

TRIBUTE TO THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF NURSE ANESTHETISTS
(AANA) ON THEIR 75TH
ANNIVERSARY

HON. BEN CHANDLER
OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 15, 2006

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute today to an outstanding group of representatives from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) on their 75th anniversary of their founding, as well as the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) for their dedication to quality anesthesia care and patient safety. CRNAs are advanced practice nurses who are the hands-on providers of approximately 65 percent of all anesthesia given in the United States each year. Nurses were the first professional group to provide anesthesia services in the United States. Established in the late 1800s, nurse anesthesia has since become recognized as the first clinical nursing specialty. On June 17, 1931, pioneer nurse anesthetist Agatha Hodgins founded the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists (NANA) in Cleveland, Ohio. Eight years later, NANA officially changed its name to the present AANA. The oldest national organization of anesthesia providers in the country, the AANA is the professional association for more than 35,000 CRNAs and student nurse anesthetists. CRNAs administer every type of anesthetic and provide care for every type of surgery or procedure, from open heart to cataract to pain management. CRNAs practice in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered: traditional hospital surgical suites and obstetrical delivery rooms; critical access hospitals; ambulatory surgical centers; the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, plastic surgeons, and pain management specialists; and U.S. Military, Public Health Services, and Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare facilities. CRNAs are the sole anesthesia providers in approximately two thirds of all rural hospitals in the United States, enabling these healthcare facilities to offer obstetrical, surgical, and trauma stabilization services. In some states, CRNAs are the sole providers in nearly 100 percent of the rural hospitals. Since World War I, nurse anesthetists have been the principal anesthesia providers in combat areas of every war in which the United States has been engaged. During the Panama action, only nurse anesthetists were sent with the fighting forces. Nurse anesthetists have been held as prisoners of war, suffered combat wounds during wartime service, and have lost their lives serving their country. The names of two CRNAs killed in the Vietnam War are engraved on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. Military nurse anesthetists have been honored and decorated by the United States and foreign governments for outstanding achievements, dedication to duty, and competence in treating the seriously wounded. In the 21st Century, CRNAs continue to care for servicemen and women, their dependents, and veterans—whether on the frontlines of Iraq and Afghanistan, or in military hospitals and VA facilities. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) and their 35,000 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) as they celebrate 75 years of invaluable service to their patients and to our country.