

Our servicemen and women deserve better treatment from the country they defend.

I believe the Federal Government should get out of the business of telling states they can or cannot do something that States are perfectly capable of regulating themselves.

But that's a big step. At the very least, the government that sent our troops into harm's way should not turn around and stop them from accessing treatment that works for them—sometimes the only treatment that works for them.

How many more veterans have to suffer the emotional and physical scars of war before we listen to what they have to say?

I urge my colleagues to support this important amendment.

GREAT FALLS MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, on Memorial Day I had the privilege of attending a ceremony in Great Falls, Virginia, honoring those who have fought for our great Nation.

I was joined at the service with dozens of Great Falls residents, along with other community leaders, to pay tribute to the 25 men and women of Great Falls who died in battle or from attacks on America.

The service began with a friendly welcome from Mr. Bruce Ellis Fein, a member of Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. In 2002, Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial was created with the goal of building a memorial site in Great Falls dedicated to those residents who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

The highlight of the service was the keynote speech by Lt. Gen. Norman H. Smith who served our country in the Marine Corps for over 35 years. In his address, Lt. Gen. Smith discussed his recent trip to the island of Iwo Jima, specifically, his visit to Mt. Suribachi with several surviving veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Lt. Gen. Smith has had an established military career and has been awarded numerous decorations for his service. He now serves as president of the Iwo Jima Association of America and currently resides in my congressional district in Winchester, Virginia.

I submit Lt. Gen. Smith's remarks from the Great Falls Memorial Day Service and a recent news article from the Great Falls Connection.

ADDRESS BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL NORMAN H. SMITH, USMC (RET) OF WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA AT THE MEMORIAL DAY 2013, THE GREAT FALLS FREEDOM MEMORIAL

Good Morning.

I'm going to take a bit of keynote speaker's prerogative to point out one special guest for today's service, and he is Marine Tommy Cox, a veteran of the Iwo Jima campaign of World War 2.

I'm honored to speak to you this morning on this particular day, in this particular place, which is dedicated to those residents who have given their lives in the cause of freedom.

I'm a Marine, but it is my great privilege to be here today to represent all of our

Armed forces. All of them contribute mightily to the security of our nation. It is an even greater honor, on this Memorial Day 2013, to speak about the tens of thousands of our fellow citizens who have given their lives in the defense of our country, its people, and its principles.

For me, Memorial Day came early this year, in mid-March on the island of Iwo Jima. I went there with a group that included military historians, writers, students from the Young Marines organization and, first and foremost, 14 veterans of the battle of Iwo Jima and the Pacific campaign of World War 2.

These men who are now in their late 80's and early 90's were, most of them, teenagers in February of 1945, when the battle began. The ultimate goal of the Iwo Jima campaign was to gain ever closer access to the Japanese home islands in the event that an invasion of Japan would be necessary in order to end the long, bloody war.

Iwo Jima in 1945 was a barren volcanic island covered with ash and stone. There was nowhere to take cover, no trees, nowhere even to be able to dig a fighting hole, for the soil was ashy sand that acquired a name of its own: the black sands of Iwo Jima.

Beneath this forbidding surface lay noxious sulphur beds that stank, and many miles of tunnels, caves and reinforced fighting positions crammed with small arms, machine guns, mortars and artillery pieces. The Japanese defenders, well prepared for an assault on the island, intended to inflict massive casualties on their enemies. They did.

Sixty-eight years later, the 14 Iwo Jima vets I traveled with returned to the site of a savage battle that went on without pause and without quarter, on either side, for 36 days. They went back to remember their own experiences and to keep alive the sacrifices they witnessed. Six thousand eight hundred Marines died during the 36-day battle. 22,000 were wounded. More than 20,000 Japanese were killed. In February 1945 the Iwo Jima veterans of today were fighting for their lives and the lives of their brother Marines and sailors. They were fighting, too, for the lives of many Army Air Corps crewmen who would have died were it not for the emergency landing field built by Seabees while the battle still raged. It is estimated that more than 20,000 U.S. airmen were saved by landing their battle damaged B-29s and B-24s as they returned from bombing raids over Japan. All the American Armed Forces contributed to the victory on Iwo: the Army, Navy, Navy Air, the Army Air Corps, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard and the often forgotten Merchant Marine.

The almost accidental photograph of the flag raising on Mt. Suribachi became an iconic image of American valor. Today, Mt. Suribachi is the site of a very different annual ceremony, a ceremony that none of the 14 returning veterans could have believed possible in 1945. This, the annual Reunion of Honor, is attended by American and Japanese alike, who meet every year to commemorate the historic battle and the post war U.S.-Japanese alliance.

The Reunion of Honor began in 1995, when the Iwo Jima Association of America joined with the Iwo Jima Association of Japan in order to honor warriors on both sides who died for their respective countries on that desolate island, 600 miles from Japan. This memorial service is not about lauding the victors nor humiliating the vanquished. Nor does it attempt to glorify war. Far from it. Iwo Jima was a killing ground and, like our own Civil War battlefields in the Shenandoah Valley and other places, it is also hallowed ground where the remains of the missing still lie. To the Japanese families of soldiers whose bodies were never recovered,

it is an annual pilgrimage undertaken to honor their ancestors.

This year the hour-long service took place in perfect weather, on an island that looks far different from the hellish place it was 68 years ago. What was black sand and scarred rock is now green with scrub trees and shrubs. Dirt roads have been paved, memorial markers have been placed. The beaches, however, are still black sand. Japanese and American military and governmental officials spoke during the service and wreaths were laid on the memorial stone markers. A military band played, a band composed of both American and Japanese musicians.

Following the ceremony the American group boarded mini-vans for the trip up the serpentine road to the top of Mt. Suribachi. During the battle, this mountain—about the height of the Washington Monument—was honeycombed with gun emplacements that rained deadly fire on the U.S. forces. On the third day of the invasion, elements of the 28th Marine Regiment made a tortuous and deadly ascent up the steep side of the mountain, to its peak. It was here that the now famous flag raising took place. The photo taken was used to create the magnificent bronze monument in Arlington Cemetery: the Marine Corps War Memorial.

Atop Suribachi the Iwo vets and others visited the unit memorials placed there. Photos were taken and more stories from the vets were forthcoming as they gazed down upon the landing beaches and the now peaceful landscape of Iwo Jima.

As we stood on Mt. Suribachi some of the vets talked about their recollections of the battle . . . and the rest of us listened.

Donald Graves is 87. He was 18 then. He remembered having steak for breakfast at 0700 on the day he went ashore in the 3d wave. Once on the black beach he lay with his face in the sand, very scared. He told me he was clinging to a ledge on Mt. Suribachi with his flamethrower, just a few feet from where the flag was raised.

Bill Montgomery is 89. In 1945 he was not long out of high school. On Iwo Jima he was the only survivor of his small unit. When he saw the flag raised on Suribachi, he thought it was all over . . . but the battle went on for more than a month. He told me that he had not wanted to revisit the scene of so much tragedy, but decided to come now to remember, and to honor his fallen brother Marines.

Lieutenant General Larry Snowden, 92, a native Virginian, was a young company commander on Iwo Jima. When he talks about the battle he never fails to remember the men he lost there. To this day he holds them close in loving memory of their courage and honor.

In today's world, 68 years is a very long time. To the younger generations, it may seem like an eternity. In the 68 years since the battle of Iwo Jima, much has happened that we might prefer to forget. The young men who survived the battle, which was after all, but one of countless such battles in the European and Pacific Theaters of World War 2, may have wanted nothing more than merciful forgetfulness . . . and who could blame them?

The men I stood with on Suribachi have not forgotten. They spoke with quiet dignity about those who died there. They grieve for them still. The stakes during the dark days of any war are so high . . . so high. Those who make the greatest sacrifice have no tomorrows. They have given them to us. For those who have given their lives, we must and will be strong, be faithful, be free. To them we owe all that we now possess. Our duty is clear; we will never forget our Nation's debt of gratitude to those who died in the defense of our liberties.

Thank you.

[From the Great Falls Connection, May 28, 2013]

GREAT FALLS MARKS MEMORIAL DAY

(By Alex McVeigh)

Retired Lt. Gen. Norman H. Smith was commissioned into the United States Marine Corps in December 1955, more than 10 years after the Battle of Iwo Jima. But 68 years later, he accompanied 14 surviving veterans to the Japanese island, and he was struck by the stories he heard.

"As we stood on Mount Suribachi, some of the vets talked about their recollections of the battle. Donald Graves, 87, was 18 then. He remembered having steak for breakfast on the day he went ashore third wave. Once on the black beach, he lay with his face on the sand, very scared. He told me he was clinging to a ledge on Mount Suribachi with his flamethrower, just a few feet from where the [American] flag was raised," Smith said. "Bill Montgomery, 89, was not long out of high school. On Iwo Jima he was the only survivor of his small unit. When he saw the flag raised on Suribachi, he thought the battle was over, but instead it raged on for more than a month. He told me he had not wanted to revisit the scene of so much tragedy, but decided to come to remember and honor his fellow Marine brothers."

Smith was the guest speaker at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial's Memorial Day ceremony Monday, May 27. One Iwo Jima veteran was present at the ceremony. Tommy Cox of McLean was a member of the 5th Marine Division, 28th Regiment, and witnessed the famous raising of the American flag on Mount Suribachi.

Dozens of residents gathered at the memorial to pay tribute to the 25 men and women of Great Falls who died in battle or from attacks on America, as well as the thousands of Americans who had what Abraham Lincoln called "laid so costly a sacrifice on the altar of freedom."

After the names were read, scouts from Boy Scout Troop 55 raised the flags at the memorial from half-mast.

"According to the Flag Code, flags should fly at half staff until midday, to mourn the sacrifices of the past," said Bruce Ellis Fein of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. "The flags should be raised at midday to full staff to celebrate the future that those sacrifices have made possible."

After the ceremony, Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34) presented the family of Tony Blankley, a Great Falls resident and member of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial who passed away in January 2012.

Blankley was a press secretary for Newt Gingrich while he was Speaker of the House, the editorial page editor for The Washington Times and a regular panelist on The McLaughlin Group. He was also a prosecutor with the California attorney general's office and even briefly a child actor, appearing in Humphrey Bogart's last film, "The Harder They Fall."

"It's fitting that we honor Tony today, because he and [his wife] Linda were very committed to the military, and were so involved in setting up this memorial, and Linda continues that legacy today," Comstock said. "Tony was truly a Renaissance man. He led such a rich, interesting and well-led life, and he was well respected by all his friends and colleagues, which many of us here are proud to call ourselves."

Blankley's wife Linda Davis, her mother and their daughter Anna accepted the resolution awarded by Comstock. Davis is still active with many military causes, and spent last weekend volunteering with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors.

"I'm so thankful for this tremendous honor, and I know Tony would be very humbled by it as well," she said.

Smith said in his concluding remarks that though many of the men and women of the armed forces may wish to forget the tragedies, injuries and losses they have endured in service of country, "Those who have made the greatest sacrifice have no tomorrows," he said. "They have given them to us, and for those who have given their lives, we must be strong, we will be faithful and we will be free."

HONORING WILL ORDING

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Will Ording. Will is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Will has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Will has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Will has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Will Ording for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL PETER FORD

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Lieutenant Colonel Peter Ford for his extraordinary service to the Nation while serving in the United States Army Reserves and National Guard for the past 32 years.

Lieutenant Colonel Ford started his military career in 1981 as an enlisted Soldier—an infantryman—in the Virginia National Guard. After graduating from Gustavus Adolphus College, where he was the only ROTC Cadet at Gustavus, Lieutenant Colonel Ford was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army Ordinance Corps. After the Officer Basic Course, Lieutenant Colonel Ford in his civilian capacity was sworn in as a Special Agent with the State Department Diplomatic Security Service.

While serving as the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at the embassy in Switzerland, Lieutenant Colonel Ford was assigned as a Military Intelligence Officer at the Military Intelligence Group at the 7th Army Reserve Command in Germany. In 1997, he was called up to support the war in Bosnia. Upon his return to the United States, he joined the Office, Chief of the Army Reserves, as a Reserve Congressional Liaison Officer and also served as a Reservist with the 157th Individual Mobilization Augmentee Detachment.

In 2003, Lieutenant Colonel Ford was assigned as a Congressional Detailee to the

Homeland Security Committee and was named Executive Officer of the 157th that same year. After serving as RSO in Armenia, he was detailed to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In the fall of 2007, at the beginning of the "surge" in Iraq, Lieutenant Colonel Ford volunteered to serve as an Army Reservist in Iraq. He was attached to the American Embassy in Baghdad and, as the Director of the Office of Hostage Affairs, was responsible for resolving U.S. kidnapping cases in Iraq. Following the completion of his military tour, Peter continued his service in Iraq. For an additional year, he worked as a DSS Agent with the State Department in the same position.

Returning to the U.S., Peter obtained a Masters Degree from the National Defense Intelligence College and joined Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Affairs as a drilling Reservist. He was subsequently assigned to the Diplomatic Security's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC). In October 2011, Lieutenant Colonel Ford took command of the 157th Individual Mobilization Augmentee Detachment. During his military and civilian careers, Lieutenant Ford has worked in over 110 countries.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the grateful Nation, I join my colleagues today in saying thank you to Lieutenant Colonel Peter Ford for his extraordinary dedication to duty and service to the country throughout his distinguished career in the United States Army.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AVENEL FIRE COMPANY NO. 1

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Avenel Fire Company No. 1 on its 100th Anniversary. The volunteer fire company continues to provide exemplary service to the residents of Woodbridge Township's Fire District #5 and is truly deserving of this body's recognition.

Organized and chartered as Avenel Chemical Company No. 1, it legally changed its name to Avenel Fire Company No. 1 on July 12, 1913. There were 12 charter members, with Joseph Szabo serving as the first Fire Chief (a position he held through 1915) and Edward Moran serving as the first President. The first firefighting equipment purchased for the company was kept in a shed owned by member Joseph Praver. Over the years, the company was housed at different locations, finally settling at its current property on Avenel Street in 1929. It was renovated in 1995 to update and expand the structure.

Avenel Fire Company No. 1 continues to ensure the safety of its residents by replacing outdated equipment and adding new tools and apparatus to its fleet, including a ladder truck and zodiac boat. In its 100 year history, it has seen the installation of emergency response apparatus throughout the district, including fire hydrants, fire alarm systems and fire alarm boxes. Today, its 42 volunteer members answer approximately 600 alarms each year and service over 5000 addresses.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in recognizing the 100th anniversary of Avenel