

directed at underage drinking. Right now, we have multiple programs aimed at different types of substance abuse alcohol is one of those. Some of those programs are in the Department of Justice, some are in Education, some are in Health and Human Services, but there is practically no coordination of these programs. Sometimes they duplicate each other. Sometimes these programs do not work well, and so we feel there needs to be some coordinating commission that coordinates all of these programs, particularly those that are aimed at alcohol abuse by young people.

It also authorizes a national media campaign directed at adults. You say, well, why would you direct it to adults. Well, the main thing is that the attitude of parents is the number one predictor as to whether a young person will abuse alcohol as an underage drinker or not, and so many parents many times feel if a young person is using alcohol, that pretty much prevents them from being involved with heroin or cocaine or methamphetamine, when exactly the opposite is true. Someone who starts abusing alcohol at an early age is much more apt to be addicted to all kinds of substance, and therefore, we feel there is a lot of drug awareness that has to occur with drugs.

It also provides additional resources to communities and colleges and universities to prevent underage drinking. At the present time, annually 1,700 young people, college students, die each year on the college campus because of alcohol abuse. It is the leading cause of death on the college campus. This is double the rate that we have had for deaths in Iraq. So we feel that this is critical.

Also, it increases Federal research and data collection on underage drinking.

THE SIXTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE HEROIC BATTLE OF
CRETE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. Foxx). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise proudly today to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Crete, a World War II event of epic proportions that profoundly impacted on the determination of many countries to resist the aggression of Nazi Germany. This is a story of the sacrifices made by a battered but brave group of individuals thrown together in a combined effort to halt the domination of a smaller, weaker nation by a larger, more powerful aggressor.

Amidst the cataclysm that engulfed the countries of Europe at the time, it seems now preposterous that a small island dared to stand up to the aggressor to preserve its freedom and defend its honor. Today, more than half a century later, the heroic events that took place in the Battle of Crete remain etched in the memory of people around the world. In

commemoration of this anniversary, and for the benefit of future generations, I will share a brief account of these events as they unfolded.

In early April 1941, the German army rushed to the aid of their defeated ally, Italy, and invaded Greece. Following a valiant struggle, Greek forces had been pushed entirely off the continent and were forced to take refuge on the island of Crete.

The German army then looked covetously across the sea to Crete because of the British airfields on the island, which could be used by the Allies for air strikes against the oil field of Rumania, thereby denying this vital war commodity to Hitler's forces now preparing for their attack on Russia. If captured, it would also provide air and sea bases from which the Nazis could dominate the eastern Mediterranean and launch air attacks against Allied forces in northern Africa. In fact, the Nazi high command envisioned the capture of Crete to be the first of a series of assaults leading to the Suez Canal. Hitler intended a short, one month, campaign, starting in March. On successful completion, his troops would be re-assigned to Russia.

Crete's defenses at the time had been badly neglected due to the deployment of Allied forces in North Africa. GEN Bernard Freyberg of the New Zealand Division was appointed by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as commander of a small contingent of Allied troops which had been dispatched to the island a few months before and re-enforced by additional troops who had retreated from the Greek mainland.

Early on the morning of May 20, 1941, Crete became the theater of the first and largest German airborne operation of the war. The skies above Crete were filled with more than 8,000 Nazi paratroopers, landing in a massive invasion of the island, which was subjected to heavy bombing and attacks in what became known as "Operation Mercury."

Waves of bombers pounded the Allied positions followed by a full-scale airborne assault. Elite paratroopers and glider-borne infantry units fell upon the rag-tag Allied soldiers and were met with ferocious resistance from the Allied troops and the Cretan population.

Although General Freyberg had decided not to arm the Cretans because they were believed to be anti-royalist, they fought bravely with whatever was at hand during the invasion. As soon as the battle broke out, the people of Crete volunteered to serve in the militia. Centuries of oppression and several revolts against Venetians and Turks had taught them that freedom is won and preserved by sacrifice, and there was hardly a family without a gun stashed somewhere in the house. For the first time, the Germans met stiff partisan resistance.

War-seasoned men joined the regular troops in the effort to repel the invader. Old men, women and children participated and used whatever makeshift weapons they could find. The pointed their antiquated guns at the descending German paratroopers. They used sticks, sickles and even their bare hands to fight those soldiers already on the ground. Most of them were illiterate villagers but their intuition, honed by the mortal risk they were facing, led them to fight with courage and bravery. "Aim for the legs and you'll get them in the heart," was the popular motto that summarized their hastily acquired battle experience.

Seven days later, the defenders of Crete—though clinging to their rocky defensive positions—knew that they would soon be overrun. The evacuation order was given, and nearly 18,000 men were rescued. These valiant survivors had bought the Allies a week's precious time free of Nazi air and sea attacks based from Crete. More importantly, they inflicted severe losses on the German airborne forces, the showpieces of the Nazi army. Although well-armed and thoroughly equipped, the Germans didn't break the Cretans' love of freedom.

Although the Germans captured the island in 10 days, they paid a heavy price. Of the 8,100 paratroopers involved in this operation, close to 4,000 were killed and 1,600 were wounded. So injured were the German units that they never again attempted an airborne assault of the magnitude launched at Crete. Hitler may have won the Battle of Crete, but he lost the war. The German victory proved a hollow one, as Crete became the graveyard of the German parachute troops. In fact, it is a lesson taught in almost every major military academy in the world on what not to do.

In retaliation for the losses they incurred, the Nazis spread punishment, terror and death on the innocent civilians of the island. More than 2,000 Cretans were executed during the first month alone and thousands more later. Despite these atrocities, for the 4 years following the Allied withdrawal from the island, the people of Crete put up a courageous guerrilla resistance, aided by a few British and Allied officers and troops who remained. Those involved were known as the Andartes (the Rebels).

Cretan people of all ages joined or aided the Andartes. Children would pile rocks in the roads to slow down the German convoys. They even carried messages in their schoolbooks because it was the only place that the German soldiers never looked. These messages contained information critical to the Andartes who were hiding in the mountains and would come down for midnight raids or daytime sabotages.

The German terror campaign was meant to break the fighting spirit and morale of the Andartes. Besides the random and frequent executions, German soldiers used other means to achieve their goal. They leveled many buildings in the towns and villages, destroyed religious icons, and locked hundreds of Cretans in churches for days without food or water, but nothing worked. These actions only made the Cretans more ferocious in their quest for freedom.

Even in the face of certain death while standing in line to be executed, Cretans did not beg for their lives. This shocked the German troops. Kurt Student, the German paratrooper commander who planned the invasion, said of the Cretans, "I have never seen such a defiance of death."

Finally, the Cretan people participated in one of the most daring operations that brought shame and humiliation to the German occupation forces and exhilaration and hope to the enslaved peoples of Europe. Major-General Von Kreipe, commander of all German forces in Crete, was abducted from his own headquarters in April 1944 and transferred to a POW camp in England.

The German troops had never encountered such resistance. Hitler had initially sent 12,000 troops to Crete, thinking that the occupation

would be swift. By the end of the 3½ years of occupation, Hitler had sent a total of 100,000 troops, to confront a little more than 5,000 Cretan Andarte fighters. These German troops could have been deployed somewhere else. More German troops were lost during the occupation of Crete than in France, Yugoslavia and Poland combined.

Most importantly, as a result of the battle in Crete, Hitler's master plan to invade Russia before the coming of winter had to be postponed, which resulted in the deaths of many German troops who were not properly prepared to survive the harsh Russian winter.

As we Americans know from our history, freedom does not come without a price. For their gallant resistance against the German invasion and occupation of their island, Cretans paid a stiff price. Within the first 5 months of the Battle of Crete, 3,500 Cretans were executed and many more were killed in the ensuing 3½ years of occupation.

Mr. Speaker, there are historical reasons why we Americans appreciate the sacrifices of the Cretan people in defending their island during the Battle of Crete. We have a history replete with similar heroic events starting with our popular revolt that led to the birth of our Nation more than two centuries ago.

We must always remember that as long as there are people willing to sacrifice their lives for the just cause of defending the integrity and freedom of their country, there is always hope for a better tomorrow. May we take inspiration from the shining example of the people of Crete in ensuring that this is indeed the case.

FORMER STATE SENATOR JOE BURTON AND GEORGIA'S VOTER ID LAW

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn for 5 minutes.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my State of Georgia on its new voter ID law which hopefully will be fully implemented soon. Additionally, I rise today to honor a friend and former Republican colleague in the Georgia State Senate, Joe Burton of DeKalb County.

Though retired, Senator Burton was one of the legislature's greatest proponents of voter identification reform, as well one of the legislative architects of this reform. While he may no longer be in the Georgia State Senate, the passage of this voter ID reform legislation can be directly attributed to his efforts.

Madam Speaker, Senator Burton, like most of us, realized open and fair elections are critical to the preservation of our democratic form of government. Every citizen has not only the right but, in many ways, the obligation to choose their leaders through the electoral process.

However, to ensure the integrity of our elections, we must verify those who vote are actually registered voters and the person they claim to be. Preventing election fraud and taking reasonable precautions to do so are fundamental in reassuring us all that our election results are a legitimate expression of the will of the people.

Last year, Madam Speaker, the Georgia legislature passed, and Governor Sonny Perdue signed into law a comprehensive voter identification bill. This bill requires an individual to produce a photo ID in order to vote rather than 1 of 17 different forms, including utility bills, bank statements, mail, and various non-photo licenses, which in no way guarantee that the possessor of the document is actually the identified person.

Madam Speaker, this law hit a slight speed bump when a Federal appeals court maintained an injunction on the voter ID law pending certain changes. Thankfully in the opening weeks of this year's legislative session, the Georgia legislature and the governor quickly passed a bill making all the necessary changes ensuring every Georgian can obtain a free photo ID in each and every one of Georgia's 159 counties.

Madam Speaker, this path to reform has not been an easy one. Legislators on both sides of this issue feel very passionately, and throughout this debate, emotions ran high, and they will probably continue to run high until these reforms are enacted and the law's opponents can see these reforms actually help, not hinder, voters.

While this law may have a few more legal tests to pass, it has been reviewed by the Department of Justice throughout the process. I remain confident that, given a fair hearing, this law will stand all legal tests and will provide all Georgians with a more fair electoral process.

Madam Speaker, strengthening voter confidence in the electoral process will only encourage more people to vote. I know this, and I know Senator Burton knew this when he helped lay the foundation for this reform in the Georgia Senate. Now, with a Republican majority in the Georgia legislature and a Republican governor, these nonpartisan reforms will become a reality to strengthen the integrity of our elections for the sake of all Georgians.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. George MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. McHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ROHRABACHER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DUNCAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and May 23 on account of official business in the district.