

honor the memory of people like Kevin Imel, allow us to deliberate, allow us to put these into action, allow us to help make sure that those million people who have died to gun violence have not died in vain.

IN HONOR OF ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize the contributions of Asian and Pacific Island veterans. Tomorrow, President Clinton will be presenting this Nation's highest military award for valor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, to 21 Asian American veterans who previously won the Distinguished Service Cross.

President Clinton approved the Army's recommendations for the upgrades this past May. Nineteen of the twenty-one veterans were members of the all-Japanese 100th Infantry Battalion, or 442nd Regimental Combat Team. For their size, it was amongst the most highest decorated units in U.S. military history. Members of this noble unit earned an amazing number of decorations, 18,000 individual decorations, including one wartime Medal of Honor, 53 Distinguished Service Crosses, 9,486 Purple Hearts and 7 Presidential Unit Citations, the Nation's top award for combat units.

The upgrading of the medals stems from efforts made by Senator DANIEL AKAKA of Hawaii, who authored the provision in the 1996 Defense Authorization Act mandating a review of the service records of Asian Pacific Americans who received the Distinguished Service Cross.

The recommendation by Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, and the subsequent order by President Clinton, serves to correct the injustice of racial discrimination that was prevalent against Asian Pacific Americans during World War II. Many of the Japanese Americans who served in the 442nd volunteered from internment camps, where their families had been relocated at the outbreak of the war. These men fought in 8 major campaigns in Italy, France and Germany, including battles at Monte Cassino, Anzio and Biffontaine. Despite the ferocity of the fighting they endured and the degree of bravery exhibited by these men, the climate of racism precluded many from due recognition of their actions under fire. Tomorrow's White House ceremony will finally redress this past wrong.

One of those honored for valor is Senator DANIEL INOUE who distinguished himself when leading his platoon against the enemy at San Terenzo on April 21, 1945. Though hit in the abdomen by a bullet that came out his back and barely missed his spine, he contin-

ued to lead the platoon and advanced alone against a machine gun nest that had pinned down his men.

He tossed two hand grenades with devastating effect before his right arm was shattered by a German rifle grenade at close range, according to the senatorial bio. INOUE threw his last grenade with his left hand, attacked with a submachine gun, and was finally knocked down the hill by a bullet in the leg.

After 20 months in Army hospitals, INOUE returned home as a captain with a Distinguished Service Cross, the Nation's second highest award for military valor, the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster and 12 other medals and citations, and of course he now has a distinguished career in the other body.

Many of these names which I will enter into the RECORD will add to the Pantheon of true American heroes, names like Hajiro, Hayashi, Kobashigawa, Ono, Wai and Davila, add to the great tradition of American military history, and it should be noted, and I have noted here in my extended remarks, that these men endured, along with many other Asian Pacific Islanders during the war, a climate of racism that continued to persevere, and made their contributions in a number of combat units throughout the war, men from Pacific Islands like American Samoa and Guam, people who served in the Philippine armed services under the American flag, and, of course, many who joined the regular armed forces of the U.S. and who were limited to service and transportation units.

The other soldiers who will be honored are: Staff Sgt. (later 2nd Lt.) Rudolph B. Davila, Pvt. Barney F. Hajiro, Pvt. Mikio Hasemoto (posthumous), Pvt. Joe Hayashi, Pvt. Shizuya Hayashi, Tech. Sgt. Yeiki Kobashigawa, Staff Sgt. Robert T. Kuroda (posthumous), Pfc. Kaoru Moto (posthumous), Pfc. Kiyoshi K. Muranaga (posthumous), Pvt. Masato Nakae (posthumous), Pvt. Shinyei Nakamine (posthumous), Pfc. William K. Nakamura (posthumous), Pfc. Joe M. Nishimoto (posthumous), Sgt. (later Staff Sgt.) Allan M. Ohata, Tech. Sgt. Yukio Okutsu, Pfc. Frank H. Ono (posthumous), Staff Sgt. Kazuo Otani (posthumous), Pvt. George T. Sakato, Tech. Sgt. Ted T. Tanouye (posthumous), and Capt. Francis B. Wai (posthumous).

In honoring the heroism of these Asian Pacific veterans, I am reminded of the sacrifices of all our minority veterans. Today, several weeks after Memorial Day, I would like to take a few moments to talk about the tens of thousands of minority Americans who set aside political, economic and social disenfranchisement, to answer the call to arms against the forces of tyranny.

Minorities have served in the American military since the early days of the republic and valiantly fought in every major engagement including the Civil War, Spanish-American War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf.

The moment of truth for most minority veterans was solidly demonstrated in WWII. Undaunted by discrimination and racism, they en-

deavored to serve their country. In the beginning of the war, many minority servicemen were relegated to serve only in "rear echelon" positions or support positions during the war. They served as munitions men, truck drivers, cooks, stewards, and in cleaning and repair details. I am reminded of Uncle "Bob" Lizama, a native son of Guam who served in the U.S. Navy as a steward. His naval career spanned over 30 years including service in three major wars.

Minorities also labored in the factories and farms throughout the United States working towards the war effort. In many cases, when in combat zones, the men in these positions manned weapons and fought honorably side-by-side with white soldiers and sailors during furious engagements.

Later in the war, after tremendous lobbying efforts by minority civic leaders, combat units were established for minority populations. These brave men and women came from all walks of life but were bound by a love of the principles of duty to God and country. They lived in a separate component of American society that was defined by an unfortunate climate of prejudice. African-Americans, Hispanics, native Hawaiians, Chamorros, Samoans, Asian Americans, Filipinos, American Indians, and Native Alaskans all served honorably in many capacities with the U.S. military to combat the hegemonic forces of Germany, Italy and Japan.

In segregated units, often led by white officers, these noble men distinguished themselves in combat and proved to the entire nation that they too were willing to lay down their lives for freedom. The Tuskegee Airmen, the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Infantry Battalion, the Navaho Code-Talkers, the U.S. Navy's Fita Fita Guard (a U.S. Navy auxiliary unit in American Samoa), the 1st Samoan Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps, and the Guam Combat Patrol (a U.S. Marine Corps auxiliary unit in Guam) are just a few of the organizations where minorities fought valiantly in some of the most difficult combat assignments anywhere in World War II.

After WWII, President Harry S. Truman desegregated the U.S. military. Beginning with the Korean war, minority soldiers, sailors, and airmen have fought alongside with all Americans. Recently, Congress passed a resolution honoring all of America's minority veterans. I am very pleased to have worked with both Representative SHEILA JACKSON-LEE and Senator EDWARD KENNEDY to ensure that the Pacific Islanders were represented in the resolution's text.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the level of dedication, sacrifice and honor, that minority veterans displayed while serving in our nation's military, we must in every way possible ensure that any past instance of wholesale discrimination be addressed and corrected. In this light it may be prudent to have legislation that establishes a commission to ensure that minority veterans during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts were not denied awards for valor on account of the color of their skin or on the basis of their national origin. At the beginning of the 21st Century, we should conclusively and exhaustively rectify as many of these past racial injustices so that we can finally proceed forward in unity and in the spirit of brotherhood. The noble sacrifices of our forbearers who fought valiantly for our freedom should never go unrecognized, nor be tarnished by societal

ignorance. We, the benefactors of their sacrifice owe them at least that much.

THE REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the last couple of weeks have produced some of the most spectacular propaganda we have seen here in some time. It relates to the Republicans Medicare prescription drug proposal. First PHRMA, the drug industry and prescription drug manufacturers' lobbying group, launched an advertising campaign in the newspaper Roll Call and other papers claiming that a plan like the Republican proposal could cut prices by 30 to 39 percent.

By expressing their exuberant support for this plan and its alleged results, the drug industry as much as said it can comfortably weather price cuts in the 30 to 39 percent price range. If that is the case, the drug industry should do us all a favor and simply make the cuts in price. It is a lot easier than requiring seniors to go into a prescription drug coverage market that does not exist to purchase a stand-alone product that cannot stand alone.

The second wave of rhetoric came yesterday when Chairman THOMAS announced the GOP prescription drug plan which relies on private insurers to offer individual prescription drug coverage saying it would cut prices twice as much as the Democrats Medicare based plan. If only it were true. The Congressional Budget Office said the Republican drug plan may cut costs by 25 percent, not through lower prices but by restricting access to medically necessary drugs.

It is an important division. I will say it again. The Republican plan saves money not by miraculously convincing drug companies to lower their prices but instead by limiting access for senior citizens to medically necessary prescription drugs. It cuts costs by decreasing the value of the prescription drug benefit. The insurers win, the drug companies win, the government wins but senior citizens lose.

The Republican plan gives insurance companies carte blanche to do what they are doing today, that is, put price tags on treatment decisions and deny coverage for medically necessary treatment. Sound familiar? The President's plan is explicit in requiring coverage, on the other hand, for any medically necessary drug prescribed by a doctor, which makes sense given it is the doctor, not the insurer, who should be and is making medical decisions and who is actually treating the patient.

The Republican plan guarantees nothing other than assistance for low income seniors. Prescription drugs, however, are not just a low income problem. Seniors who thought they

were financially secure are watching their savings go straight into the pockets of drug makers. Some of my colleagues are trying to tell seniors that there will be a choice of reliable, affordable private prescription drug insurance plans available to them. Based on what? Certainly not history. Even the insurance industry is balking at the idea. It says something that insurers do not sell prescription drug coverage on a stand-alone basis today, even to young and to healthy individuals. That is because it does not make sense.

Medicare is reliable. Medicare is a large enough insurance program to accommodate the risks associated with prescription drug coverage. Individual stand-alone prescription drug policies are not.

Some in this body are actually trying to convince seniors who stand firmly behind Medicare that expanding the current benefit package is less efficient, more onerous, than manufacturing a new bureaucracy, as the Republican plan does, and conjuring up a new insurance market. Seniors are simply too smart for that.

I do not want to ask seniors in my district and across the country to rely on a market that does not want the business to provide a benefit not suited to stand-alone coverage to a population that, let us face it, has never been served well by the private insurance market.

I do not want seniors in my district and across the country to be coerced into managed care plans in order to avoid dealing with three different insurance plans, with Medicare, with Medigap and with individual prescription drug coverage.

I do not want seniors in my district or across the country to receive a letter from their employer telling them that their retiree prescription drug coverage has been terminated on the premise, quote, that the government is offering private insurance now.

I do not want to forsake volume discounts and economies of scale by segmenting the largest purchasing pool in this country, and then waste trust fund dollars on insurance company margins, on insurance company market expenses, on insurance company huge executive salaries.

I do not think the individual health insurance market is a reasonable model for Medicare prescription drug benefits. In fact, as anyone who has had to purchase or sale coverage in that market knows the individual health insurance market is not even a good model for individual health insurance. It is the poster child for selection problems, for rate spirals and for insurance scams.

The very fact that the drug industry backs Citizens for a Better Medicare supports the private plan approach is a giant strike against it. The drug industry and their puppet organization clearly feel that undercutting seniors' collective purchasing power, relegating

seniors to private stand-alone prescription drug plans, is the key, underscore this, is the key to preserving discriminatory monopolistically set outrageously high prices.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Members of this Congress read the fine print when we decide these Medicare prescription drug bills.

RESOLUTION OF KASHMIR ISSUE MUST INCLUDE THE KASHMIRI PANDITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, in recent years the United States and the world community have been forced to confront the need for a resolution of the conflict in Kashmir. This conflict in the Himalayan Mountains has for decades poisoned relations between India and Pakistan.

The conflict has also poisoned life within Kashmir itself. People from all ethnic and religious groups have suffered from the violence, be they Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, but the most forgotten victims have been the Pandits.

Recently, it was reported by the Indo-American Kashmir forum that Karl Inderfurth, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, reiterated the view that Pandits should not be ignored in upcoming discussions of the Kashmir issue. In a meeting with the National Advisory Council on South Asia at the State Department earlier this month, Mr. Inderfurth acknowledged that the U.S. has not always mentioned the Pandits in its statements on the Kashmir, but assured the Council that the displaced status of the Pandits is a matter of concern to the United States.

As a U.S. official who has frequently sought to give more attention to the plight of the Pandits, I am encouraged by Mr. Inderfurth's recent statement. I will urge our State Department to continue to draw attention to the suffering that the Pandits have endured and continue to endure in its statements on the Kashmir issue.

I have also called for the U.N. and international organizations to devote greater attention to what I consider a case of ethnic cleansing that is afflicting the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Mr. Speaker, India's Prime Minister Vajpayee has indicated that his government would be willing to meet with Kashmiri groups to address their concerns but the prime minister has stressed that Pakistan should not have any role in this dialogue, which is in fact an internal matter for India.

Some of these separatist elements within Kashmir, the same organizations involved in the terrorism that has uprooted the Pandit community, are clearly working to promote greater Pakistani involvement in this process.