

I am proud to represent North Carolina and proud of the Carolina Hurricanes.

TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO PUT OUT WILDFIRES

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, as summer days get longer and hotter, the risk of forest fires continues to increase. Just last week a 1,500-acre wildfire burned in Pioche, Nevada. Dedicated firefighters kept the blaze from the small Nevada town, located about 190 miles north of Las Vegas.

Today I would like to echo the sentiments expressed by Lincoln County Sheriff's Sergeant John Wilcock. He said, "If it hadn't been for the quick response by volunteer firefighters and the BLM, the town could have been gone."

Thank you to all of our Nation's firefighters who risk their own lives every day to save the homes and lives of others. As a proud resident and Representative of a Western State, I know firsthand the unique challenges our firefighters face in preventing and putting out wildfires. Nevadans value your work, your commitment and your heroism.

ENRON CORPORATION RUN FOR FUN AND PROFIT OF TOP EXECUTIVES

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, as Americans picked up their newspapers this morning, they once again learned that the Enron Corporation was run for the fun and profit of its top executives, not for the benefit of the energy market, and certainly not for most of its employees.

In the year that Enron was failing and heading toward bankruptcy, 140 of its top executives took out almost \$800 million in bonuses; \$800 million, which is about the same amount as its 20,000 employees lost in their 401(k) retirement plans; \$800 million that those people will not have for retirement, but which these 100 executives will have for the rest of their lives.

As the Republicans talk about privatizing the Social Security system and insisting that everybody go into the equity markets with their own little account, they had better understand that corporate America is not running this system for the benefit of the shareholders. Corporate America is not running the system for the benefit of the corporations. They are running it for the benefit of the executives, those executives that took out \$800 million on the eve of the bankruptcy at Enron Corporation.

SENIORS NEED DRUG BENEFIT NOW

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Americans have sent a clear message to Congress: Seniors need a prescription drug benefit now. We can no longer rely on rhetoric and empty promises. We must take action now to make sure that seniors receive help.

Now, thanks to the leadership of Republicans, we have a prescription drug benefit plan that not only provides for a long-term permanent benefit, but also makes sure that relief is given now in the short term.

This is a plan that does not discriminate between different groups of seniors, as everyone should have access to the prescription drug if they choose to use it. And the most important part of this plan is that it provides options. We will give seniors real choices to make sure they get a plan that best suits their individual needs.

Many on the other side of the aisle want to make this a partisan issue. They offer up plans that have no basis in reality, calling for a \$800 billion program with no way to fund it. This is politics as usual, rhetoric with no results.

The Republican prescription drug benefit is a responsible and realistic plan, and we can get it to our seniors now.

PROVIDING SENIORS PRESCRIPTIONS AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, they built this Nation, raised their families and fought for our freedom, so no senior in this country, not a single one, should be without the prescription drugs they need to stay healthy.

Every senior deserves access to the prescriptions they need at an affordable price. We do that in our plan. Republicans do not. That is what we Democrats are fighting for.

If we controlled the House, we would pass a bill to cover all seniors, not just some, but all seniors today. In fact, we would have passed a bill years ago, but almost 8 years after Republicans took control of the House, they still refuse to give all seniors the coverage they deserve.

Why is that? The sad truth is that Republicans would rather protect 100 percent of their special interest friends and leave millions of seniors without the coverage they need, and that is a sorry, inexcusable disgrace.

Let us have what Democrats are proposing. Let us have a vote on this floor for a universal, affordable, voluntary prescription drug program for America's seniors.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT AND DISCOUNT ACT

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the House Democratic prescription drug proposal is a real one. It provides a solid \$25-a-month premium cost, a \$100-a-year deductible, coinsurance. Beneficiaries pay 20 percent, Medicare pays 80 percent, an out-of-pocket limit of \$2,000 per year per beneficiary, and low-income beneficiaries with incomes of 150 percent of poverty will pay absolutely nothing.

This is a real plan, a plan that benefits all of the people. Let us pass it.

BRING KIDNAPPED AMERICAN CHILDREN HOME

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I have taken to this floor every day now this year to come here to remind the American citizens of Ludwig Koons, who was abducted from the United States of America in 1994. He is now, I think, 9 years old, and he is still a citizen of the United States who is illegally out of our country.

I placed a phone call to our Secretary of State. A staff person called me back. I placed a phone call to the Ambassador to the United States from the Vatican. They have not even bothered to return my phone call. I have placed a phone call, many phone calls, I might add, to all of these people, including the Ambassador of Italy to the United States. I have talked with him, yet nothing yet seems to be moving.

The issue is not about Ludwig Koons, it is about the 1,000 children who are taken out of our borders each year illegally. They are all citizens of this country and pledge allegiance to our flag.

Where is our government? Why are we not turning to those children and doing anything, anything, necessary to return them to our land? Bring our children home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules.

CODE TALKERS RECOGNITION ACT

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and

pass the bill (H.R. 3250) to authorize the President to present a gold medal on behalf of Congress to the Sioux Indians who served as Sioux Code Talkers during World War II in recognition of their service to the Nation, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3250

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Code Talkers Recognition Act".

SEC. 2. EXPRESSION OF RECOGNITION.

The purpose of the medals authorized by this Act are to express recognition by the United States and its citizens and to honor the Native American Code Talkers who distinguished themselves in performing highly successful communications operations of a unique type that greatly assisted in saving countless lives and in hastening the end of World War I and World War II.

TITLE I—SIOUX CODE TALKERS

SEC. 101. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Sioux Indians used their native languages, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota Sioux, as code during World War II.

(2) These people, who manned radio communications networks to advise of enemy actions, became known as the Sioux Code Talkers.

(3) Under some of the heaviest combat action, the Code Talkers worked around the clock to provide information which saved the lives of many Americans in the Pacific and Europe, such as the location of enemy troops and the number of enemy guns.

(4) The Sioux Code Talkers were so successful that military commanders credit the code with saving the lives of countless American soldiers and being instrumental to the success of the United States in many battles during World War II.

SEC. 102. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design, to each Sioux Code Talker, including the following:

- (1) Eddie Eagle Boy.
- (2) Simon Brokenleg.
- (3) Iver Crow Eagle, Sr.
- (4) Edmund St. John.
- (5) Walter C. John.
- (6) John Bear King.
- (7) Phillip "Stoney" LaBlanc.
- (8) Baptiste Pumpkinseed.
- (9) Guy Rondell.
- (10) Charles Whitepipe.
- (11) Clarence Wolfguts.

TITLE II—COMANCHE CODE TALKERS

SEC. 201. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) On December 7, 1941, the Japanese Empire attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the Congress declared war the following day.

(2) The military code, developed by the United States for transmitting messages, had been deciphered by the Axis powers, and United States military intelligence sought to develop a new means to counter the enemy.

(3) The United States Government called upon the Comanche Nation to support the military effort by recruiting and enlisting Comanche men to serve in the United States Army to develop a secret code based on the Comanche language.

(4) At the time, the Comanches were second-class citizens, and they were a people who were discouraged from using their own language.

(5) The Comanches of the 4th Signal Division became known as the "Comanche Code Talkers" and helped to develop a code using their language to communicate military messages during the D-Day invasion and in the European theater during World War II.

(6) To the enemy's frustration, the code developed by these Native American Indians proved to be unbreakable and was used extensively throughout the European theater.

(7) The Comanche language, discouraged in the past, was instrumental in developing one of the most significant and successful military codes of World War II.

(8) The Comanche Code Talkers contributed greatly to the Allied war effort in Europe and were instrumental in winning the war in Europe. Their efforts saved countless lives.

(9) Only 1 of the Comanche Code Talkers of World War II remains alive today.

(10) The time has come for the United States Congress to honor the Comanche Code Talkers for their valor and their service to the Nation.

(11) The congressional gold medals authorized by this title are the recognition and honor by the United States and its citizens of the Comanche Code Talkers who distinguished themselves in performing a unique, highly successful communications operation that greatly assisted in saving countless lives and in hastening the end of World War II in Europe.

SEC. 202. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to each of the following Comanche Code Talkers of World War II, in recognition of their contributions to the Nation:

- (1) Charles Chibitty.
- (2) Haddon Codynah.
- (3) Robert Holder.
- (4) Forrest Kassaravoid.
- (5) Willington Mihecoby.
- (6) Perry Noyebad.
- (7) Clifford Otivito.
- (8) Simmons Parker.
- (9) Melvin Permansu.
- (10) Dick Red Elk.
- (11) Elgin Red Elk.
- (12) Larry Saupitty.
- (13) Morris Sunrise.
- (14) Willie Yackesch.

TITLE III—CHOCTAW CODE TALKERS

SEC. 301. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) On April 6, 1917, the United States, after extraordinary provocations, declared war on Germany, thus the United States entered World War I, the War to End All Wars.

(2) At the time of this declaration of war, Indian people in the United States, including members of the Choctaw Nation, were not accorded the status of citizens of the United States.

(3) Without regard to this lack of citizenship, many members of the Choctaw Nation joined many members of other Indian tribes and nations in enlisting in the Armed Forces to fight on behalf of their native land.

(4) Members of the Choctaw Nation were enlisted in the force known as the American Expeditionary Force, which began hostile actions in France in the fall of 1917, and specifically, members of the Choctaw Nation were incorporated in a company of Indian enlistees serving in the 142d Infantry Company of the 36th Division.

(5) A major impediment to Allied operations in general, and American operations in particular, was the fact that the German forces had deciphered all codes used for transmitting information between Allied commands, leading to substantial loss of men and materiel during the first year of American action.

(6) Because of the proximity and static nature of the battle lines, a method to communicate without the knowledge of the enemy was needed.

(7) An American commander realized the fact that he had under his command a number of men who spoke a native language. While the use of such native languages was discouraged by the American Government, the commander sought out and recruited 18 Choctaw Indians to use for transmission of field telephone communications during an upcoming campaign.

(8) Because the language used by the Choctaw soldiers in the transmission of information was not based on a European language or on a mathematical progression, the Germans were unable to understand any of the transmissions.

(9) The Choctaw soldiers were placed in different command positions, to achieve the widest possible area for communications.

(10) The use of the Choctaw Code Talkers was particularly important in the movement of American soldiers in October of 1918 (including securing forward and exposed positions), in the protection of supplies during American action (including protecting gun emplacements from enemy shelling), and in the preparation for the assault on German positions in the final stages of combat operations in the fall of 1918.

(11) In the opinion of the officers involved, the use of Choctaw Indians to transmit information in their native language saved men and munitions, and was highly successful. Based on this successful experience, Choctaw Indians were being withdrawn from frontline units for training in transmission of codes so as to be more widely used when the war came to a halt.

(12) The Germans never succeeded in breaking the Choctaw code.

(13) This was the first time in modern warfare that such transmission of messages in a native American language was used for the purpose of confusing the enemy.

(14) This action by members of the Choctaw Nation is another example of the commitment of American Indians to the defense of our great Nation and adds to the proud legacy of such service.

(15) The Choctaw Nation has honored the actions of these 18 Choctaw Code Talkers through a memorial bearing their names located at the entrance of the tribal complex in Durant, Oklahoma.

SEC. 302. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design honoring the Choctaw Code Talkers.

TITLE IV—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. MEDALS FOR OTHER CODE TALKERS.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—In addition to the gold medals authorized to be presented under section 102, 202, and 302, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to any other Native American Code Talker identified by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to subsection (b) who has not previously received a congressional gold medal.

(b) IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER NATIVE AMERICAN CODE TALKERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any Native American member of the United States Armed Forces who served as a Code Talker in any foreign conflict in which the United States was involved during the 20th Century shall be eligible for a gold medal under this section.

(2) DETERMINATION.—Eligibility under paragraph (1) shall be determined by the Secretary of Defense and such Secretary shall establish a list of the names of such eligible individuals before the end of the 120-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 402. PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL MEDALS UNDER THIS ACT.

(a) MEDALS AWARDED POSTHUMOUSLY.—Medals authorized by this Act may be awarded posthumously on behalf of, and presented to the next of kin or other representative of, a Native American Code Talker.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of any presentation of a gold medal under this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury shall strike gold medals with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(2) DESIGNS EMBLEMATIC OF TRIBAL AFFILIATION.—The design of the gold medals struck under this Act for Native American Code talkers of the same Indian tribe shall be emblematic of the participation of the Code Talkers of such Indian tribe.

(3) INDIAN TRIBE DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term "Indian tribe" has the same meaning as in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

SEC. 403. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary of the Treasury may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medals struck under this Act in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, and at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the bronze medal.

SEC. 404. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.

The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 405. FUNDING.

(a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals authorized by this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 403 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3250.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3250, the Code Talkers Recognition Act.

This legislation celebrates a relatively unknown aspect of American history, acts of bravery and heroism by Native American soldiers in the world wars of the last century, acts which saved the lives of many Allied servicemen.

Mr. Speaker, in any war, battles turn as much on information or on secrecy as on pure military might. If you know what your enemy is planning, you have a good chance to stop it. In both the First and Second World Wars, our enemies were skilled code breakers, and the ability to crack our communications costs many Allied lives.

In both conflicts, however, a relatively small band of Native Americans were able to use their unique tribal languages to baffle enemies. Speaking to each other either on field radios or field telephones, or occasionally even communicating with written messages, these men were able to quickly and accurately relay complex military messages and orders that could not be understood by enemies even if intercepted. Based neither on European languages or on mathematical formulas, these tribal languages were so impenetrable to the German and Japanese military intelligence units that they are said never to have been cracked.

Mr. Speaker, the best known of these code talkers were the Navajo, honored with congressional medals in the last Congress. But a number of other tribes, including the Sioux, Comanche and Choctaw, also provided code talkers, and the legislation we consider today seeks to recognize them as well.

The bill we are taking up was introduced by the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and incorporates language in similar bills by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATKINS).

Mr. Speaker, as the sponsors of the language in this bill will tell us, the critical role played by the Native American code talkers in the battles of the First and Second World Wars were critical to the success of Allied efforts. It is long overdue that Congress recognize their heroic efforts with congressional gold medals. This bill will do that, recognizing the Comanche, Sioux and Choctaw code talkers, as well as asking the Secretary of Defense to identify any other soldiers from other tribes who also served valiantly in the defense of this country and then awarding them medals.

Mr. Speaker, I ask strongly for the support of this legislation.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives honors many unsung American heroes whose contributions to America's freedom are without parallel in American history, the Sioux, Choctaw, Comanche and other Native American code talkers of World War II.

Without the valiant efforts of these patriotic members from many of our Native American communities, our

Armed Forces would not have been able to deceive our enemies as effectively as they did. The rare beauty and intricacy of our Native American languages turned out to be our most secret of weapons, and to our code talkers, America owes a great debt of gratitude.

Our code talkers are an example of how the richness of our American heritage became a strength that no adversary could possibly match or overcome. America's freedom endures because our military commanders turned the linguistic heritage of our Native American tribes into an unprecedented asset of warfare.

Last year, in a Capitol Rotunda ceremony, Congress and President Bush honored code talkers from the Navajo Nation with a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor that Congress can bestow. John Brown, Jr., speaking on behalf of the Navajos, said at that ceremony, "I am proud that at this point in American history our native language and the code we developed came to the aid of our country, saving American lives and helping the other U.S. Armed Forces to ultimately defeat the enemy."

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It was a fitting tribute that the House now extends to the Choctaw, Comanche, and to other Native American code talkers through passage of this important legislation.

During World War II, America and its allies fought a massive war on several fronts and the code talkers protected the allies' secrets communications on most, if not all, of these fronts. From the Comanche and the Choctaw against the German Army and France, to the Navajo in the Pacific theater, more than 17 tribes in all made immeasurable contributions to the war effort. These include Cheyenne, Comanche, Cherokee, Choctaw, Osage, Yankton Sioux, Chippewa, Creek, Hopi, Kiowa, Menominee, Muscogee-Seminole, Javajo, Oneida, Paunee, Sac and Fox, and the Sioux, from both the Lakota and Dakota dialects.

The compelling story of how the rich heritage of our Native American peoples, their language, and their heroes ultimately played a major role in our winning World War II unfortunately took more than a half a century to be told. And it took as long for one of our Nation's highest honors to be bestowed upon these Native American heroes.

Today we honor their patriotism and their selflessness and their heroic actions, and America is grateful and proud for their contributions to our freedom. As proven by the code talkers, it is our heritage, and our people, that will always make America a great Nation.

I only regret that we as a Congress are so late in recognizing the contributions of American Indians to the allies' victory in World War II and that not all of the code talkers who served are alive today to accept this important honor. Even so, I am pleased we are

taking this action today; and as the daughter of a World War II veteran, I am also heartened by the progress we can all see on the national memorial now under construction on the Mall just blocks from here.

As time passes, we cannot let the magnitude of the great victory our veterans achieved over the fanaticism of our World War II enemies fade from the national memory. As we face new military challenges today, from terrorists who also target and hate free societies, we can take extra inspiration from the bravery of our World War II veterans and the special place in history for the Native American code talkers. These brave soldiers went to war for the United States despite the historic mistreatment of Native Americans by the very government they were fighting to defend.

I am honored to stand and honor the Sioux code talkers this morning. Congress has stipulated that recipients of this award shall have "performed an achievement that has an impact on American history and culture that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the recipients' field long after the achievement." The contribution of the code talkers to our great victory in World War II meets this high standard, and I am very pleased to join with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to recognize them today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), who is the primary principal author of this bill and who has worked very diligently on this effort.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and thank him for his efforts in bringing this legislation to the floor, as well as the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), in giving us the opportunity to recognize these great American heroes.

Mr. Speaker, South Dakota has a long history that extends back before the founding of our country by Western explorers. Native American culture was a way of life based upon four key values: generosity, bravery, fortitude, and wisdom. Whether they were hunting for food, interacting with family members, or facing the trials of life, they always displayed these great and important values. Regrettably, the importance and revered culture of these great people was nearly erased from American history.

However, later, during the middle part of the last century, at a time when Indians were discouraged from practicing their native culture, a few brave men used their cultural heritage, their language, to help change the course of history. These men are known as the code talkers. They served our country with distinction in both the European and the Pacific fronts of

World War II. The Sioux code talkers, who I represent, used their Lakota, Dakota and Nakota dialects to send coded communications that the enemy was unable to crack. These brave men were often sent out on their own to communicate with headquarters regarding enemy location and strength without protection from the enemy. Sometimes they spent over 24 hours in headphones without sleep or food in deplorable conditions.

Today, military commanders credit the code talkers with saving the lives of countless American soldiers and being instrumental to the success of the United States military during World War II.

Two of these Sioux code talkers are still alive today: Clarence Wolf Guts of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Charles Whitepipe, Sr. of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

Unfortunately, the nine other Sioux code talkers, John Bear King of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Simon Broken Leg and Iver Crow Eagle, Sr. of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Eddie Eagle Boy and Philip LaBlanc of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Baptiste Pumpkinseed of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Edmund St. John of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, and Walter C. John of the Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska have passed away.

Clarence Wolf Guts and Charles Whitepipe can tell us the stories of the trials and tribulations they faced as they served our country. The families of the other Sioux code talkers can pass on the stories told to them by their husband, father or uncle.

The legislation before us today finally honors the Sioux code talkers for their distinguished service to our country. In addition, the bill recognizes two other groups of code talkers who served our country with distinction. This bill distinguishes 14 Comanche code talkers for their dedication and service during World War II, and it also pays tribute to the Choctaw code talkers who served not only during World War II, but were known to have been used for their transmission of field communications in their native languages during World War I. I appreciate the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATKINS) working with me to recognize these heroes.

At a time in which we fully understand the meaning of the word "hero," I believe we can all agree the code talkers are truly heroes of this country.

All of the code talkers provided safety to fellow Americans who were fighting so hard for our Nation. They did so by using their culture and their native language, which had been passed down to them through the generations. Above all, these code talkers brought respect to their Nation and victory to our country.

Last year, we rightly honored the Navajo code talkers for the important role that they played and for their her-

oism during World War II. It is now time to honor and recognize the Sioux, Comanche and Choctaw and code talkers for their contributions by awarding them Congressional Gold Medals.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be the sponsor of H.R. 3250, the Code Talkers Recognition Act, to honor the men who had risked their lives to save the lives of others. Congress should recognize these courageous men for their bravery and heroism in the face of adversity. Today, we will consider this important bill and finally recognize these men for their heroic efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this important legislation. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) for his work in bringing it to the floor today and say to my colleagues on the floor that it is high time that we gave honor and due recognition to these brave men and the cultures that they represent.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), another one of the authors of this important piece of legislation.

(Ms. GRANGER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, millions of people poured into movie theaters this weekend to see the movie "Wind Talkers" with Nicholas Cage. The movie is set during World War II against the backdrop of the horrific battle of Saipan; the drama revolves around the Navajo "code talker."

The so-called code talkers were native Americans who used their native dialect to radio important messages in code to our allied troops. The movie "Wind Talkers" focuses on a Navajo code talker who was the Marines' first new secret weapon against the Japanese. The movie explores just how far our Marines were willing to go to protect the code.

We all know that in our fast-paced, modern world, movies are our storytellers. Hollywood often misses some of the facts, but in this case I am proud to see the tale of these code talker heroes being told so publicly. In my mind, the Native American code talkers are some of the Nation's greatest heroes.

Today, it is time for Congress to give all of the Native American code talkers the recognition they deserve for their contribution to U.S. victories in World War I and World War II.

Like the Navajo code talkers who were recognized for services last year, the Comanche, Choctaw and Sioux Indians also served as code talkers in both the Pacific and European theaters during World War II. We also know that the Choctaw code talkers served our country as early as World War I.

These code talkers were sent out on their own to provide communications on enemy location and strength. They sometimes spent 24 hours using headphones without sleep or food. Many of

these men endured terrible conditions without protection from the enemy. Military commanders credit the code talkers with saving the lives of countless American soldiers and ultimately to the success of the United States in many battles.

The story of the code talkers was highlighted for me last year by a constituent of mine, Ben Tahmahkera. He came to me and pointed out that in July, President Bush honored the Navajo code talkers for their contribution to the United States Armed Forces as radio operators in World War II. Mr. Tahmahkera was very pleased to hear about the Navajo recognition, but he wanted to make sure the sacrifices of the Comanche code talkers and other code talkers were not forgotten either.

Ben Tahmahkera suggested that I learn more about Charles Chi-bitty, who today is the only surviving Comanche code talker. Charles Chi-bitty lives near Tulsa, Oklahoma, today and he is 80 years old. In January of 1941, Chi-bitty enlisted in the United States Army and was assigned to the Army's 4th signal company. Chi-bitty probably himself saved thousands of lives during the Normandy invasion alone and he can still remember the messages he received and sent out on D-Day. On that day he identified where our troops were, protected them from being fired on by our own troops and, in general, completely confused the Germans. Chi-bitty specifically remembers saying in code to our men, "Okay, we know where you are, just keep doing what you are doing."

The code that Chi-bitty used was never broken and, for a long time, the Germans believed it was just gibberish. Eventually, the Germans sent spies to training grounds in Fort Gordon and to reservations in Oklahoma to try and crack the code. None of the spy missions were successful.

Charles Chi-bitty, a true American hero, was also a loyal friend. He once turned down the Medal of Honor because it did not include all members of the 4th signal company whom he considers his brothers. Chi-bitty says, "I am glad I am still here, but I miss my comrades. I know that my comrades that have already gone before me are listening and laughing right now. I know when I go up there some day, they will be there waiting."

Mr. Speaker, today we honor Charles Chi-bitty and all of the other Native American code talkers who so valiantly fought for our country and protected our Nation. H.R. 3250 authorizes the President to present a Congressional Gold Medal to these Native Americans who served as code talkers during both World War I and II. H.R. 3250 gives these men the honor they so richly deserve. Please support H.R. 3250.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATKINS), who was raised among the Choctaw in eastern Oklahoma.

Mr. WATKINS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) for their efforts in getting this here. I would like to especially thank the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), my friend, and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), my good friend and neighbor, who represents Fort Worth quite capably.

As the gentleman from Oklahoma stated, I had the distinct privilege, although one does not realize it as much when one is growing up, of growing up among the Choctaw Indians in southeast Oklahoma. I heard many of my elders talk about the days of using code talkers in World War I, and they were also utilized in World War II.

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So it is with a great deal of pride and nostalgia as I think back to what a lot of the elderly Native Americans with Choctaw ancestry were saying for me to be part of bringing this legislation, H.R. 3250, to the floor. I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman OXLEY) from the Committee on Financial Services and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) on that committee that combined several of these code talker bills so we could bring this legislation together and move it at this time.

Many people know the history of the code talkers of World War II; however, few people know the history of the code talkers of World War I. In the closing days of World War I, several members of the Choctaw Nation were helpful in winning key battles. The Choctaws were the first Native American code talkers used in battle and to win wars.

The Germans had broken the code of the American forces, and they had captured a messenger who was running information between several of the companies in the Army. The Army commander overheard two of his men conversing in their native Choctaw language, and due to his smart thinking, the use of the Native Americans' tribal language as a code was born.

An additional number of Choctaw Indians were located in the battalion, and within a period of hours after getting them all together, they were relocated to strategic locations. In less than 72 hours, the Germans were retreating, and the Allies were in full attack and moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a long time since these men did this great service for their Nation. It has been a long time for me even to be sitting at the knees of some of these elderly Choctaw chiefs and others and listening to them tell this story.

I believe we should pass H.R. 3250 to honor these code talkers and their service to this country. I urge my colleagues in a unanimous way to support this legislation to bring honor to the code talkers of World War I and World War II.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATKINS), for their efforts.

Clearly, the generation that went off to Europe in 1917 and 1918 is now all but gone, and the young men who went off to fight the Second World War between 1941 and 1945 is starting to show the ages and seasons of time. But, my colleagues, by making this effort to acknowledge these brave and valiant efforts, we do this House great service and do this Nation the same service.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution.

Until recently the very existence of Sioux and Navajo code-talkers had remained yet another classified war secret.

These proud code-talkers lived with the quiet dignity of knowing that they did a great service for their nation, but could never speak of their heroic deeds.

These Sioux code-talkers worked under some of the heaviest combat conditions and worked around the clock, often without sleep, to provide coded information that saved the lives of countless American soldiers.

The Sioux code-talkers were so successful that military commanders credit the code for many victories in battle.

These brave and heroic men deserve our deepest respect. We owe a debt of gratitude to these men. We must honor them and teach our children, so that their quiet dignity is silent no more. So we may now honor them as what they are—American heroes.

It took an act of Congress to honor the Navajo code-talkers, we should at least pay the same tribute to these other defenders of our freedom.

Let us never forget the 44,000 Native Americans who served in World War II. They fought for a nation that has mistreated historically their people. That is the ultimate sign of valor and sacrifice.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3250, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read:

"A bill to authorize the presentation of gold medals on behalf of Congress to Native Americans who served as Code Talkers during foreign conflicts in which the United States was involved during the 20th Century in recognition of their service to the Nation."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.