

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2546.

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

There was no objection.

OSCAR G. JOHNSON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITY

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2602) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan, as the "Oscar G. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2602

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 FACILITY, IRON MOUNTAIN, MICHIGAN.

The Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Oscar G. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility". Any reference to that medical facility in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Oscar G. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Medal of Honor recipients have performed selfless acts of courage. When reading their citations, we are deeply humbled by the courage and selflessness of their actions to save their comrades and to defend this great country.

H.R. 2602 would name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan, as the Oscar G. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility.

The following is from the citation for Sergeant Johnson, who at the time of his action was a private first class in the United States Army. It was September, 1944, and the Allied Forces were attempting to break the German defense line in Italy known as the "Gothic Line":

He practically single handedly protected the left flank of his company's position in the offensive to break the German Gothic Line. Company B was the extreme left assault unit of the corps. The advance was stopped by heavy fire from Monticelli Ridge, and the company took fire behind an embankment.

Sergeant Johnson, a mortar gunner, having expended his ammunition, assumed the duties of a rifleman. As leader of a squad of seven men, he was ordered to establish a combat post 50 yards to the left of the company to cover its exposed flank.

Repeated enemy counterattacks, supported by artillery, mortar, and machine gun fire from the high ground to his front, had by the afternoon of 16 September killed or wounded all of his men. Collecting weapons and ammunition from his fallen comrades, in the face of hostile fire, he held his exposed position and inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy, who several times came close enough to throw hand grenades at him.

On the night of September 16, the enemy launched its heaviest attack on Company B, putting its greatest pressure against the lone defender of the left flank. In spite of mortar fire which crashed about him and machine gun bullets which whipped the chest of his shallow trench, Sergeant Johnson stood erect and repulsed the attack with grenades and small arms fire.

He remained awake and alert throughout the night, frustrating all attempts at infiltration. On 17 September, 25 German soldiers surrendered to him. Two men, sent to reinforce him that afternoon, were caught in a devastating mortar and artillery barrage.

With no thought for his own safety, Sergeant Johnson rushed to the shell hole where they lay half buried and seriously wounded, covered their position by his fire, and assisted a medical corpsman in rendering aid. That night he secured their removal to the rear and remained on watch until his company was relieved.

Five companies of the German paratroop regiment had been repeatedly committed to the attack on Company B without success. Twenty dead Germans were found in front of his position. By his heroic stand and utter disregard for personal safety, Sergeant Johnson was in large measure responsible for defeating the enemy's attempts to turn the exposed left flank. What an incredible hero, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. JOHNSON is no longer with us, but we can keep alive his memory by naming the facility in his honor.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 2602, a bill to designate the VA medical facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan, as the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Facility. This legislation was introduced by my colleague from Michigan, Representative BART STUPAK, and it will honor a soldier who served his country with gallantry and distinction under fire during World War II near Scarperia, Italy. I appreciate Congressman STUPAK's hard work and initiative on this legislation.

On September 16, 1944, Sergeant Johnson, a mortar gunner, expended

his ammunition and assumed the duties of a rifleman. As the leader of the squad of seven men, he was ordered to establish a position 50 yards to the left of his company to cover its exposed flank. Repeated enemy counterattacks had by that afternoon killed or wounded all of his men. Collecting weapons and ammunition from his fallen comrades, he continued to hold his exposed position and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy throughout the night. On September 17, 25 German soldiers surrendered to him; 25 soldiers surrendered to one very brave soldier.

Two men were sent out to reinforce him that afternoon, but were caught in devastating mortar fire. Sergeant Johnson secured their removal and continued to hold his position until his company was relieved on September 18. Twenty dead Germans were found in front of his position. By his heroic stand and utter disregard for personal safety, Sergeant Johnson was in large measure responsible for defeating the enemy's attempts to turn the exposed left flank.

Mr. Speaker, I will submit Sergeant Johnson's complete Medal of Honor citation into the RECORD.

JOHNSON, OSCAR G.

Rank and organization: Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company B, 363d Infantry, 91st Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Scarperia, Italy, 1618 September 1944. Entered service at: Foster City, Mich. Birth: Foster City, Mich. G.O. No.: 58, 19 July 1945. Citation: (then Pfc.) He practically single-handedly protected the left flank of his company's position in the offensive to break the German's gothic line. Company B was the extreme left assault unit of the corps. The advance was stopped by heavy fire from Monticelli Ridge, and the company took cover behind an embankment. Sgt. Johnson, a mortar gunner, having expended his ammunition, assumed the duties of a rifleman. As leader of a squad of 7 men he was ordered to establish a combat post 50 yards to the left of the company to cover its exposed flank. Repeated enemy counterattacks, supported by artillery, mortar, and machinegun fire from the high ground to his front, had by the afternoon of 16 September killed or wounded all his men. Collecting weapons and ammunition from his fallen comrades, in the face of hostile fire, he held his exposed position and inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy, who several times came close enough to throw hand grenades. On the night of 1617 September, the enemy launched his heaviest attack on Company B, putting his greatest pressure against the lone defender of the left flank. In spite of mortar fire which crashed about him and machinegun bullets which whipped the crest of his shallow trench, Sgt. Johnson stood erect and repulsed the attack with grenades and small arms fire. He remained awake and on the alert throughout the night, frustrating all attempts at infiltration. On 17 September, 25 German soldiers surrendered to him. Two men, sent to reinforce him that afternoon, were caught in a devastating mortar and artillery barrage. With no thought of his own safety, Sgt. Johnson rushed to the shell hole where they lay half buried and seriously wounded, covered their position by his fire, and assisted a Medical Corpsman in rendering aid. That night he secured their removal to the rear and remained on watch until his company was relieved. Five companies of a German paratroop regiment had been repeatedly committed to the attack on Company B

without success. Twenty dead Germans were found in front of his position. By his heroic stand and utter disregard for personal safety, Sgt. Johnson was in a large measure responsible for defeating the enemy's attempts to turn the exposed left flank.

Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Johnson continued to serve his country after the war. He served as a foreman of a National Guard vehicle maintenance shop in Lansing, Michigan, giving his Nation 30 years of service with the National Guard. On May 13, Mr. Johnson died in Iron Mountain, Michigan, leaving behind a legacy of heroism and gallantry.

I support H.R. 2602 as a fitting tribute to a good man who served his Nation well, not just in war but also throughout his life. I certainly urge all of the Members to support this and would remind the Members that certainly Mr. Johnson is one of the many reasons why we do call this, Mr. Johnson's era, the "Greatest Generation."

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the author of this wonderful piece of legislation, Congressman BART STUPAK from the State of Michigan.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

I rise today in support of H.R. 2602, a bill to name the Veterans Affairs medical facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan, after Oscar G. Johnson. I am proud to have authored this legislation and proud to bring it to the floor. Oscar Johnson was a friend of mine, and he was a legend in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

I would like to thank Chairman FILER and Ranking Member BUYER for their support of this legislation.

As was mentioned, Oscar Johnson was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner and a Dickinson County native. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in combat near Scarperia, Italy, in September, 1944.

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I will not go through all the details, as that has already been done by the previous two speakers who have eloquently outlined the heroic actions of Oscar Johnson. Mr. HARE and Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE did an excellent job in doing that. I would like to add a few other thoughts.

As was indicated, Sergeant Johnson's service to his country did not stop after he returned home from World War II. In fact, Mr. Johnson continued to serve honorably as a foreman of the National Guard vehicle maintenance shop in Lansing, Michigan, our State capital.

During his 30 years of service, Mr. Johnson worked alongside and guided young soldiers, Vietnam-era veterans, and newly enlisted women in our military service. Oscar Johnson quickly became a beloved member of his local community and exemplified the dedica-

tion and sacrifice made by all the men and women who served in the Armed Forces, especially during World War II. He was a local hero and a great American. Mr. Johnson is one of 68 World War II Medal of Honor recipients to have survived combat.

Mr. Johnson passed away in 1998 and developed a reputation for conducting himself with modesty, dignity and honor.

At this time, I will enter into the RECORD an article entitled, "A Soldier's Story," which appeared in the Iron Mountain Daily News after his death in 1998. This article eloquently describes Mr. Johnson's heroic actions during World War II and his commitment to this country.

A SOLDIER'S STORY (By Jim Anderson)

Oscar Johnson was reluctant, in a newspaper interview, to relate the details of a World War II battle that earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

"The way they describe my role, it sounds like I might have been a little better than I was," he said.

The story of the battle, as told in his medal presentation, is extraordinary.

Johnson, a soldier from Foster City, practically single-handedly defended the left flank of his company's position from a German paratroop regiment.

The certificate accompanying his Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military decoration, tells it as follows:

Near Scarperia, Italy in September 1944, Johnson's company (Company B) was stopped by heavy fire from Monticelli Ridge and took cover behind an embankment. Johnson, a mortar gunner, having expended his ammunition, assumed the duties of a rifleman.

As leader of a squad of seven men, he was ordered to establish a combat post 50 yards to the left of Company B to cover its exposed flank. Repeated enemy counterattacks, supported by artillery, mortar and machine gun fire from the high ground, had by the afternoon of Sept. 16 killed or wounded all his men.

Collecting weapons and ammunition from his fallen comrades, in the face of hostile fire, he held his exposed position and inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy, who several times came close enough to throw hand grenades.

That night, the enemy launched a heavy attack on Company B, putting its greatest pressure against the lone defender of the left flank.

In spite of mortar fire that crashed about him and machine gun bullets that whipped the crest of his shallow trench, Johnson stood erect and repulsed the attack with grenades and small-arms fire.

He remained awake and on the alert throughout the night, frustrating all attempts at infiltration.

On Sept. 17, 25 German soldiers surrendered to him. Two men were sent to reinforce him that afternoon, but were caught in a mortar and artillery barrage.

Johnson, ignoring his own safety, rushed to the shell-hole where they lay half-buried and seriously wounded, covered their position by his fire, and assisted a medic in rendering aid. That night, he secured their removal to the rear and remained on watch until his company was relieved.

Five companies of the German paratroop regiment had been repeatedly committed to the attack against Company B without success. Twenty dead Germans were found in front of Johnson's position.

According to his presidential citation, Johnson's heroic stand and utter disregard for personal safety was in large measure responsible for defeating the enemy's attempts to turn the exposed left flank.

Oscar Johnson, one of the rare recipients of the Medal of Honor to have survived combat, died Wednesday at the age of 77.

He had gone on, after the war, to serve as foreman of a National Guard vehicle maintenance shop in Lansing. During 30 years of duty with the Guard, he saw a lot of changes.

"During the '50s, we got a lot of boys joining to avoid the draft," he said in a 1980 Panax Newspapers interview. "A lot of them were farm boys who knew a lot about equipment. I enjoyed working with them. Now we get guys in who have to be taught to drive a stick-shift."

The biggest change, he said, was working with women.

"I can't say anything bad about them," he said. "They make real good jeep drivers and they seem to have more responsibility toward their vehicles. They don't think a thing about pulling out a battery or crawling underneath with an oil pan."

He said the Vietnam-era veterans he worked with at the Guard were really no different than the veterans of World War II or the Korean War.

"The biggest difference is that they don't get as much attention," he said.

After his Guard service, Johnson retired in Dickinson County.

He was a regular church-goer.

A couple of years ago, he attended a Good Friday service at First Lutheran Church in Iron Mountain. I'm sure he attended many others—this happened to be one I managed to make.

Part of the service is the reading of the "Good Friday Solemn Reproaches," representing the agony and reproaches of the crucified Savior.

This line is included:

"I grafted you into the tree of my chosen Israel, and you turned on them with persecution and mass murder."

Those lines might have been echoing in my thoughts when I noticed Oscar.

The sight of his ruddy face and white hair made it especially clear that it took his sacrifices, and those of countless others, to stop the unspeakable horrors inflicted on Jews in Europe.

Near the end of the service, after a silence is kept for meditation on the mystery of redemption, there is a time to visit a cross at the altar.

Traditionally, one is to bow before the cross, touch it, or kiss it.

Oscar Johnson approached the cross, walking with a slight limp as he did in his later years, but with a sure confidence and grace.

He didn't bow before the cross, touch it, or kiss it.

What he did was this. He gave it a casual, respectful soldier's salute and limped back to his pew.

To this day, the memory of that simple gesture brings forward tears.

Maybe it's true, as Johnson claimed, that the Medal of Honor story made him sound a little better than he was.

It must also be true that he was more.

So it is fitting tonight that we honor Oscar Johnson, his years of service and his family by naming the Veterans Affairs Medical Facility in Iron Mountain Michigan the "Oscar G. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility."

This legislation has been endorsed by the city of Iron Mountain, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American

Legion, Disabled American Veterans and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Mr. Johnson was the last Congressional Medal of Honor winner living in the Upper Peninsula. As I stated earlier, he was a friend of mine. I first introduced this legislation in 2000, it is now 2007. It is time for the family and friends to have the honor of Oscar Johnson having his name attached to the VA Medical Facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan.

I would also like to thank the entire Michigan U.S. House delegation for cosponsoring this legislation, and our two Senators, STABENOW and LEVIN, for their support of this legislation. And I thank the previous speakers.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2602.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 2602.

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 Illinois (Mr. HARE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2602.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RAYMOND G. MURPHY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 229) to redesignate a Federal building in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as the "Raymond G. Murphy Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 229

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

SECTION 1. REDESIGNATION.

The Federal building known and designated as the "Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center" located at 1501 San Pedro Drive, SE, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, shall be known and redesignated as the "Raymond G. Murphy Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Federal building referred to in section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Raymond G. Murphy De-

partment of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on December 9, 1861, Iowa Senator James W. Grimes introduced S. 82 in the United States Senate, a bill designed to "promote the efficiency of the Navy" by authorizing the production and distribution of "medals of honor". On December 21 the bill was passed, authorizing 200 such medals be produced "which shall be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen and Marines as shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities during the present war." President Lincoln signed the bill, and the Medal of Honor was born.

The first Medal of Honor was the Navy Medal of Honor. Raymond Murphy was a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps when he risked his life and went above and beyond the call of duty as a platoon commander in action against the enemy.

Although painfully wounded by fragments from an enemy mortar shell while leading his evacuation platoon, Second Lieutenant Murphy refused medical aid and continued to lead his men up a hill through hostile mortar and small-arms fire, while shouting words of encouragement to his men.

Under the increasing intense enemy fire, he immediately located casualties as they fell and made several trips up and down the fire-swept hill to direct evacuation teams to the wounded, personally carrying many of the stricken Marines to safety. When reinforcements were needed by the assaulting elements, Second Lieutenant Murphy employed part of his unit as support and, during the ensuing battle, personally killed two of the enemy with his pistol.

With all the wounded evacuated and the assaulting units beginning to disengage, he remained behind with a carbine to cover the movement of friendly forces off the hill, and although suffering intense pain from a previous wound, seized an automatic rifle to provide more firepower when the enemy reappeared in the trenches.

After reaching the base of the hill, he organized a search party and again ascended the slope for a final check on missing Marines, locating and carrying the bodies of a machine gun crew back down the hill.

Wounded a second time while conducting the entire force to the line of departure through a continuing barrage of enemy small-arms, artillery and mortar fire, he once again refused medical attention until assured that every one of his men, including all the casualties, had preceded him to the main lines.

Second Lieutenant Murphy's actions epitomize the Marine Corps motto, *Semper Fidelis*, "always faithful," and demonstrate his loyalty and commitment to marine comrades-in-arms.

After the war, Mr. Murphy continued his service to his veteran comrades in New Mexico, serving as Director of Veteran Services at the VA center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Renaming the VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico is a fitting tribute to a tireless advocate of veterans.

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

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are considering S. 229 on the House floor today. This Senate bill would name the VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico the Raymond G. "Jerry" Murphy Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Jerry Murphy was awarded the Medal of Honor and the Silver Star for heroism during the Korean War. Its companion bill in the House, H.R. 474, introduced by Representative WILSON, has the support of the entire New Mexico delegation as well as Governor Richardson from that State.

During his service in the United States Marine Corps, Second Lieutenant Murphy was cited for his "conspicuous gallantry at the risk of his life and above and beyond the call of duty as a platoon commander. He was twice wounded, but he repeatedly refused medical attention and continued to lead his men in an assault against a cleverly concealed and well-entrenched enemy force."

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would submit for the RECORD the text of Lieutenant Murphy's Medal of Honor citation.

MURPHY, RAYMOND G.

Rank and organization: Second Lieutenant, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein.). Place and date: Korea, 3 February 1953. Entered service at: Pueblo, Colo. Born: 14 January 1930, Pueblo, Colo. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a platoon commander of Company A, in action against enemy aggressor forces. Although painfully wounded by fragments from an enemy mortar shell while leading his evacuation platoon in support of assault units attacking a cleverly concealed and well-entrenched hostile force occupying commanding ground, 2d Lt. Murphy steadfastly refused medical aid and continued to lead his men up a hill through a withering barrage of hostile mortar and small-arms fire, skillfully maneuvering his force from one position to the next and shouting words of encouragement. Undeterred by the increasing intense enemy fire, he immediately located casualties as they fell and made several trips up and down the fire-swept hill to direct evacuation teams to the wounded, personally carrying many of the stricken marines to safety. When reinforcements were needed by the assaulting elements, 2d Lt. Murphy employed part of his unit as support and, during the ensuing battle, personally killed 2 of the enemy with his pistol. With all the wounded evacuated and the assaulting units beginning