

The Honorable Paul E. Kanjorski **U.S. Representative of Pennsylvania**

Remembering the Day

Representative Kanjorski provides a detailed account of the shooting in the House Chamber on March 1, 1954.

Interview recorded October 26, 2011

I was in the first seat. There was a call to be answered on the floor. I got up and I took about three or four steps and I heard the shooting begin, and then a ricochet occurred very close to me. And the fact is, it hit above my head, on one of the marble columns, and that ricochet shot. That's how I very clearly—although it sounded, because of the large chamber, it sounded like a package of firecrackers were lit and set off, but with the ricochet, in my mind, it identified it as a shot, so I hit the floor very quickly. To this day, I say to myself I was very lucky, because I could have been one of the victims that were shot, but I wasn't, and it didn't come that near, it was like ten, twelve feet away. But what it did is it allowed me to go through the mental processes of what had happened very quickly. So once I got up off the floor, when the shooting stopped, and it stopped in a very limited period of time. I think there had been 29 shots or something, and they went off with great rapidity, out of a number of weapons. I got up, checked the floor and we were in the middle of a roll call vote or a quorum call. And, obviously, there was some shouting and so and so was down and so and so, and Mr. Fallon from Maryland had been standing in the back of the chamber seats, and he'd been hit in the buttocks. I was aware that there were Members shot, so I got up immediately and went down to check on who was the most serious. I alerted my other fellow Pages that we needed stretchers, and we actually—funny enough, Bill and I...Bill was on the floor too—we sort of took over, ordering the stretchers and getting people put together. And a group of maybe a half dozen of us really started getting the people put in the stretchers, identifying who they were, and by the time that the ambulances arrived, we were taking them out. And, Bill and I, I think carried about three Members of the five or six that were wounded, out.