

House Natural Resources Committee  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

May 4, 2011

Testimony of Rep. Ken Calvert

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. As a former Member of the Natural Resources Committee I'm happy to be back among friends to talk about H.R. 320, a bill to designate a national Distinguished Flying Cross Memorial. I am seeking your support for the legislation.

I am honored to represent the Inland Empire Chapter of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society which is the primary sponsor of the memorial. I introduced H.R. 320 which would designate a memorial, which is currently under construction at March Field Air Museum, in Riverside, California, as the Distinguished Flying Cross National Memorial. It honors all current and former members of the armed forces who have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The bill has strong bipartisan support with 25 cosponsors. The legislation is supported by the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Military Officers Association of America, the Air Force Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, and the China Burma Indian Veterans Association. I'd like to point out language in the bill that specifically states that the designation shall not be construed to require or permit federal funds to be expended for any purpose related to the national memorial. Funds have been and will continue to be raised through private means for these purposes.

Distinguished Flying Cross recipients have received the prestigious medal for their heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight while serving in any capacity with the U.S. Armed Forces. There are many well known people that have played a vital role in the history of military aviation and have received the award. This group includes: Captain Charles L. Lindbergh, former President George H. W. Bush, Brigadier General Jimmy Doolittle, General Curtis Lemay, Senator McCain, Jimmy Stewart and Admiral Jim Stockdale to name just a few.

The March Air Reserve Base, which hosts the C-17As of the 452nd Air Mobility Wing is adjacent to the location of the memorial at the March Field Air Museum. When completed, visitors will be able to witness active operational air units providing support to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is an appropriate setting that honors the many aviators who have distinguished themselves by deeds performed in aerial flight.

The memorial will be topped by a two foot by two foot Distinguished Flying Cross of polished bronze and models of the Spirit of Saint Louis and a Loening OA-1A amphibian aircraft. The OA-1A was chosen because the Pan-American Goodwill Flights were made in five OA-1A aircraft by ten pilots between 1926 and 1927. The pilots were the first recipients of the Distinguished Flying Certificate from President Calvin Coolidge.

Again, I hope you will join me in supporting the designation of the National Distinguished Flying Cross Memorial at the March Field Air Museum and H.R. 320. Thank you.