

Rep. Henry Cuellar Post Office Floor Speech

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1209, which will rename a post office facility in my district at 901 North Francisco Avenue, in Mission, Texas, as the Mission Veterans Post Office. Across my district, fine men and women of all walks of life have honorably served our country, and it is critical that we honor their service and their dedication. Mission alone is home to over 2,000 veterans, according to the U.S. Census. Dedicating this post office to our veterans will serve as an enduring reminder of the sacrifices that our friends, neighbors, and family have made while serving their country.

These individuals put country ahead of self and I am proud to recognize them with the dedication of this post office facility. Today, in particular, I want to acknowledge the sacrifice of Captain Joaquin Castro of Mission, Texas. Captain Castro joined the Army Air Corps in 1941 and served as a B-17 pilot in the Pacific theater. He was stationed in Hickam field, Hawaii during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor where his airfield was extensively damaged and suffered heavy casualties.

However, Captain Castro would go on to serve several missions against enemy forces before being declared missing in action during a bombing mission. He received the National Defense Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with an oak leaf cluster. Captain Castro would eventually be honored with an elementary school named after him in his hometown of Mission, Texas. However, he was known to be a humble and diligent individual who served in a variety of jobs before joining the military, including as a janitor, school bus driver and stenographer.

We owe our freedoms to veterans like Mr. Castro, which why I am recognizing him with the dedication of this post office, for not only his service, but also for other veterans. He's just one example of many veterans who have made countless sacrifices for their country in the face of danger. The bravery and commitment of our veterans to our nation demonstrates what it really means to be an American.

I would also like to take a moment to thank veterans' organizations throughout my district for their tireless work in providing the care that our veterans need. Let us remember and express our gratitude to these courageous people: the veterans, their families, as well as their caregivers. In the words of President John F. Kennedy, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers." This bill allows us to show our appreciation for the veterans of Mission, Texas, and make sure that their sacrifice and service to our country is not forgotten.