

the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last night for the State of the Union address by President Obama, my guest was a Portlander, Cheryl Strayed, the author of the best-selling book, "Wild," who is currently being portrayed on the big screen by Reese Witherspoon. This epic story is about how a young woman, reeling from the loss of her mother and the cascading challenges of her life, undertook a journey 1100 miles along the Pacific Coast Trail. It was 96 days of an amazing struggle, overcoming all sorts of difficulties, adversities, as she helped work out her own challenges and issues.

I invited her because I thought the story that she portrayed, the experience that she had, was an interesting metaphor for the sorts of things that we should be doing here. Perhaps we might be able to come together as a Congress, supporting legislation that would help protect some of those special places that are portrayed in her powerful book and in the excellent movie.

In the course of her visit, another thought has made its way to me as I watched her interact with dozens of young people in a variety of meetings on Capitol Hill, fellow Members of Congress, and many other people who were touched by the story of her journey and it made a profound effect on them. She continues to receive hundreds of emails a day from people who were inspired by that effort and her magnificent book.

It occurs to me that it is an appropriate metaphor for what our challenge is as Members of the 114th Congress, because this, after all, is a 2-year journey on behalf of the American people. The question for us is: If we can struggle with that heavy pack, navigate areas where sometimes the trail is a little obscure, can we put our trust in strangers who help us along this difficult journey? Can we be resolute in putting one foot in front of another on behalf of the American public?

Mr. Speaker, it was a very profound experience to watch those interactions, after having seen the movie, and having been entranced by the book. I am absolutely convinced that this is our moment, our journey into something that doesn't necessarily have to be "Wild," even though there is a roller coaster of legislative activity. I am convinced there ought to be enough common interest, common commitment, common goals that we ought to be able to tease out elements that enable us to be successful in our journey.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that people will reflect on that experience of this young woman who was able to overcome adversity and open up an amazing chapter in her life and beyond. I hope we will be able to do the same for the people we represent.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE 70TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind everybody about a real-life story of being outnumbered 10 to 1, a story of courage, will, discipline, suffering, immense sacrifice, and success, a tale of two great militaries, surprise, weather, overwhelming force, and sheer resolve. It is marked with the graves of thousands and exemplifies the struggle for the very future of freedom in our world.

The story ends with the 101st Airborne and Patton's Armor being victorious in January and February of 1945, and I think it is important to recognize the accomplishments of all the units who struggled and suffered greatly under the German siege of a small town in Belgium named Bastogne. This January and the recent December marks the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

Most people know of the 101st Airborne, nicknamed the "batting Bastards of Bastogne," and the plight of Patton's Armor, as chronicled in so many stories and movies now bur-nished into the collective consciousness of our Nation, and rightly so.

However, Mr. Speaker, on this 70th anniversary, I want to remind us of an often untold story of the other heroes of the Battle of the Bulge and the little but critical town of Bastogne. It is a story of the American soldiers of the 28th Division from Pennsylvania, who held at all costs.

In late October to mid-November of 1944, the battle of the Hurtgen Forest was described as a meat grinder. The 28th Division was in a fierce battle with the German 73rd Corps. For the 28th, the battle losses were 248 officers and 5,452 enlisted men. After the battle, the weary division needed a rest.

The Ardennes Forest was thick and seemingly impenetrable. It was known as a quiet sector in which the 28th could reequip, reorganize, and assimilate thousands of new replacements into the ranks while the division rested.

Greatly weakened by the previous battle, the 28th Division was spread out over some 25 miles along a front which was more than double that which was recommended in standard practice by any division at the time.

On the morning of 16 December 1944, the peace was shattered by the opening barrage of the Germans opening up one of the largest displays of artillery bombardment ever, signaling the start of Hitler's last great offensive on the Western Front in World War II.

For the next 4 days, without any sleep, often without food, elements of the 28th Division and their affiliates fought continuously, often until the last bullet and life, to deny the enemy success. It was exceptionally cold, foggy, damp, and, of course, snow cov-

ered, exactly what Hitler had counted on, as the winter would only add to the element of surprise.

The German 5th and 15th Panzer Armies, 6th SS, and 7th Army attacked the U.S. 8th Army in a line between Aachen and Bastogne with a plan to go as close as possible down the seam between American, Canadian, and British forces to split them.

After crossing the Meuse River, the attacking Panzers were to turn north and capture the port city of Antwerp, thus collapsing the supply lines and the alliance.

The timetable established by the German general staff and German high command called for the capture of the entire 28th Division sector early in the morning of 16 December and the capture of Bastogne by the same evening of that day. Bastogne was a major road junction which was needed by the Germans for armor and resupply units.

In the early morning hours of 16 December, the 28th Division received a message telling them to hold at all costs. Keystoners, as they were known, were dug in and began the slow and painful art of trading space for time, trading space for time and life.

The 110th Regiment was soon surrounded and fought to the last round. From 0530 that morning of the 16th until sometime late in the afternoon of the 18th and early on the 19th in some locations, men of the 110th Infantry Regiment fought and held, giving ground only when forced out, but all the while buying precious time for General Eisenhower to find and move reserves forward from deep inside France.

The other two regimental combat teams of the division, the 109th and 112th Infantry Regiments, did only slightly better. The 110th Regiment stayed in place as they were assigned the center sector of the division. The regiment alone fought elements of five German divisions, of which it was outnumbered at times 7 to 1.

I must abbreviate due to time.

While there are many things that come to mind when we think of the Battle of the Bulge like the 101st Airborne, Patton's Armor, or Easy Company from the Band of Brothers, please also remember the names and places familiar to those others who held at all costs: the 103rd, the 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th of the 28th. These are the echoes of the 28th Division and the men who held at all costs and traded space for time so that the 101st and Patton's Third Army could get into position in time to defeat the German offensive.

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Mr. Speaker, we can learn a lot from these dedicated soldiers who refused to surrender but fought on for what they believed in. I just wanted to remind everyone and to offer my salute to these finest Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind everybody about a real life story of being outnumbered 10 to 1.

A story of courage, will, discipline suffering, immense sacrifice and success. A tale of two great military forces, surprise, weather, overwhelming force and sheer resolve. A story marked with the graves of thousands, and that exemplifies the struggle for the very future of freedom in our world.

The story ends with the 101st Airborne Division and Patton's Armor victorious in January and February of 1945.

We must recognize the accomplishments of all the units that struggled and suffered greatly under the German siege of a small town in Belgium named Bastogne.

This past December 2014 through the end of January 2015 marks the 70th Anniversary of the one of the most significant and deadly battles of World War II—the Battle of the Bulge.

We must also remember the German units and the actions of their Soldiers committed to their nation's cause. We must recount their actions as well—the cause of their leadership, the unfortunate actions that occurred in those desperate hours and learn from that history so that we may never again have to re-endure them.

Most people know of the 101st Airborne (nicknamed the "Batting Bastards of Bastogne") and the plight of Patton's Armor as chronicled in so many stories and movies now burnished into the collective consciousness of our Nation—and rightly so. However Mr. Speaker, on this 70th Anniversary, I'm reminded of an often untold story of other heroes of the Battle of the Bulge, in the little but critically important town of Bastogne. It's the story of the American Soldiers of the 28th Division from Pennsylvania who held at all costs.

In late October to mid-November of 1944, occurred the Battle of the Huertgen Forest—described as "the meat grinder"—where the 28th Division fought a fierce and deadly battle with the German 73rd Corps. For the 28th, battle losses were 248 officers and 5,452 enlisted men, after which the battle-weary Division needed a rest and were moved to the Ardennes Forest, thick and seemingly impenetrable but quiet sector in which the 28th Division could reconstitute, reorganize and assimilate thousands of replacements into the ranks while the Division recovered. Greatly weakened by the previous battle, the 28th Division was spread out over some 25 miles along a front more than double that which was recommended in standard practice by any division at the time. On the morning of 16 December 1944, the peace was shattered by the opening barrage of the Germans in one of the largest and most deadly artillery bombardments ever—signaling the start of Hitler's last great offensive on the Western Front in WWII. For the next four days without any sleep, and often without food, elements of the 28th Division and their Allies fought tirelessly—to the last bullet in most cases—as well as to the last life, to deny the enemy success.

The day and night were punishing—freezing, wet, foggy and snow-covered—exactly what Hitler had counted on, as the winter would only add to the element of surprise and exponentially increase his chances for success. The German 5th and 15th Panzer Armies, 6th SS and 7th Army attacked the U.S. 8th Army and aligned between Aachen and Bastogne with a plan to fight as close as possible down the seam between American, Canadian and British forces in order to split

them. After crossing the Meuse River, the attacking Panzers were to turn north and capture the port city of Antwerp, thus collapsing the supply lines and the Alliance. The timetable established by the German General Staff and High Command called for the capture of the entire 28th Division sector early in the morning of 16 December, and the capture of Bastogne by the same evening. Bastogne was a major road junction that was needed by the Germans for armor and resupply units.

In the early morning hours of 16 December the 28th Division received the order to "Hold at all costs!"

"Keystoners", as they were known, were dug in and began the slow and painful art of trading space and lives for time—time enough for the 101st Airborne and Patton's Armor to get into the fight, and win it.

The 110th Infantry Regiment soon was surrounded and fought to the last bullet. From 0530 hours on 16 December, until sometime late in afternoon of the 18th and early on the 19th in some locations, men of the 110th Infantry fought and held—giving ground only when forced out—but while buying precious time for General Eisenhower to find and move reserves forward from deep inside France.

The other two Regimental Combat Teams of the Division—the 109th and 112th—did only slightly better, and the 109th ran out of ammunition on the 18th. These scattered and battered units of the 28th Division held out in the face of overwhelming odds—delaying the Germans as long as they was by any standard a miraculous feat because of the complete and massive confusion of the Battle.

However, the 110th Regiment stayed in place as they were assigned the center sector of the Division. This Regiment alone fought elements of five German divisions, outnumbering the Americans 7 to 1.

Overall the 28th Division would identify elements of 9 divisions in its sector before the Battle was over. Early on, the force ratios reached 10 to 1 in the Germans' favor, but still Pennsylvania's 28th Division valiantly held its ground.

Small determined units, low on ammunition, food, water, anti-tank weapons, and morale, continued to stand and fight until forced to retreat, captured or killed.

The old 110th, which had served the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Nation since 1873, started to fight with just over 2200 Soldiers. When all was said and done, less than 750 officers and men could be found still fighting. Some unit strength reports have it just around 500 unit members still standing. The German Fifth Panzer Army was so ravaged by the Keystoners that many say it ultimately cost the Germans the battle.

The Division held until it could hold no more, and it never ordered a single retreat. It was a continuous fighting withdraw under fire—described as "We made the Germans pay for every yard, every road junction, and fighting house by house, floor by floor, often hand-to-hand when the ammunition ran out."

The 28th inflicted 11,700 casualties on the enemy at a cost of 3850 Americans killed and wounded, and another 2000 captured when they simply ran out of ammunition.

There are many footnotes to this intense Battle:

On 17 December, Allied prisoners of war were executed in cold blood by elements of the 6th SS Panzer Army. Some 100 prisoners

were killed where they stood at Malmédy on direct orders from German Colonel Joachim Peiper.

On 19 December, 6000 Allied Troops surrendered to the encircling German Army at Schnee Eifel.

On 20 December, the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne completely was encircled by the German 47th Panzer Corps and the US 10th and 19th Armored Divisions completely were encircled by the German advance. After holding on to Bastogne for a full week while encircled, the 101st repelled the final German thrust with the arrival of the 4th Armored Division.

On 25 December, the 2nd Panzer Division was stopped by a combined force of British and American armor made up of General Montgomery's 29th Armored Brigade and the American 2nd Armored Division.

7 February 1945 marked the end of the battle where the German casualty count was a staggering 82,000 men, matched only by the 77,000 casualties suffered by the American Army.

While many things come to mind when we think of the Battle of the Bulge—like the 101st, Patton's Armor or Easy Company (made famous by the book and movie, "Band of Brothers"), please also remember the names and places familiar to the others that held at all costs:

The 103rd, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th Infantry Regiments; the towns and grounds of Clervaux, Wilt, the Clerf River, Foy and Noville; and the other units like Combat Command B, 48th Armored Field Artillery, Combat Command R, 158th Engineer Battalion, 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 1278th Engineer Battalion and the 299th Engineer Battalion who suffered and fought to reconstitute and support this brave endeavor. These are the echoes of the 28th Division and the men and units who held at all costs and traded space for time so that the 101st and Patton's 3rd Army could get into position in time to defeat the German offensive.

Mr. Speaker, we could learn so much from these dedicated Soldiers who not only refused to surrender, but fought for what they believed in.

I remind us all of this tale of heroism, tireless and selfless service, and salute these brave Americans.

MAINTAINING AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I wish to associate myself with the prior gentleman's commendation of those who fought on behalf of liberty at the Battle of the Bulge. We bow before them. They bequeathed liberty to this generation. It is a heavy burden. Let us hope that we can measure up to it in tribute to their valor.

At last night's State of the Union Address, passing a transportation and infrastructure bill to repair America and build forward a new century, as we create hundreds of thousands of jobs, got the broadest bipartisan applause. You could hear it on both sides of the aisle. So I come to the floor this morning to