

CPO Mark Govea Testimony – HB 2507

CPO Mark A. Govea USN(RET), MBA

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Dear Sir or Ma'am,

I am Chief Petty Officer Mark A. Govea USN(RET). I served in the US Navy for 21 years before retiring in 2008. I am a disabled veteran. I am honored and thrilled at the opportunity to write this letter about SrA Derek Scott Martin for the purpose of memorializing this American Hero with a bridge in his honor.

I came to meet and befriend SrA Martin several years ago, after he and his family moved to Visalia California. Derek was working at Valley Oaks Golf Course, of which I play most of my golf. In casual conversation I learned of Dereks service in the US Air Force and a little bit of the missions and awards he received. Derek was a humble person, as most heroes are. We became good friends.

It was also at this golf course where Derek created and ran Rimpac foundation. As soon as he learned that I was a disabled veteran he took a sincere interest in my well-being. It was at this time that he told me about the Rimpac Foundation and what it was about. Derek created Rimpac to teach disabled veterans to play golf. Derek found a way to teach golf to all veterans no matter the type of disabilities or physical limitations. His foundation offered veterans lessons, equipment, and rounds of golf, all free of cost. It also provided comradery and a place for veterans to congregate amongst their peers. An ulterior yet subtle motive for the Rimpact Foundation was a way to help veterans who suffered from PTSD. As Derek explained to me, "if veterans are out and staying actively busy, then they are not at home sitting in a room dealing the symptoms of PTSD." Derek truly cared about his fellow veterans. He never spoke about his own struggles with PTSD, always putting other veteran struggles ahead of his own.

Derek is the epitome of an American hero. He was an exemplary Airman who served his time in the military with distinction. When discharged and returning stateside Derek found a way to help his fellow veterans. In a way, he continued his service to the country. He was a great man and an even better friend. Honoring SrA Derek Scott Martin with a bridge is perfect gift of gratitude for a hero, and his family. Derek is most deserving of this honor.

CPO Mark A. Govea USN (Ret), MBA