

said it had received Cuba's request for help to provide powdered milk to children under age 7.

According to the Inter-American Commission, the Cuban Government approached WFP for help to continue the monthly delivery of milk for children throughout the country and to help with the delivery of flour for subsidized bread in the basic food basket.

The Commission went on to describe how hunger is increasing on the island due to a combination of low economic growth, high inflation, reduced food production and distribution, and infrastructure problems, especially interruptions in electricity.

It also cited recent economic measures adopted by the Cuban Government, including higher prices for fuel and electricity, the elimination of subsidies for the basic food basket, and the devaluation of the country's currency.

The Inter-American Commission and the Special Rapporteur then underscored that U.S. policies and sanctions are intensifying and worsening the social and economic condition throughout Cuba and especially affecting the Cuban people's access to food, medicines, and basic necessities.

In brief, Mr. Speaker, the United States is increasing hunger and poverty in Cuba. This is being done deliberately and knowingly. It is a human rights violation. It also appears it is being done with a degree of indifference and callousness that I find shocking. It makes me ashamed.

During all my time as a Member of Congress, I have fought to end hunger and food insecurity here at home and around the world. I do not believe that food and medicine should ever be used as weapons against innocent civilians, not in Sudan, not in Ukraine, not in Gaza, not anywhere.

I have coordinated hearings that highlight how governments and armed actors use food as a weapon against civilian populations they view as adversaries.

To see our own government deliberately imposing and maintaining sanctions that we know make hunger worse in Cuba is unconscionable to me.

It is also unconscionable, Mr. Speaker, that some Members of Congress, who cling to Cold War policies, appear eager to support actions that punish and increase the suffering of ordinary people on the island. They actually raise money off the Cuban people's suffering. They say they care about human rights but contribute to making the human rights situation worse. They deliberately create chaos because they can, with absolutely no regard to how it hurts the Cuban people.

Sadly, President Biden has adopted and maintained Donald Trump's policies against Cuba, policies that he rightly denounced as a candidate and when he was Vice President, policies that hurt the very people he says he most wants to help, like independent entrepreneurs, young people, Afro-Cubans, women, and the poor.

President Biden knows that keeping Cuba on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list means no one in Cuba has access to the international financial system. Our European and Latin American friends and allies are unable to provide help to the Cuban people out of fear of being punished by U.S. sanctions. Then we wonder why hundreds of thousands of Cubans are leaving the island and migrating to our borders.

I am puzzled and deeply disappointed by the President's inaction. The situation has become desperate, with little hope for a better future. U.S. stubbornness sends a clear signal to the Cuban people that there is no reason to believe that change will happen.

President Biden, your policies are hurting not the Cuban Government but the Cuban people. Your policies are helping to drive mass migration from the island. Mr. President, stop increasing hunger and poverty in Cuba. Remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, and let's move toward normalizing relations between our two countries. It is in the interest of both our peoples. Take action and please do it now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

HONORING BRIGADIER GENERAL CLARENCE E. "BUD" ANDERSON

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend, Brigadier General Clarence E. "Bud" Anderson, probably known best, at least by me and some others in the neighborhood, as Colonel Bud.

In recent years, Representative TOM MCCLINTOCK and I petitioned the Air Force to upgrade him to brigadier general, which he certainly deserved and he earned, but I think most folks kind of know him as Colonel Bud.

What you see there in his countenance and smile goes even beyond his exploits as a triple ace in World War II to the kind, nice, and decent man that he was.

You could sit down with Colonel Bud and just chat about anything. He was willing to talk about his time serving in World War II, especially as a fighter ace, a triple ace. "Ace" means five kills of enemy aircraft. He did that over three times.

He was known as everybody's friend in the Auburn area of northern California. It was certainly a pleasure for me to know him since somewhere around 2011 when I first got to meet him at a special event there.

He was always out participating in the community when he could. Health issues more recently made that tougher. He was out there sharing and just being an inspiration to so many, especially young people. He would take the time to sit with and chat and talk

about his experiences. That is very special because his service was an incredible experience in helping keep our Nation safe and helping free Europe in World War II. Not a lot of veterans want to talk about that publicly. It is difficult for them. He was the guy who could do that.

You see him here with his aircraft. He flew three different types of aircraft in World War II, but the one most known was his P-51 Mustang named the "Old Crow," of which there are replicas that you can see at certain air shows. I am very proud of that, and it is well known because of his amazing exploits.

We are very saddened by his passing, but our hearts are filled with what a great man and a nice man he was.

He would talk with us about engines and airplanes and the dogfighting in World War II that got him to that point of being a triple ace, and he would even talk about NASCAR racing.

Interestingly, there is a special edition Ford Mustang done up like his aircraft that he got to see, which was pretty cool as well. It was done, I think, by Roush Racing.

He was a northern California native. He grew up on a rural farm in Newcastle, and he loved to watch the airplanes back then.

He graduated from Placer High School in 1939 and earned his private pilot license in 1941 through the Civilian Pilot Training Program. In January of 1942, when duty called, he entered the U.S. Army aviation cadet program, receiving his wings that September of 1942.

In Europe, Bud served two combat tours, escorting heavy bombers in the P-51 from 1943 to 1945, which was some severe duty.

If you have ever watched any documentaries, the duty they had in those daylight raids to try to bomb Germany out of the war is incredible. Those "Little Friends," as these Mustangs were known, escorting those bombers in that difficult mission were indeed valuable and loved by them.

He flew 116 combat missions, 480 hours' worth, destroyed 16¼ enemy aircraft, as they divided them up amongst a couple other pilots as well.

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Bud flew in the 357th fighter group known as the Yoxford Boys and was the highest scoring ace in the 363rd fighter squadron. Bud came home from Europe and married Eleanor Cosby in 1945. They had two children, James Edward and Kathryn.

After the war, he became a fighter test pilot and later chief of fighter operations. He flew many models of early jet fighters and was involved in some very unusual flight test programs, including down at Edwards Air Force Base where much of that came from. He has flown over 130 types of aircraft and logged over 7,500 flying hours in his career.

He was also assigned in postwar Korea as a commander of a F-86 jet

fighter squadron there as well, commander in the F-105 wing in Okinawa, and two assignments at the Pentagon, as well.

Bud was decorated 25 times. His awards include 2 Legions of Merit, 5 Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star, 16 Air Medals, the French Legion of Honor, and the French Croix de Guerre, as well as many other campaign service ribbons.

When Bud retired from the Air Force, he joined the McDonnell Aircraft Company and served for 12 years as the manager of the company's flight test facility there.

After his full retirement in 1984, Bud and Ellie moved back to Auburn where he continued to travel, hunt, fish, and speak at air shows and just be the great man we knew him as. God bless him. I am going to miss him personally. What a great friend he was. He was a great human being, and I am glad to have known him.

May God bless you, Bud, and hold you in His hands.

Fly high, my friend.

NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, the month of May was designated National Military Appreciation Month by an act of Congress introduced by the late Senator John McCain, a war hero from the State of Arizona.

Since then, throughout every May, our Nation observes a series of military events: On May 8, Victory in Europe Day, the date Nazi Germany surrendered in World War II; May 10, Military Spouse Appreciation Day, to recognize the exacting service of military spouses; and, May 18, Armed Forces Day, to honor the roughly 1.4 million people who serve as Active-Duty troops in all six branches and the 760,000 National Guard and Reserves, every one of them volunteers.

Lastly, on May 27, our Nation will observe its most solemn national holiday, Memorial Day, when across the country events will be held at military gravesites and veteran gathering places to remember and pray for those who gave their lives in defense of our Nation's freedoms and security.

Mr. Speaker, the definition of appreciation is to express gratitude. Gratitude can come in many forms, verbal, which certainly counts, but the most meaningful is tangible support for the disruption and sacrifice that the hard work of military service entails.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honor to represent eastern Connecticut, home to the largest military installation in New England, with 9,000 sailors, officers, and DOD support personnel, the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut, and the highest

concentration of veterans in the State of Connecticut.

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend a Veterans' Coffeehouse nearby the submarine base, a monthly event hosted at Filomena's, a restaurant owned and operated by Michael Buscetto, whose amazing staff and volunteers donate a piping hot breakfast to 50 or so local vets to share war stories, have a few laughs, and catch up on new developments for the veteran community. I was asked to provide a legislative update on a variety of those issues.

The most prominent was a progress report on the milestone PACT Act signed into law by President Biden in 2022 that finally knocked down barriers to healthcare and benefits to millions of veterans exposed to toxins during the Vietnam war, the Gulf war, radiation cleanup, and Camp Lejeune, the most significant expansion of benefits and services to toxic-exposed veterans ever.

Since the bill was signed, implementation has moved fast, as this chart shows. As of a few days ago, the VA reported that over 1 million PACT Act-related claims have now been granted, delivering more than \$5.7 billion of benefits to veterans and their survivors. Over 145,000 new veterans have enrolled in VA healthcare, and over 5.4 million free toxic exposure screenings were given to all veterans whether they are enrolled in the VA or not. The law was further expanded a few months ago, to include veterans who not only served overseas, but also those who only served in the continental U.S. and are suffering from the cancers and heart disease caused by toxic exposure.

I also briefed the coffeehouse on a new measure, which the House Armed Services Committee, on which I sit, will take up tomorrow, the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement Act as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Act. This bill, thanks to the bipartisan efforts of the Quality of Life Panel, will provide additional resources and new authorities for servicemembers and their families. This effort could not come too soon.

Last year, for the first time in over 20 years, the Air Force missed its Active Duty enlisted recruiting goal. The Army fell short of 10,000 enlisted recruits, and the Navy fell short over 7,000 enlisted sailors and 2,000 officers.

Included in this bill for tomorrow are authorities to alleviate pay discrepancies for junior enlisted servicemembers, combat food insecurity, support childcare, and spousal employment opportunities. Importantly, the bill authorizes a 19.5 percent increase in military pay for junior enlisted servicemembers.

The bill will also cover 100 percent of basic allowance for housing to ensure that servicemembers can cover the cost of housing no matter where they are stationed. It will also make the basic needs allowance available to all servicemembers with dependents whose in-

come is less than 200 percent of the poverty guidelines, making more servicemembers eligible for the program.

Incredibly, the panel documented that 25 percent of junior enlisted servicemembers today are forced to enroll in food stamps in order to put food on the table for their families.

Lastly, the DOD will be given the authority to transfer professional licenses between States for military spouses, and fully fund childcare fee assistance programs to eliminate wait lists for eligible families.

This is the sort of meaningful gratitude that truly adheres to the goals of Military Appreciation Month. As John McCain often quoted George Washington: "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive how the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

These powerful and wise words are true today more than ever with an all-volunteer force, and we should finish the job for successful implementation of the PACT Act and pass this year's quality of life bill as soon as possible.

THE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE HAS SOLUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, employers across all industries are looking for qualified workers to fill in-demand jobs. Job creators are consistently finding that skills-based credentials can successfully, oftentimes more effectively, prepare workers for success on the job.

It is not just employers who are recognizing the value of upskilling. A recent poll found that 82 percent of American voters are in favor of bolstering the Nation's workplace development programs.

The Education and Workforce Committee is proud to spearhead this effort with legislation like the A Stronger Workforce for America Act, which makes critical updates to the Nation's workforce development system.

Additionally, the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act will help connect low-income students and workers with the experiences and programs they need to gain relevant skills for in-demand jobs.

In conjunction, these pieces of legislation will be transformative for America's workforce and prepare more Americans for success in the 21st century economy.

DIGITAL ASSETS MARKET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Financial Innovation