

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1815

To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 4, 2003

Mr. BENNETT (for himself and Mr. HATCH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 **SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
4 **AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER, SALT LAKE CITY,**
5 **UTAH.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
7 ings:
8 (1) On October 5, 1945, President Harry Tru-
9 man presented George E. Wahlen with the Medal of

1 Honor for his efforts as a medical corpsman on be-
2 half of his comrades at the battle of Iwo Jima.

3 (2) In a 26-day period, George E. Wahlen was
4 seriously wounded 3 times. However, he continued to
5 risk his life to provide aid to wounded members of
6 his company.

7 (3) The official citation presented by President
8 Truman reads: "For conspicuous gallantry and in-
9 trepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the
10 call of duty while serving with the 2d Battalion,
11 26th Marines, 5th Marine Division, during action
12 against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima in the
13 Volcano group on 3 March 1945. Painfully wounded
14 in the bitter action on 26 February, Wahlen re-
15 mained on the battlefield, advancing well forward of
16 the frontlines to aid a wounded marine and carrying
17 him back to safety despite a terrific concentration of
18 fire. Tireless in his ministrations, he consistently
19 disregarded all danger to attend his fighting com-
20 rades as they fell under the devastating rain of
21 shrapnel and bullets, and rendered prompt assist-
22 ance to various elements of his combat group as re-
23 quired. When an adjacent platoon suffered heavy
24 casualties, he defied the continuous pounding of
25 heavy mortars and deadly fire of enemy rifles to care

1 for the wounded, working rapidly in an area swept
2 by constant fire and treating 14 casualties before re-
3 turning to his own platoon. Wounded again on 2
4 March, he gallantly refused evacuation, moving out
5 with his company the following day in a furious as-
6 sault across 600 yards of open terrain and repeat-
7 edly rendering medical aid while exposed to the
8 blasting fury of powerful Japanese guns. Stout-
9 hearted and indomitable, he persevered in his deter-
10 mined efforts as his unit waged fierce battle and,
11 unable to walk after sustaining a third agonizing
12 wound, resolutely crawled 50 yards to administer
13 first aid to still another fallen fighter. By his daunt-
14 less fortitude and valor, Wahlen served as a constant
15 inspiration and contributed vitally to the high mo-
16 rale of his company during critical phases of this
17 strategically important engagement. His heroic spirit
18 of self-sacrifice in the face of overwhelming enemy
19 fire upheld the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval
20 Service.”

21 (4) George E. Wahlen is currently the only liv-
22 ing recipient of the Medal of Honor in Utah. Born
23 on August 8, 1924, in Ogden, Utah, George E.
24 Wahlen served his country in three wars. He con-

1 tinues to serve as a voice on behalf of the veterans
2 of Utah.

3 (b) DESIGNATION OF MEDICAL CENTER.—The De-
4 partment of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salt Lake
5 City, Utah, shall after the date of the enactment of this
6 Act be known and designated as the “George E. Wahlen
7 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center”. Any ref-
8 erence to such facility in any law, regulation, map, docu-
9 ment, record, or other paper of the United States shall
10 be considered to be a reference to the George E. Wahlen
11 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

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