



OREGON MILITARY DEPARTMENT
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, OREGON NATIONAL GUARD
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
1776 MILITIA WAY
P.O. BOX 14350
SALEM, OREGON 97309-5047

23 February 2016

Representative Williamson, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide a few remarks regarding Senate Concurrent Resolution 205 which honors a member of the Oregon National Guard, Specialist Alek Skarlatos. My apologies for not being able to attend this hearing in person, but my duties as Adjutant General require I be in Washington D.C. this week.

One of the greatest pleasures of being the Adjutant General is getting to honor individuals who have displayed tremendous acts of character, heroism and bravery. One such individual is Specialist Alek Skarlatos.

Specialist Skarlatos was on vacation sightseeing with his friends in Europe when he unexpectedly found himself back in harm's way. As a member of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, he had only been home from Afghanistan for less than a month. He and his friends were aboard a train carrying 500 passengers from Amsterdam to Paris when a gunman appeared carrying an AK-47. With Specialist Skarlatos' now famous words, "Let's go," he and his three friends and another British passenger tackled the gunman and wrestled the rifle out of his hands.

Specialist Skarlatos said it wasn't a conscious decision; he just acted without hesitation. I would offer that he didn't develop that outlook working in his day job, he learned it while being a Soldier in the Oregon National Guard. That split-second decision prevented a potentially catastrophic loss of life, and Specialist Skarlatos was awarded the Legion of Honor from the French President and the Soldier's Medal from the Secretary of Defense for his actions.

More recently, some of you may have seen him in the news, or performing on the television show Dancing with the Stars, where, like his act of heroism, he continues to inspire the

American People as he represents our military values and acts as an ambassador for the Oregon National Guard.

Because of his outstanding act of heroism, his selfless service as a Guardsman and his continued honorable representation of the Oregon National Guard, I whole-heartedly support the passing of Senate Concurrent Resolution 205, honoring Specialist Aleksander Skarlatos.

Thank You

Michael E. Stencel
Major General
The Adjutant General