

Rt. 248 (POW/MIA Highway) Dedication

Good morning ... and welcome to this long-overdue POW/MIA highway dedication ceremony. I am honored to be in attendance here today; but more importantly, I am honored to be in the presence of so many distinguished veterans who are accompanied by their families, friends and elected officials today ... at this honorable event.

As Majority Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I have the distinct privilege of interacting with veterans, and various veterans organizations, on a routine basis. Now, ... we all know that a veteran is a veteran in the eyes of all veterans.

(PAUSE)

That is to say that we honor all who have worn the uniform and honorably served their country.

In terms of classification of veterans, a few distinctions can be made. Distinctions that necessarily do not separate a veteran from a

veteran, but rather ... draw our attention to a heightened experience which certain veterans had the displeasure to endure.

In the case of our country's prisoners of war and those missing in action, their experiences, which we are only now beginning to fully chronicle, do draw some distinction, in regard to their continued hardships ... which lapsed well beyond their actual battlefield experiences.

Therefore, I think that it is altogether befitting that we do everything within our capabilities ... to ensure that the heroic deeds and sacrifices of our nation's POW/MIAs are not forgotten.

Thus, the dedication of this section of highway, to be known as the "POW/MIA Highway" ... will serve as a constant reminder to us, as well as our future generations, ... a reminder of the hardships that these heroic men and women have endured, so that our present-day society can be what it is today. We, the citizens of this great nation, Commonwealth and community, are truly the benefactors of their great sacrifices. We must never forget this fact ... and more importantly, we must never forget them as individuals -- in

particular, those service men and women who are missing-in-action, and their demise is known only to God.

I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you today, to do what is proper for our beloved POW/MIAs. Ceremonies such as this are an important portion of our commitment to remember and honor these men and women. But ... another important part to this honor, is to assure ourselves that we will never, ever ... cease in our efforts to fully account for each and every missing-in-action service member who remains in that uncertain limbo.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to be a part of this honorable dedication ceremony ... and more importantly ... thank each and every one of you for your presence here today. Your support and cooperation in today's event ... ensures that we, as a community ... will never forget these individuals.

(PAUSE)

We will never forget!

Thank you.