task Force on AIDS and in 1992

was appointed the Citywide Coordinator for AIDS Policy for the City of New York. Known for being both forceful and persuasive yet guided by facts, Mr. Johnson helped the city develop a comprehensive strategy for stemming the HIV/AIDS epidemic through proactive education, prevention, and treatment. He strengthened the city's AIDS hotline and testing programs, needle-exchange program, and housing and medical care services for AIDS patients.

By 1996, Mr. Johnson was rewarded for his efforts as he witnessed a sharp decline in New York City's HIV and AIDS-related deaths. His programs were working and he had the data to prove it. He later joined the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, where he helped design the policy thinking and best practices for the President's Emergency Plans for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Today, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, I am honored to commend Ronald Johnson for his long career advocating for the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS. His service and devotion has saved lives, inspired hope, and made this world a remarkably safer and better place.

HONOR THE LIFE OF GREG WOOD

HON. STEPHANIE N. MURPHY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of one of my constituents, Greg Wood, who passed away on October 14, 2017, at the age of 70.

In tribute to Greg, who served in the United States Marine Corps and was wounded in action during the Vietnam War, my office arranged for an American flag to be flown over the U.S. Capitol. I am so glad that our country raised the flag in Greg's honor, because Greg did so much to support and defend this country. Greg fought to protect the fundamental freedoms that our flag represents.

This Saturday is Veterans Day, when our nation pauses to express gratitude to all those who honorably served, both living and departed. The day before, I will attend a ceremony at the Park Maitland School in Orlando, where we will formally present the flag to Greg's widow, Donna. Donna was kind enough to talk to my office about her late husband, about what mattered most to him, and about how he lived his life.

Greg was many things—a Texan at heart despite spending most of his life in the Sunshine State; a well-educated man who earned a master's degree in finance; an adventure-seeker who once rode his motorcycle from the United States all the way down to Panama; a respected commercial real estate broker; a sports lover; a fisherman and a hunter; and a pillar of our central Florida community.

But, as Donna made crystal clear, Greg was—above all—a U.S. Marine and a family man. These two roles defined him. They were the core of who he was. They gave his life purpose and meaning.

In a speech that he delivered many years ago to members of the Marine Corps, President Ronald Reagan said: "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But the Marines don't have that problem."

Greg volunteered to serve in the Marine Corps in March 1966, when he was only 18 years old. After basic training, Greg was sent to Vietnam, where he served as a forward observer—directing artillery fire onto enemy targets. Working as a forward observer, especially in Vietnam, was an exceptionally dangerous job.

The Marines are famous for their bravery, discipline and toughness. Greg was a Marine's Marine—respected and even revered by his brothers in arms for his courage and commitment. Despite his youth, Greg was a natural leader of men. They followed him, and they trusted him. Some even thought he might be invincible, and did not want to go out on patrols unless Greg was going with them.

Friendships forged in war are uniquely deep and intense. Greg lost many good friends in Vietnam—and, as Donna tells us, he carried these losses with him for the remainder of his life. On some days, the memories haunted Greg, and he struggled with feelings of sadness and guilt. Like any warrior who has seen his fellow warriors fall, Greg naturally asked himself: "Why them and not me?"

Physically, as well as psychologically, Greg did not leave Vietnam unscathed. One fateful day, while out on a mission, he was shot and critically wounded—earning a Purple Heart. When Greg awoke hours later in a military hospital, a priest was administering his last rites. Although he survived, doctors told him he was unlikely to live past age 35. In a sense, then, Greg's entire life was one big case of beating the odds.

After being honorably discharged from the Marines, Greg was determined to become successful professionally and personally—in part to honor his fallen comrades who never had the chance to build a career or a family of their own. As Donna told us, nearly everything that Greg did later in life was shaped by his formative experience in Vietnam, whether for better or for worse.

One of Greg's daughters, Kristina, told me that her father loved war movies, but they always made him cry. It is clear that Greg had complex feelings about war itself, but that he cherished the American soldiers, sailors, airmen and—of course—Marines who fought these wars. It didn't matter whether they served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, or Iraq. He felt a sacred bond with all of them.

In addition to his military family, of course, Greg treasured his own family—which includes Donna, four children, and eight grandchildren. By all accounts, he was a loving husband and father, who coached Little League, served as a Boy Scout leader, and did all the big things and little things that great dads do.

So, I hope Greg has been reunited with the friends he lost in Vietnam. I hope he is happy and at peace. And I hope he knows how much his life mattered to his family and to the country he so nobly served.

TRIBUTE TO MCGWIRE MIDKIFF

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate McGwire