

He benefitted from the love and will of his mother—Virginia Clinton—a widow and survivor of domestic violence who worked tirelessly to support her children. He was a dutiful son, a protective brother, and a gifted student. In college, Clinton juggled coursework with an internship for Senator Fulbright, relishing his introduction to politics. Awarded the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship, Clinton went on to Oxford University and Yale Law School. There he met his match and wife-to-be in the form of a driven Hillary Rodham.

Mr. Speaker, it was as President that Mr. Clinton captured the hearts, the imagination, the hope, of so many Americans. A post-Cold War President, Bill Clinton believed we must become a domestic as well as a military superpower. He knew our strength came from more than just our military might, but from our commitment to the ordinary men and women of this country. He nurtured our country's strength through economic growth, support for the middle class and a ladder for the poor.

Bill Clinton forged a Third Way, a new path to bipartisanship that remains a model for lawmakers and citizens alike. He made our streets safer with the Brady bill, he made our working families stronger with the Earned Income Tax Credit, and he made our economy soar by balancing the budget and erasing the deficit. He protected our environment, he created jobs, he strengthened alliances across the world and he labored for peace.

Mr. Speaker, President Clinton continues to be a devoted public servant, crusading against the global AIDS pandemic. His foundation has succeeded in lowering the cost of HIV/AIDS tests and treatment for millions of people in developing countries across the world.

I am fortunate to call Bill Clinton a friend. I have seen him light up a crowded room, and I have seen him connect with struggling individuals in a way that only he can. A musician and a musician, he is a Blues man with soul. He knows the sorrow of life's harsh realities, and he knows the joy that comes from striving towards our collective potential. Most of all, Bill Clinton is a man of heart. I wish him—and his heart—continued health. I thank Congresswoman MALONEY for sponsoring this resolution and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add to the overwhelming support of this House for this resolution honoring former President Bill Clinton as he celebrates his 58th birthday.

President Clinton is a gifted and charismatic leader who has devoted his professional life to public service.

His administration was marked with great economic success, transforming quadrupled budget deficits into a budget surplus. He achieved the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the lowest percentage of Americans on welfare 29 years, and the lowest inflation rate in 33 years.

During his presidency, the economy expanded by 50 percent in real terms, and when he left office, the U.S. had a gross national product of \$10 trillion—one-quarter of the entire world economic output.

During his administration, 15 million jobs were created and average wages rose. Home ownership rates were the highest in history. Funding public education, saving Social Security, and ensuring health care for all Americans were priorities.

Our economic success was a sign of stability that sparked growth in domestic and international markets.

He was a great supporter of human rights and promoting peace through humanitarian relief efforts, refugee assistance, and aiding in peace process negotiations.

I was honored to accompany President Clinton on historic trips to Northern Ireland and Africa. We went as ambassadors of peace and reconciliation, and it was heartening to see how well received we were by our international hosts. The people of this country were welcomed and well respected abroad.

I have great respect and admiration for him personally and for his outstanding leadership of our great country, and I believe his legacy will long enjoy the approval of a grateful nation.

I extend to him my best wishes for a happy birthday, and I offer my wholehearted support for this resolution.

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 717, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THOMAS E. CREEK DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4836) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Amarillo, Texas, as the "Thomas E. Creek Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center."

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4836

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

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN AMARILLO, TEXAS.

The Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Amarillo, Texas, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Thomas E. Creek Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center". Any reference to that medical center in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Thomas E. Creek Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4836 would name the VA Medical Center in the City of

Amarillo, Texas, for Lance Corporal Thomas E. Creek. This heroic Marine gave his life on February 13, 1969, to save fellow Marines by falling on a grenade near Cam Lo, Vietnam. He was awarded our Nation's highest military declaration, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Lance Corporal Creek was only 18 years old when he went above and beyond the call of duty while serving as rifleman with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. He was one of three Medal of Honor recipients who served with the 9th Marines during the Vietnam War.

I commend my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY), for introducing H.R. 4836 to honor one of our Nation's heroes, and I will momentarily yield to him.

The VA medical center in Amarillo, Texas, Mr. Speaker, opened in 1940 and played an important role during and after World War II in caring for and rehabilitating U.S. servicemembers. The medical center today provides general medical and surgical treatment and alcohol rehabilitation and vocational rehab services for veterans. Expansion and renovation projects have kept the facility modern, and it currently has some 69 inpatient beds and 120 nursing care beds. I think it is entirely fitting and appropriate to remember the ultimate sacrifice of this young brave Marine by naming the Amarillo VA Medical Center for him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY), the prime author of this bill.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH); and the ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS); the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS); and all the members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, including John Bradley of the staff, for their assistance and support with this measure.

I also want to thank all my Texas colleagues. Each of them is a cosponsor of this bill, as is the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), to whom I am also grateful.

I want to acknowledge my staff members who have worked on this issue, especially Sylvia Nugent and Bryan Whitworth.

I also want to recognize Larry Milam, Selden Hale, Pat Cunningham, Marvin Graham, and the other veterans of the Texas panhandle region who initiated this effort, as well as the veterans organizations which have lent their enthusiastic support, including the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and AMVETS.

I want to acknowledge as well the excellent work in exploring Thomas

Creek's story done by the Amarillo Globe News and High Plains Public Radio. And, finally, I want to thank the Creek family for their patience and understanding and dignity with which they have approached this matter.

Mr. Speaker, in the late 1960s, Thomas E. Creek was in many ways a typical young man from the Texas panhandle. He had worked in a variety of jobs since he was 11 or 12 years old. He was a fan of Elvis Presley. He enjoyed being with his friends, and one remembered that he liked being in the middle of things. His brother, Ross, has been quoted as saying that "he didn't think Tom was afraid of anything. That's what gets me," he said to the Amarillo Globe News. "If he was afraid of anything, he kept it inside."

Tom Creek left school early and joined the Marine Corps. On the 4th of July, 1968, he stepped foot in Vietnam. In letters home, he called it hell. But on February 13, 1969, Marine Lance Corporal Thomas E. Creek was a rifleman with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division. His unit was part of a resupply convoy that was ambushed by enemy forces using mortars, mines, fragmentation grenades, and small arms.

According to the documents recommending him for the Medal of Honor, the fierce combat found the men firing at point-blank range. Corporal Creek was struck in the neck by a bullet. Blood was seen flowing from the wound. But then he noticed a fragmentation grenade land between him and the rest of the squad. Though wounded, he threw his body on top of the grenade. One of the Marines with him recalled seeing him run towards the grenade and yell, "I've got it, Mac." His body absorbed the full impact of the grenade, saving the lives of at least five Marines nearby. His act inspired the rest of the squad to defeat the enemy and complete its mission to resupply the forward combat base. Eleven others were wounded, but only Tom Creek was killed.

Lance Corporal Thomas E. Creek was awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest honor our Nation can bestow. This bill, as the chairman mentioned, will rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Amarillo, Texas, the Thomas E. Creek Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Dr. Craig Barnes has said that as he read the book "The Greatest Generation," he was struck by the fact that each of those described was a regular person. No one was born a hero. But when pushed, they found something heroic inside themselves. Heroes are ordinary people who refuse to be governed by fear when times are hard, he said.

Tom Creek was a regular person. He was also a hero. He reached down within himself and made a decision in a split second, a decision to sacrifice his life in order to save the lives of others. It is the same kind of sacrifice which men and women have made throughout

our history, from the Revolutionary War to the streets of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan, sacrifice for others while serving and defending the Nation.

I believe that naming this veterans medical center for this 18-year-old who sacrificed everything he had is a fitting tribute to his incredible heroism and sacrifice; that it will enhance the honor that rightfully belongs to those who have served our Nation and will be treated in this facility; and I hope that it will remind the rest of us that we too can refuse to be governed by fear and find something heroic inside ourselves as our duties demand.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation to honor Lance Corporal Thomas E. Creek by renaming the Amarillo VA Medical Center for him. As we are once again forced to confront on an almost daily basis the sacrifice of the young men and women who are serving our Nation, it is fitting and appropriate that we continue to honor the uncommon bravery of those soldiers who came before them.

Thomas Creek embodied such bravery, when in February of 1969 he selflessly gave his own life to save the lives of fellow Marines in Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, by all accounts, Thomas Creek was a young man who deserves this honor which we can bestow upon him today, and I am proud to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4836.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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 the bill, H.R. 4836.

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

There was no objection.

THOMAS P. NOONAN, JR., DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1318) to name

the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Sunnyside, Queens, New York, as the "Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic."

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1318

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

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC, QUEENS, NEW YORK.

The Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Sunnyside, Queens, New York, shall be known and designated as the "Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic". Any reference to such clinic in any law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the "Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1318 would name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in the City of Sunnyside, Queens, New York, for Lance Corporal Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., a Marine, who on February 5, 1969, was killed in action in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam.

Lance Corporal Noonan was 25 years old on that fateful morning in Vietnam when serving as a fire team leader he was mortally wounded while valiantly trying to drag a wounded Marine to safety. For his heroic actions, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military decoration.

I want to commend my distinguished colleague on the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), for introducing H.R. 1318. This is the second naming bill the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has brought to the floor today to honor servicemembers who gave their lives in Vietnam. These are bipartisan measures which pay homage to our fallen heroes. I am pleased to bring these bills before the House for its consideration.

I hope that these stories of bravery and sacrifice are an inspiration to the new generation of soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen who are so ably serving our country in the war against terrorism. By naming these facilities to honor Lance Corporals Noonan and Creek, we also signify our intent to continue providing health care to veterans of our Armed Forces now and into the future.

Again, I am grateful to my friend and colleague on the other side of the aisle for introducing it.

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