

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

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2024

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

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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. 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 aid, 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

war is a human endeavor, and while the Nazis had lots of armor, the troopers of the 101st had a rendezvous with destiny. Now most of history will tell you that that siege was eventually broken on the 26th of December, at 1650 hours as Cobra King, the lead tank of Patton's Third Army reached Bastogne. I think the troopers of the 101st would tell you that the only thing those tanks allowed him to do was continue the attack. War is a human endeavor. It was then, and it is now. What the world witnessed 80 years ago is what happens when the cause of freedom is led by valiant action, a coalition and Alliance built on freedom and liberty, not conquest. In the words of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Battle of the Bulge was a great and glorious victory. But it is also a reminder that freedom is not free, that the price of freedom is paid in the blood and the sweat of those that defend it. Today, we are joined here today by veterans of that fight from 80 years ago. And gentlemen, it is my great honor to be in your presence. Thank you. Your legacy is what makes our Army great today. Thank you.

REMARKS OF FOREIGN MINISTER
BERNARD QUENTIN

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on December 13, 2024, during the commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, hosted by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and the U.S. Embassy in Belgium, inspiring remarks were presented by Belgian Foreign Minister, Bernard Quentin. The alliance of Belgium and the United States is unshakeable.

Dear Senator, Bill Nelson NASA Administrator and Representative of His Excellency, the President of the United States of America, Ambassador Michael Adler, and members of the official U.S. delegation, including, of course, very specially, the veterans and their families and carers. It is a true honor to stand in front of you here in Bastogne, ambassadors and other security distinguished guests present tonight. Dear Mr. Benoît Lutgen, Mayor of Bastogne, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, the nuts that will be thrown tomorrow in homage to General Anthony McAuliffe, the GIs elements in which you might drink a delicious local beer in a Bastogne Cafe later tonight, carefully the last resting place of General George Patton just across the border. Not many battles in history have generated emotions and symbols as strong as those related to the Battle of the Bulge for many generations, this Battle is synonymous with courage, resilience and self-sacrifice. It is a powerful symbol of unity and resistance of democratic countries against tyranny and violence, it is also a potent reminder that peace and freedom come at a price, as we honor the memory of so many young soldiers from all over the U.S. and other allied countries who fell for the freedom of Europe. How can we not think of the Ukrainian soldiers who are today dying in the snow, in the frozen mud to defend their country against an unprovoked war of aggression? Tonight, ceremonies remind us of the importance to stand side by side in the fight for the rightful cause. It reminds us of our duty to support Ukraine for as long as it takes, because, as we saw here in Bastogne, the violence and brutality should never prevail, ladies and gentlemen, not taking any-

thing away from the tribute we owe to the British and Canadian soldiers who also fought and died in the larger theater operation, including your own Brigadier men, nor the Free Poles, Free French, and also all those coming from all over the world, including India and Africa. Looking at the names on the graves, on the Ardennes Forest, this is essentially an American history and a tragic and glorious epitome of America's unflinching dedication to preserving liberty, democracy and human rights in the world. We are here, first and foremost, to honor freedom and do tribute to troops from all corners of the U.S. who came here to liberate our land, my land, from the yoke of Nazism thousands of miles from their own cities and villages. We celebrate them, those who are with us today, the others who could enjoy and the children, nieces, nephews, grandchildren and grand grandchildren of those who are not with us any longer. We are also here to give a strong message of hope and unity, both as a minister and as a historian. I know that the United States of America and Belgium share a long history during which they have consistently defended together the values of humanity and freedoms that both our nations are built upon. One moving story I remember was told in a great documentary series in the battle that was broadcasted in on Belgium television when I was still a child, already a long time ago, the story of young servicemen from the Midwest who, during the battle, were trying to communicate with local villagers despite not speaking any French. Soon, they discovered that the dialect they were speaking back in Wisconsin or Minnesota was actually a Walloon, one perfectly understandable to the Bastogne they were addressing. Like them, hundreds of thousands of Americans claim Belgian lineage today. Thousands of viewers and Belgian citizens live in the other country, with hundreds of thousands more employed by investors from the other country and countless tourist researchers. And students, sports, people and artists traveling each year across the Atlantic Ocean. These are deep and enduring bonds. Allies yesterday are allies today, and it is only by remaining trustful security partners that we will be able to tackle the current global challenges, a nature of safety and prosperity. Belgium's commitment to the Transatlantic Partnership is a tenet of its foreign policy, as is our result, to strive for peace in Europe, in Africa and, of course, in East Asia and the Middle East. Allies were also in many other combats with us. One example among many, the fight against criminal activities, including narcotics and the modern slavery of peoples of people smuggling, increasingly co-operating, both at home and in third countries. We need to enhance our common fight, because these threats are numerous, challenging our freedom and our democracies worldwide. Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, we are those future generations for which the young GIs, paratroopers, gunners and Rangers fought 80 years ago. Let us show ourselves worthy of those who gave their lives for us, and let us continue the strong tradition of mutual trust and friendship that has existed for close to two centuries, and even more so since World War Two and the Battle of the Bulge, it is now our duty to preserve the freedom that has been bestowed on us and to pass it on to today's fellow generation. And if you allow me, dear veterans, when I saw you, I had to remember a personal event late in the 90s. I was sitting watching the news with my beloved late grandmother, born before the First World War. It was a war in Serbia, and she was crying, and I don't remember. I don't want to remember the stupidity I told her, so why are you crying? And she looked at me back,

and she loved me a lot, but there Her eyes were not happy, and she told me, I knew. What do you know about war? Nothing, But you know and you give to all of us. The best of you. Thank you very much.

WELCOME REMARKS OF
SECRETARY CHARLES DJOU

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Americans are grateful for the service of American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) Secretary Charles K. Djou who provided welcome remarks of the Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge at the Luxembourg American Cemetery on December 14, 2024. With his AMBC leadership, American cemeteries worldwide are a permanent recognition of affection for servicemembers recognizing Freedom Is Not Free. When Americans liberate nations from oppression, it is not for occupation as we request only to have sufficient acreage to bury valiant American patriots.

Good morning, Your Majesties, Prime Ministers, Administrator Nelson, Ambassador Barrett, members of the United States Senate and United States House of Representatives. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Luxembourg American Cemetery. I'd like to start here this morning by sharing with all of you a very quick story about one soldier. His name is Alexis Sommaripa. Alexis was born in Odessa, Ukraine. He went on to serve. He went on to graduate from Harvard University, and when World War Two broke out, he was 41 years old. But he nevertheless volunteered to serve in the United States military, and because of his language skills, speaking Russian, Ukrainian, German, and French. He was put in the Intelligence Corps. He landed on Normandy Beach and fought here at the Battle of the Bulge. He went on and was assigned to the 37th Tank Battalion, Fourth Armored Division, unfortunately, after the Battle of the Bulge, while he was sitting at the top and commanding a tank, Alexis' tank was strafed by German Messerschmidt. It wounded the driver, flinging him from the tank, and the tank Raj fell over on Alexis. He is buried here at the Luxembourg American Cemetery. He is buried a Plot E, Row 15, Grave, 65. I raise the story with all of you, because all of these crosses and these Stars of David that rest behind me are not movie props. They are not just figures. They are the lives of real Americans who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of freedom, and each and every one have a story as compelling as Alexis. And I raise this story because Alexi was a Ukrainian-American, and the relevance today with the largest invasion on the plains of Ukraine, unprovoked, is today steaming across Europe. I know, ladies and gentlemen, that there are many here in this world who question, who doubt, who wonder, do places like this exist? Do ceremonies like this still have relevance today? I'm here to respond to you, to all who question, to all who wonder, to all who doubt. Come, come here to Luxembourg. Come here to the Luxembourg American Cemetery. Come see these crosses and these Stars of David. Come and see what true sacrifice is about. Because you see, ladies and gentlemen, when the United States of America stands at its best, when we are at our finest America does not send its young, its brave and its finest to fight for a king or