



CONGRESSMAN

G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery

G. V. "SONNY" MONTGOMERY—A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In 1773 there were among the passengers of a certain ship that left Ireland seven Montgomerys - four brothers and three sisters: James, David, Hugh, Charles, Margaret, Jane and Nancy. They landed in Charleston, South Carolina.

Charles Montgomery and his wife Margaret Reynolds had twelve children: Sarah, Jane, Charles, William, James, John, Margaret, David, Mary, Nancy, Martha, and Hugh. Between the years 1835 and 1845 the older ones of the second generation of this family moved from Fairfield County, South Carolina to Oktibbeha County, Mississippi. They lived near Starkville for many years and all died there except William, who moved to Hinds County, Mississippi.

The descendents of these families are found in many parts of the South and West. The Hon. Gillespie V. "Sonny" Montgomery, Clan Montgomery member No. 20, is one of these descendents. He represents in the Congress of the United States the Third District in Mississippi which consists of the counties of: Clarke, Clay, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Lowndes, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Scott, Smith, and Winston. Parts of five other counties which are: Attala, Choctaw, Jones, Madison and Rankin. His biographical sketch follows.

GILLESPIE V. (Sonny) MONTGOMERY, Mississippi Democrat, was born in Meridian, (Lauderdale County) Mississippi. He was educated in the Meridian Public Schools, the McCallie School in Chattanooga, Tenn., and Mississippi State University, where he received a B.S. degree.

He is a retired major general in the Mississippi National Guard, having served more than 35 years in the military. His active and reserve service includes duty in World War II in the European Theatre and with the 31st Infantry Division during the Korean Conflict. Among his military awards are the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Bronze Star for Valor, Army Commendation Medal, WWII European Theatre Ribbon and the Mississippi Magnolia Cross Award.

One of the awards cherished most highly by the Congressman is the Certificate of Merit he received from the American Red Cross for saving a life. Other awards of honor given to Rep. Montgomery during his years of public service include the Distinguished Service Citation by the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, Congressional Award by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Silver Helmet Congressional Award from the AMVETS of World War II, Distinguished National Veterans Award, given at the National Veterans Day program in Birmingham, Ala., Distinguished Service Award by the Central Mississippi Chapter of the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame, Mississippi State University Alumnus of the Year, McCallie School Distinguished Alumnus. He has further received special awards from the National Guard Association of the United States, including its highest honor, the Harry S Truman Award, for "constant and outstanding support and counsel in behalf of National Guard personnel." In August 1981, the G.V. Montgomery National Guard Complex was dedicated in his hometown of Meridian. The complex includes the Army Aviation Support Facility and an armory serving as headquarters for two National Guard units.

He is a member of the Episcopal Church, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, 40 & 8, Shrine, Masons, Scottish Rite and York Rite. He is past president of the Mississippi Heart Association, the Mississippi State University Alumni Association and Mississippi National Guard Association.

Prior to being elected to Congress, he owned and operated Montgomery Insurance Agency in Meridian. He was elected to the Mississippi State Senate in 1956, where he served for 10 years with a perfect attendance record. He was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in November 1966 and was re-elected to his tenth term in November 1984. In 1980, he was instrumental in organizing the Conservative Democratic Forum.

Now serving his ninth term on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, he assumed the chairmanship of the full committee in 1981 and was re-elected chairman for the 99th Congress. He also serves as chairman of the Oversight and Investigations subcommittee and is a member of the Compensation, Pension and Insurance subcommittee. Following seven terms on the Armed Services Committee, he has risen to ranking member on both the Military Personnel and Compensation committee, and the Military Installations and Facilities subcommittee. In the 98th Congress, he introduced and guided to passage a peacetime G.I. education bill which will provide incentives for both recruitment and retention of qualified young men and women for the all-volunteer armed forces.

In 1970, he served as chairman of the House Select Committee on U.S. Involvement in Southeast Asia and in 1975-76, he was chairman of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia. Both chairmanships are a result of his deep interest in American servicemen who served in the Vietnam Conflict and those classified as POW/MIA in Indochina. In the Spring of 1977, he went to Hanoi as a member of the presidentially-appointed Woodcock Commission, seeking additional information about missing servicemen. He was appointed chairman of the Special House Committee on Southeast Asia in 1978 to conduct further efforts on behalf of the MIAs. He has made a total of 13 trips to Vietnam.

In May 1984, Rep. Montgomery was asked by President Reagan to head a House delegation to observe the presidential elections in El Salvador. He was appointed in June 1984 by the Speaker of the House to lead the official House contingent to the 40th anniversary of the D-Day invasion at Normandy.

Congressman Montgomery served as president of the Congressional Prayer Breakfast Group in 1970.