



**A Tribute to HeartsApart.org
April 25, 2012**

Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to HeartsApart.org, a truly outstanding organization providing a creative and invaluable service to the men and women of our Armed Forces. As their name implies, HeartsApart.org serves the members of our military while their apart from their hearts -- their families and loved ones – as they serve our nation across the seas and around the world.

HeartsApart.org pairs soon-to-be deployed men and women with local photographers, who donate their time, resources, and skills to give soldiers a precious gift: a portrait of their children and spouses. These photographs, printed on waterproof and durable bi-folded cards, which fit securely in a uniform pocket, and serve as reminders of home and encouragement for those who serve us so readily.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that HeartsApart.org began as a local organization in my own state of North Carolina. For Wilmington, N.C. co-founders, photographer Brownie Harris and Brett Martin, it was a way to show their support and appreciation for America's service members one photo shoot at a time. From humble beginnings and a simple mission, HeartsApart.org has grown to become a national organization, with volunteer photographers in states from Virginia to Nevada and California to Illinois.

On April 11, HeartsApart.org was one of 20 organizations honored by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden as finalists for the Joining Forces Community Challenge, an initiative aimed at encouraging citizens to honor, support, and celebrate our military families. The vision and commitment of the staff of HeartsApart.org is to be commended and applauded.

Today, I offer my heartfelt thanks to those who give of their time and talents to serve our brave men and women. May God continue to bless their efforts, and may God bless America.

**U.S. Congressman Mike McIntyre
7th District, North Carolina**