



Vol. 25 No. 3

The Gardien

Clan Montgomery Society International
News Magazine



Summer
2006

A Thousand Year Tradition

Inside This Issue

As I See It	3
Bits & Bytes	4
Serendipity	4
How Many Ways Can You Spell Montgomery?	6
At the Root of It All	7
Upcoming Events	8
Flowers of the Forest	9
Election Info And Ballot	10 11
Our Montgomery Family	12
Games Reports	14
AGM Info	16
AGM Registration	18
Treasurer's Report	19
New Members	20
Tartan Shop	21

G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Leaves a Legacy to Thousands



Former Congressman "Sonny" Montgomery appeared at the dedication of the transport plane bearing his name. With him are Ret. Col. Ed Montgomery and his wife Lucia. Ed is the Congressman's 1st cousin once removed, and are the Rockies CMSI Vice Presidents.

Former Congressman Sonny Montgomery was CMSI member # 20. It is such a simple sentence to begin an article about the death of an American patriot, a soldier, a great legislator, and a loyal Mississippian. Gillespie V. Montgomery passed away on May 12, 2006 in his hometown of Meridian, Mississippi. He was 85 years old.

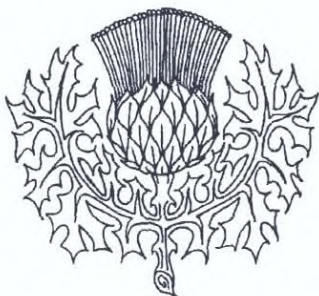
Born August 5, 1920 in Meridian, he served overseas in World War II, and then returned home to Meridian to start a successful insurance business while rising to the rank of major general in the Mississippi National Guard. Having received the Bronze Star during the war, he returned to combat with the Thirty-first Dixie Division during the Korean conflict in 1951. Montgomery began his public political career in 1956 by running for, and being elected to, the Mississippi State Senate. Ten years later he successfully ran for Congress. A conserva-

tive Democrat, Sonny Montgomery served an east-central Mississippi district in Congress from 1967 to 1997. For 13 years he chaired the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld issued this statement on the day of Rep. Montgomery's death: "With the passing of Sonny Montgomery, America has lost a true patriot, and the men and women in uniform have lost one of their most passionate advocates. A decorated veteran of World War II—where he won the Bronze Star for capturing a German machine gun nest—as well as the Korean War, Sonny Montgomery brought his personal experience and expertise in military matters to bear in a lifetime of public service."

Secretary Rumsfeld called it a privilege to serve with Congressman Montgomery when he first joined the House of Representatives in the late 1960's. "Because of

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 1)

A Legacy to Thousands

the way he treated everyone with grace and respect, Sonny would go on to become one of the most beloved and respected members of the Congress on both sides of the aisle”, stated Rumsfeld. He went on to say that Montgomery’s most outstanding legislative accomplishment was the Montgomery GI Bill, which bears his name. The Secretary said that the bill “extended educational benefits to countless thousands of soldiers in the nation’s all-volunteer service.”

Because of his 13 years as chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Sonny Montgomery was known as a champion of service members and veterans. Veterans Affairs Secretary R. James Nicholson referred to Montgomery as “Mr. Veteran.” He further stated, “Sonny Montgomery once said, ‘Patriotism is a pretty simple word, but also a beautiful word to most Americans.’ Sonny Montgomery exemplified patriotism, and he will be greatly missed.”

Army Lt. General H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, called Montgomery “the quintessential citizen-soldier who set the conditions for the success of the all-volunteer force.” The Enlisted Association of the National Guard named its highest tribute for him, the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Eagle Award.

Retired Brig. Gen. Stephen M. Koper, president of the National Guard Association of the United States, said, “The National Guard as an institution and individual Guardsmen past, present and future owe Sonny Montgomery an enormous debt of gratitude for his lifetime of effort on our behalf.” He went on to say, “To us, he is more than a giant. He is, and forever will be, ‘Mr. National Guard.’ “



In a speech in 1993, Rep. Montgomery recalled the fight to get the Montgomery GI Bill passed. He stated that “while all the GI bills have helped veterans readjust to civilian life, the Montgomery Bill had the added purpose of being a tremendous incentive for bright young men and women to join our armed forces.”

The Montgomery Bill was passed and President Ronald Reagan signed the bill into law in October of 1984. Under the Montgomery GI Bill, veterans with two years of active service who contributed \$1200 of their own money were eligible to receive tuition payments of \$300 a month for 36 months. The Army and Navy then kicked in an additional payment to bring the total benefits to roughly \$17,000 . The payments have since been raised after the original bill was passed.

George Herbert Walker Bush, the first President Bush, said that the version of the Montgomery Bill that was enacted in 1984 was “an important component in the success of America’s all volunteer forces, and among the most practical and cost-efficient programs ever devised.”

The current President Bush awarded Sonny Montgomery the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our nation’s highest civilian award, in November of 2005 “for his service to our country and for his dedicated work to honor and improve the lives of the men and women who sacrifice for our liberty.”

Following the former Congressman’s death, President Bush issued the following statement, “Laura and I and the entire Bush family are saddened by the death of a good friend and patriot, Sonny Montgomery.” Continuing, the President said, “Sonny Montgomery served during World War II and the Korean War, and he was a tireless advocate for America’s veterans throughout his three decades in the House of Representatives. He sponsored the Montgomery GI Bill, which has helped make higher education and professional training accessible to millions of our veterans.”

Gillespie V. “Sonny” Montgomery has a long list of military institutions named in his honor. Among them are the Veteran’s Affairs Medical Center in Jackson, Miss, the Naval Reserve Training Center at Naval Air Station Meridian, and the Sonny Montgomery Airport at Forest, Miss. Also, the Mississippi Air National Guard’s C-17 III transport plane is named “The Spirit of G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery.”