

SENATOR JERRY MORAN AT
BASTOGNE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, hosted by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and U.S. Embassy Belgium, on December 13, 2024, at the Mardasson Memorial featured remarks by Senator Jerry Moran. Heartfelt observations by a fellow son of a Kansas, same as Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Ladies and gentlemen, and our veterans, those who served here at the Battle of the Bulge and around the globe, who served in World War Two and the wars that preceded that, and those who serve today, it's an honor to be with you here in Belgium to lead this Senate Delegation to the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. And I want to recognize my colleagues from the Senate who are here, Senator Susan Collins, Senator John Barrasso, Senator Kristen Gillibrand and Senator Maggie Hassan. I also recognize Congressman and Chairman McCaul and his House members and Administrator Bill Nelson in his representation of the Administration of the United States of America. We thank all of you who have traveled here today for this very important and significant occasion. I represent the state of Kansas, the home of Dwight D. Eisenhower in the United States Senate, I am the ranking member and incoming Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. In marking this commemoration in Belgium today and Luxembourg tomorrow, we are here to pay tribute to and to honor the memory of the men who fought for freedom on the European Continent and those who remain here, still lying in internal rest in sites like Ardennes, the American Cemetery to the north and Luxembourg American Cemetery to the southeast. Together, they are the final resting place for more than 10,000 Americans, and another 834 are memorialized on the wall of the missing places like these and the monuments where we are today are reminders of the price that were paid for the liberties that we each enjoy. The Battle of the Bulge was the largest, as we've heard, the most costly battle for the Americans during World War Two. On the morning of December 16, 1944, under the cover of poor weather, Nazi Germany launched a final offensive seeking to divide allied forces and to force a negotiated end to the hostilities on this Western Front. Despite being outnumbered, outgunned short of supplies, it was here during the coldest winter in decades, where the US Army's 101st Airborne Division, The Screaming Eagles, held off the enemy's advances and bought time for the allies to halt and counter the last gasp the surprise attack of the enemy. This Band of Brothers was made up of men from every corner of the United States, such as Senator Collins, Father Don Collins, Senator Barrasso, Father John and Senator Hassan's father, Robert Wood and many more. Those of you here in attendance today who have loved ones, who served, who answered the call and to bear arms in this Battle of the Bulge. On December 22, 1944, General Eisenhower, from that small town in Kansas called Abilene, sent the following message to every member of the Allied Expeditionary Force. General Eisenhower said, "the enemy is making his supreme effort. He is fighting savagely to take

back all that you have won, but already in this battle, your gallantry has done much to foil his plans. In the face of your proven bravery, your fortitude, he the enemy will completely fail, but we cannot be content with just a mere repulse by rushing out from his fixed defenses. The enemy may have given us the chance to turn his great gamble into his worst defeat." I call upon Eisenhower speaking here. "I call upon every man of the Allies to rise now to new heights of courage, of resolution and of effort, united in this determination and with this unshakable faith in the cause for which we fight, we will, with God's help, go forward to our greatest victory." With that message in the soldiers' minds and hearts, the fighting continued through Christmas, the soldiers huddled in their foxholes and prayed between shellings, echoing the prayers of their loved ones in church pews and around the dinner tables back home, as the calendar turned from 1944 to 1945 the Allied Army steadily drove back the enemy in a unified push toward victory. One year after the war ended on America's Independence Day, the people of Belgium broke ground on this site to demonstrate and to dedicate this patch of earth to the memory of the heroes of the Battle of the Bulge in this center of this monument, there is an inscription that, when translated into English, reads the Belgium people remember their American liberators, July 4, 1946, I thought of that as we drove through this town and saw the Christmas ornaments, the trees, the stars, the lights, what happened here 80 years ago makes life possible here today and other places around our globe. This Transatlantic partnership forged in war, remains a pillar of strength for both of our nations, Belgium and the United States. And as Russia wages war in Ukraine, the bonds of NATO must grow stronger and continue to deter the aggression of our shared adversaries. The General indicated what the Germans were trying to accomplish, and I take his words to say, we too must demonstrate the Alliance cannot be shattered. We will stand together today, shoulder to shoulder, just as the soldiers who liberated this continent did eight decades ago, 80 years after the Battle of the Bulge, remember, we remember the cost paid by those who died here and those who served here. Time cannot time must not dim the glory of their deeds. We often look for heroes, and we look in baseball parks and amphitheaters and sports figures entertainers. We sometimes look to politicians to be heroes, and sometimes they are. But mostly we don't have to look very far for heroes. They are among us, among us today in our hometowns across the United States of America, they are the ones who served there's a small memorial back home in Abilene, Kansas. It's a memorial at the presidential library of Dwight D. Eisenhower that bears this inscription. "Let us be glad that such heroes have lived and mourn those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Indeed, let us be glad for those, those heroes who have lived, those heroes who show us away and let us strive to live our lives in a manner worthy of their sacrifices." God Bless you, veterans. Thank you for being our heroes and our role models. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MICHAEL MCCAUL
HONORS VETERANS

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Thursday, December 19, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I was grateful to participate in CODEL

McCaul for the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. A highlight of the ceremonies at the Bastogne War Museum in Belgium was a speech by Chairman Michael McCaul of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, on December 13, 2024. As Chairman McCaul completes his impressive service as Committee Chairman, his sincere presentation will always be historically appreciated.

Thank you. It's truly an honor to be here today, but also to be the presence of our veterans of Battle the Bulge. You're truly heroes, and I thank you for being here today. Today we gather to honor and remember the valor and sacrifice of the men who fought the bitter cold of December 1944 and changed the course of history, the freedoms that we enjoy today were born out of this bloody battle, which Winston Churchill described as undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war 80 years ago in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. The Battle of the Bulge began a desperate and brutal offensive by Nazi forces that tested the resolve of the Allied troops, while the U.S. and allied forces faced tremendous challenges against a well-equipped and well-trained enemy. The American troops did what they do best. They stood up to the challenge and held the line. This was also my father's war. I cannot stand here today without thinking about him. James McCaul, the veteran of the European theater. He served as a bombardier on a B 17, known as a Flying Fortress, participating in 32 bombing missions on enemy targets, including this one right here today, he was part of the largest bombing mission in U.S. history, in support of the D Day invasion in Normandy, as well as the skies above us during the Battle of the Bulge. He was and is always my hero, as are you, and so too are all those who bravely liberated a continent and defeated evil their commitment to victory at all cost, exemplified the grit and defiance of the American spirit. It was here in the frozen forest that the world witnesses strength and unity and resolve soldiers like the men of the 101st Airborne who held the line in Bastogne, despite being surrounded and outnumbered, they refused to surrender. They understood the stakes that were happening right here, aside from the death and carnage from the battle, American troops faced one of the coldest winters in recorded history, with record breaking temperatures sinking as low as negative 18 degrees Fahrenheit, trench foot, frostbite, arctic conditions were just as deadly as Hitler's army. Supply lines were stretched thin. Troops were exhausted from constant combat as they advanced across Europe, closing in on Berlin, the battle spanned six weeks and had staggering costs, 80,000 casualties, nearly 20,000 killed Americans and 20,000 taken prisoner, and the SS did not abide by the Geneva Convention, all told; half a million Americans, along with over half a million Allied troops, fought in this battle. It was the bloodiest battle for U.S. forces during the entirety of World War Two. The Allied Victory here broke the back of the Nazi war machine and paved the way for liberation of Europe. The memory of this battle should reinforce the moral clarity to defend freedom at all costs. My father's generation, your generation, fought to eradicate evil, and we must never forget their sacrifices and continue the legacy of freedom that they handed down to us, to my children and to our grandchildren. As a Texan, I'm also proud that many heroes of this battle went to Texas A&M University, which I represent, including then Colonel James Earl Rudder. He was a distinguished Texas A&M alumnus who was a commanding officer of the Army's Second Ranger Battalion. He was one of the amazing soldiers who landed at

Omaha Beach, and stormed Pointe du Hoc, scaling 100-foot cliffs, neutralizing the German guns above. He continued his mission across Europe, fighting in this very battle, the Battle of the Bulge. And the relevance of this Battle is just as important today as it was 80 years ago. History can repeat itself once again. We are witnessing the largest land invasion in Europe since 1939 with Russian aggression in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. We are also witnessing the rise of Chairman Xi in China and the Ayatollah in Iran is also rearing his ugly head. We are witnessing a world on fire and a battle again between good and evil. The significance of this battle must serve as a reminder that Freedom is Never Free. In that the democracies around the world must rally to the cause of freedom when it is under attack. We do not choose our enemies. They choose us. And just as we fought the Nazis during World War Two, we will continue to fight for freedom and democracy. It is our duty to take the lessons learned from our fathers, grandfathers in history, to preserve what these men fought for. In a time of great peril, these men fought against tyranny and oppression, to preserve freedom. History will always remember them as the greatest generation, may God bless our veterans, the fallen heroes of the Battle of the Bulge, the great people of Bastogne, and the United States of America, and may He hold them in the palm of his hand. Thank you.

INSPIRING REMARKS OF JOHN FOY

HON. JOE WILSON

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Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, World War II veteran, John Foy, provided extraordinary remarks on December 14, 2024, for the Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge at Luxembourg American Cemetery. His humble insight and determination will forever be an inspiration for freedom and democracy as recognized by the late Army Pfc. Thomas Caughman of Lexington, South Carolina, that "Freedom isn't Free."

I'm a little short, Ladies and gentlemen, Your Majesties, distinguished guests, and especially fellow veterans. 80 years ago, we stood in these frozen forests young men facing an unrelenting enemy and the harshest of winters, it actually get down to below zero at times. The Battle of the Bulge was not just a test of strategy, but of spirit, determination and sacrifice. I remember the bitter cold, the weight of my machine gun and the faces of my brothers in arms, ordinary men who displayed extraordinary courage. Together, we fought for freedom, step by painful step through snow and enemy fire. Some of these faces I still can see frozen in time, they were sons, fathers, friends, who gave everything so that others might live. The Ardennes offensive was a turning point, not just in the time of war, but in our lives. It taught us the value of resilience, unity, sacrifice. Today, we honor those who did not return, whose lives ended here, ensuring that turns that tyranny would not prevail. To my fellow veterans, thank you for your service, to the families of the fallen, their sacrifices not forgotten, and to those who come after us, may you always remember that the freedoms we cherish came at a terrible cost. Let us remember of this Battle inspired us to work for a world where such sacrifices are no

longer needed. I'm a small man, but I was a tiger back then, that I had a strong faith in God and in my Catholic faith certainly helped, although much of what we did was completely alien to those teachings, the killing was the worst. Almost every day, one or more of us would be killed or wounded, and every day, we would kill German soldiers. After a while, we came almost numb to such a thing. Purple Hearts were earned by the thousands. The bleeding wounds of 69,000 young Americans stained the snow and left that Red Badge of Courage on that blood-soaked field of battle. The American army had 90,000 casualties, about 19,000 of that were killed in action, 20,000 taken prisoners and about 50,000 wounded. My company was badly decimated, down to about 50 men left from 200. My machine gun section of 12 men had five killed and three badly wounded. They were my friends. This country was truly blessed. The Ardennes Woods are silent now. The battle smoke has fled. 80 years have passed. Now only memories and the dead. Thank you. May God bless you. Thank you.

ADDRESS OF BRIGADIER GENERAL ANDREW SASLAV

HON. JOE WILSON

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Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I was grateful to participate in CODEL McCaul for the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. An inspiring speech was delivered by Brigadier General Andrew Saslav at the Bastogne War Museum, Belgium, on December 13, 2024, confirming the professionalism and dedication of the American military freedom and democracy.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, friends and family, the brave men and women who fought here 80 years ago, and most importantly, our veterans. It is my honor and my privilege to be with you here today. It's 05:30. It's the 16th of December 1944, the ground in the air around the men and women of the 12th US Army Group begins to shake. The air begins to burn. It is the start of a 90-minute barrage by 1,600 artillery pieces. It's the start of the last offensive the Germans would launch in the Second World War. Their objective of this fight was to shatter the front lines to separate forces. It was to reach the vital port of Antwerp and ultimately to break the alliance that had landed here in June. To this end, the Nazis had assembled three veteran armies. They were led by their most proven and battle-hardened commanders. They were offered the newest equipment available and the most technologically advanced capabilities the Nazis had. They were fighting their proven play. It had taken them across what Europe lightning fast in 1940 and standing in their way. Standing in their way were American divisions that were actually brand new to the front or had been pulled out of the brutal fighting in the herd and forest. Each of those divisions covered an area that was over twice the size we expected a division to be able to defend. The numbers were simply in the Nazis favor. Any war game done then, any war game done today, would have told you that they had all the advantages. But what we must remember here today, what this battle should always remind us of, what my 27 years in uniform has taught me is that machines and tools of war increase the brutality and the lethality of war, but that

training matters, Experience matters, heart and esprit de corps are essential, and they will upend the results of any war game ever done. The Battle of the Bulge had begun. The Nazi army slammed into US lines, and while our men fought hard under overwhelming force, those lines began to break. Regiments were separated, regiments were surrounded, and the allies were in trouble. At Eisenhower's headquarters, they quickly realized what was happening and the gravity of the consequences of this attack. First, they called for the 18th Airborne Corps. It was down in bases in France after being pulled off of a bitter fight in the Netherlands during Operation Market Garden, the 82nd 101st Airborne were rushed north. The 82nd would make its way north of here to a portion of the fight where they would stop the lead elements of the first SS Panzer Corps. This was not our fight alone. Field monitor, Montgomery's, 21st Army Group was rushed from the north, and Patton's Third Army would make a heroic and simply amazing 48 hour drive to turn itself and move towards Bastogne and the Battle of the Bulge, our alliance was focused and it was moving towards the fight. But ladies and gentlemen, this is a human endeavor. It's the story of humans that made the difference here 80 years ago in the North. The furthest the Nazis would get was within five commit five kilometers of the Meuse river. You see there. They encountered the Third Royal Tank Regiment of 30th British Corps, and they encountered Sergeant Frederick Prover operating a lone Firefly Sherman tank. He engaged the lead elements, destroying a mark four, a half track and a German fuel truck. His actions would allow the allies in the north three group and counterattack the next day, ceasing the Movement West Patton's Army advanced to Bastogne in it private. James Hendricks, only 17 years old at the time of the fourth Armored Division came under attack from two Nazi 88 he got out of his vehicle, and he rushed shows with his rifle, forcing both of the crews of those guns to surrender. In the meantime, two of his fellow soldiers were wounded. He fought off those attackers, and he recovered those two wounded men. The column began to move again, and a fuel truck exploded after being hit. He rushed forward and pulled the driver to safety and put out the flames on that driver for his actions that day, Private Hendrix would earn the Medal of Honor. Sergeant Lester Courts, Private Ralph Ellis and Sergeant George Carroll were all separated from their units during the fight. They would survive the battle of the bulge. They survived because the heroic actions of French, Belgian, and Luxembourg citizens who came to the raid, Marician and Elise Goble, Louis Stein, Martz and Mr. and Mrs. Jean, Pereira, and Baltashier. They hid, they cared for, and eventually returned these soldiers to friendly lines, all at great personal risk. This fight was about people. It is people that make up our alliances. It is the soldiers and the citizens that we came here to liberate, that all came together in the cause of freedom. But today, ladies and gentlemen, we stand in Bastogne, the landing ground of the troopers of the 100 and first airborne. They were offered the simplest instructions for their mission, hold the vital crossroads and don't let that stone be taken. They arrived here not by not by parachute, as they'd arrived at every battle before Europe. But they arrived here by truck. But they arrived with the same determination that they had been at Normandy, the same fighting spirit that had carried them into the Netherlands in the face of overwhelming German forces, they accomplished their mission. The siege of Bastogne pitted these high these lightly armed paratroopers against the armored might of the 47th Panzer Corps. But