

the air, but when they got home, in hospital rooms, fighting a disease that they never saw coming.

That is the story of my friend, Colonel Andy "Pablo" Shurtleff. In March, Andy did a wonderful job of testifying before the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, sharing how his sudden cancer diagnosis brought his promising career to an abrupt end. He spoke with clarity and conviction about how a better understanding of cancer risk in the aviation community might have led to earlier detection not only in his case but in many of our friends and many of our wingmen, detection that could have saved his life and their lives.

Shortly after that, on Friday, May 23, my friend Pablo lost his battle with cancer. In his final days, one of the few comforts he knew was that the ACES Act was on track to becoming law. His courage, voice, and advocacy for other servicemembers should not be forgotten.

There are countless others I have served with, including people like Colonel Michael "Bam Bam" Stapleton and so many others who many of us know. That is what this bill represents. It represents keeping Pablo in the cockpit. It represents Pablo's kids and others in the next generation wanting to sign up for this because they know that we are going to give them that air cover.

This bill received bipartisan support on the House floor with a vote of 376-5 in May. This bill has the support of over 20 veteran organizations, cancer advocacy groups, and medical experts because they recognize what is at stake.

With the passage of this version of the bill, it will be sent to the President's desk, and I am hopeful that the President will sign it into law quickly so we can fulfill our promise to those who serve, a promise that when someone serves our Nation, we have their backs, that we will serve them, and that we will protect them.

Today, as we cast our votes on this critical legislation, we stand closer than ever to honoring the memory of heroes like Andy and giving future servicemembers a real chance at early detection, better treatment, and life-saving research.

I sincerely thank my colleagues who cosponsored this bipartisan legislation, as well as Chairman BOST, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee; the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee; Chairman LUTTRELL; members of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees; Majority Leader STEVE SCALISE, Senator JERRY MORAN; and leadership for their unwavering support for moving this bill. Unlike many others in Congress, this was moved with Mach, with airspeed, and I appreciate that.

I am also deeply grateful to the dedicated volunteers of the MACH Coalition, whose passion and persistence helped carry this effort forward.

My heartfelt thanks go to Senator MARK KELLY, himself a combat veteran, a pilot, and an astronaut, and Senator COTTON for championing this bill in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes." There really is no reason that we can't make this a unanimous "yes" vote in support of the ACES Act.

Most of all, my deepest gratitude goes to the thousands of pilots and aircrew members who are defending our Nation every single day. We see them. We thank them. We have their backs. This is the air cover that they so desperately deserve.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing S. 201. I thank Representative PFLUGER for this legislation. I am very honored and pleased to be able to support it, and I ask all of my colleagues to do the same.

Before I yield back, I do want to say that there are many more of our veterans who have been exposed to some toxic substances, whether it is radiation or something that is going on with our pilots.

We have learned recently of the Area 51 veterans who served at the Nevada Test Site and who obviously show signs collectively of exposure to radiation and bear the medical consequences of that.

We have ample evidence, for example, that our naval servicemembers who serve on speedboats and have been exposed to intense vibrations may have medical consequences that merit our attention. We know that exposure to overblast may cause serious traumatic brain injury.

Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of this legislation, which I can wholly support, I believe that we must do more. I ask the chairman if we might schedule a hearing for the more extensive examination into the many other types of exposures—environmental exposures, toxic exposures—that our veterans have been and our servicemembers are being subjected to. Let us pay attention to those, as well. I humbly request such a hearing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, understand that we at the committee have hearings and will continue to have hearings on things like this many times. We will take the ranking member's comments under advisement. We will set the agenda and figure out what we will have hearings on and what we won't. I appreciate the request. This is why we have these types of hearings, and that is why we have this legislation here today.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCLINTOCK). The question is on the

motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 201.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### LEONARD G. "BUD" LOMELL VA CLINIC

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2170) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Toms River, New Jersey, the Leonard G. 'Bud' Lomell, VA Clinic, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2170

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic, a state-of-the-art facility serving the region's largest veteran population, located at 1055 Hooper Avenue, recently opened in the Township of Toms River, Ocean County, New Jersey, in the Fourth Congressional District.

(2) The local community, including veterans, believe that this facility deserves to be named in honor of Second Lieutenant Leonard G. "Bud" Lomell, a long time Toms River and Ocean County resident, who served courageously and heroically during World War II.

(3) Second Lieutenant Lomell was born in 1920, the adopted son of Scandinavian immigrant parents living in Brooklyn, New York, and his family eventually moved to Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey.

(4) After graduating from Tennessee Wesleyan College, Second Lieutenant Lomell was drafted into the Army, serving first with the 76th (Liberty Bell) Infantry Division. When the 2nd Ranger Battalion was formed in April 1943, Leonard Lomell was invited to be the First Sergeant of D Company.

(5) On D-Day, June 6, 1944, First Sergeant Lomell's platoon landed at Pointe du Hoc, Normandy, France, successfully scaling the cliffs, despite a withering German defensive barrage.

(6) Pointe du Hoc, a rugged 100-foot-high coastal promenade along the English Channel was located between the American landing beaches, Omaha and Utah. It was heavily defended by the Germans and the mission of Colonel James Earl Rudder's 225 Rangers was to disable five 155-millimeter artillery guns, which could have rained artillery fire on the American forces landing on either beach, jeopardizing the invasion.

(7) Unknown to the American forces, the guns had been moved from the tip of the Pointe and hidden, pointed in the direction of Utah Beach, in an inland apple orchard nearly a mile from the coastal batteries.

(8) First Sergeant Lomell and another Ranger, Sergeant Jack Kuhn, found the guns undefended, and, with Kuhn providing cover, Lomell destroyed the weapons with thermite grenades and used his rifle butt to smash the sights of the guns.

(9) First Sergeant Lomell subsequently received a battlefield promotion to Second Lieutenant, and was awarded some of the

Army's highest honors, including the Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Heart, and Silver Star.

(10) Renowned historian Steven Ambrose regarded First Sergeant Lomell's valiant acts along with General Eisenhower's decision to invade on June 6, 1944, as the most significant actions ensuring the Allied victory on D-Day.

(11) Following World War II, Second Lieutenant Lomell was appointed as the First Director of the newly organized Ocean County Veteran's Service Bureau, serving from 1946 until 1948, before he attended law school on the G.I. Bill.

(12) Leonard Lomell and his wife, Charlotte Ewart Lomell, settled their growing family in Toms River, where, in 1957, Leonard established his own law firm, which grew to become one of Ocean County's largest firms.

(13) Leonard Lomell was involved in numerous local civic, business, and charitable organizations, including serving as president of the Ocean County Bar Association, a director of the First National Bank of Toms River, a member of the Dover Township Board of Education, and a co-founder of the Garden State Philharmonic. He was also National Commander of the Legion of Valor (1964-1965) and President of the Ranger Battalion Association of World War II (1967) and served on the French Committee of Pointe du Hoc.

(14) Second Lieutenant Lomell is profiled in "The Greatest Generation", former NBC news Anchor Tom Brokaw's testament to the heroes of World War II, and "Len Lomell: D-Day Hero", Steven M. Gillon's entry in the American War Heroes Series.

(15) As a decorated war hero, model citizen, and dedicated husband and father, Second Lieutenant Lomell is exceedingly deserving of the posthumous honor of having a new and long-awaited Toms River-based Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic named in his honor.

**SEC. 2. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC, TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY.**

The community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Toms River, New Jersey, shall, after the date of the enactment of this Act, be known and designated as the "Leonard G. 'Bud' Lomell VA Clinic". Any reference to such clinic in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Leonard G. "Bud" Lomell VA Clinic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2170.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2170, a bill to rename the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Toms River, New Jersey, as the Leonard G. "Bud" Lomell VA Clinic.

Leonard "Bud" Lomell was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1920 and enlisted in the Army after the U.S. entered into World War II. Initially serving with an infantry division, Lomell quickly volunteered for the newly formed 2nd Ranger Battalion. There, he became the platoon's first sergeant.

During the earliest hours of D-day, First Sergeant Lomell's platoon landed at Pointe du Hoc, Normandy. Their mission was to disable the heavy defense artillery guns set to rain fire on the brave soldiers on Utah Beach.

Despite all the fire and obstruction, First Sergeant Lomell and his platoon became the first unit to accomplish their D-day mission.

Lomell continued to distinguish himself during the war, receiving a promotion to second lieutenant and being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Heart, and Silver Star.

After his service ended in 1945, Lomell married his wife, Charlotte. Together, they became proud parents of three daughters and continued serving in their community. I am happy to say that Charlotte is still able to see this bill being offered in honor of her husband.

Leonard G. "Bud" Lomell served as a great example of the Greatest Generation. It is a fitting tribute to name the VA clinic after him to tell the story of his service.

I thank the sponsor of this bill, Representative SMITH, as well as the entire New Jersey delegation for honoring their fellow New Jerseyan with this tribute.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2170, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1530

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2170 to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Toms River, New Jersey, after Leonard G. "Bud" Lomell.

Mr. Lomell was born in Brooklyn, New York, but soon relocated with his family to Point Pleasant, where he went on to attend Wesleyan College on a full scholarship and quickly volunteered as an Army Ranger after World War II broke out.

Mr. Lomell and his platoon received a pivotal assignment on D-day that would change the course of the war forever. He and his fellow Rangers would scale 100-foot cliffs on ropes and find and destroy German artillery that posed a huge danger to the Allied troops landing on the beach below.

Undaunted by the impossibility of this task, Mr. Lomell and his platoon undertook their task. Despite being shot in the side and nearly drowning the moment he stepped off his landing craft, Mr. Lomell continued onward and successfully scaled the wall.

However, upon reaching the top, he and his fellow Rangers realized the weapons were decoys designed to be a

deterrent to the troops below. Even this was not reason enough for Mr. Lomell to give up. He and his team quickly found the real weapons unguarded nearby and destroyed them.

For his heroism and for saving countless lives, Mr. Lomell received the Distinguished Service Cross. Following the fighting at D-day, Mr. Lomell continued to serve his country in other battles, earning a Silver Star. After receiving another injury, he was honorably discharged in December of 1945.

After the war, Mr. Lomell returned to New Jersey, where he settled in Toms River. He graduated from Rutgers University Law School, married and had three daughters, and opened a successful law practice. He died in 2011 at age 91, and his grateful hometown honored him with the creation of Lomell Lane.

I can think of no better way to honor Mr. Lomell and demonstrate our Nation's continued gratitude for his service than to name this VA clinic in his honor.

I urge all Members to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the sponsor of this legislation and my good friend.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the distinguished chairman, for yielding and for the job he is doing as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. I once served in that position. I know how important it is to defend our veterans so vigorously. I thank the chairman for that leadership. I thank the ranking member as well for his support of this important piece of legislation.

Let me just begin.

Today, the House of Representatives has the opportunity to further recognize and honor one of the bravest and most highly decorated combat soldiers of World War II, Leonard G. "Bud" Lomell, by naming the new veterans outpatient clinic in Toms River, New Jersey, in his honor.

While Bud Lomell passed away in 2011 at the age of 91, his dear wife, Charlotte, is turning 104 in September, and she and her family deeply loved Bud and continue to deeply cherish his memory. I spoke to Bud's youngest daughter, Renee, again this morning. They are very pleased that Congress is poised to honor him today.

I also extend my special thanks to former Toms River mayor and retired admiral, Mo Hill, for originally coming up with this idea to name the clinic for Bud Lomell, as well as his incredible advocacy on behalf of Bud and his family.

On June 6, 1944, D-day, First Sergeant Bud Lomell of D Company, 2nd Ranger Infantry Battalion, and his Army Rangers were tasked with the nearly impossible mission of scaling the 100-foot cliffs at Pointe du Hoc and

to destroy the Germans' 155-millimeter artillery guns, which have a range of between 10 and 15 miles, that threatened the entire invasion which they believed were positioned at the top of the cliffs.

Bud Lomell and his Rangers, upon successfully climbing the cliffs despite heavy casualties, were dismayed to find when they got to the top of the cliffs that the Allied military intel was misled by decoys and that the entire invasion was now at risk. Bud, I know parenthetically, was actually wounded leaving the landing craft but tenaciously continued. In one interview, he said: I lost half my guys.

First Sergeant Lomell and another Ranger, Sergeant Jack Kuhn, found the five guns camouflaged in a nearby orchard. He discovered they were all aimed at Utah Beach, although they could easily reach Normandy as well. Remember, they have a 10-to-15-mile range. They could have taken out ships, landing craft, and, of course, the infantry soldiers and others making the beachheads.

With Kuhn providing cover, Bud Lomell used thermite grenades to singlehandedly destroy three of the Nazi big artillery guns, then got more thermite grenades and went back and destroyed the other two. Five massive artillery guns were utterly destroyed, ultimately helping to ensure the success of the Allied invasion and saving countless lives.

Historian Stephen Ambrose has described Bud Lomell as the single individual, besides Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower, as the most responsible for the success of D-day.

In his book, "The Greatest Generation," Tom Brokaw devoted an entire chapter to Bud Lomell, who he first met 40 years after the invasion of D-day. He noted that during their interview, even after several decades—these are his words—he "could almost see the tough, young First Sergeant Lomell directing his men as they landed under the withering fire of German forces."

For his amazing leadership and extraordinarily brave acts, Bud Lomell received the Distinguished Service Cross. As we all know, that is the second highest military decoration. The citation said in part: "First Sergeant Lomell led a patrol of men through the heaviest kind of automatic weapons fire to destroy an enemy machine gun nest. Later on the same day, while leading another patrol, he penetrated through the enemy lines to the rear and discovered five enemy 155-millimeter guns. . . .

"[He] gallantly led his patrol against the enemy and successfully destroyed the guns . . . First Sergeant Lomell's bold and outstanding leadership in the face of superior numbers is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military forces of the United States and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army."

Lomell also received a rare battle-field promotion to second lieutenant, and it was said that "there was not a man who did not feel proud to serve with him."

Six months later, Bud Lomell served in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest, where he and D Company helped capture and defend the notorious Hill 400, which had claimed thousands of his fellow servicemembers' lives.

He subsequently received the Silver Star for his valor in combat, and that citation says in pertinent part: "Conspicuously leading from the front, Lomell directed the successful defense of the hilltop in the face of nearly overwhelming German counterattack mid-day . . . [Refusing] shelter and at risk of his life with blood oozing from his ears, nose, and mouth, firing his machine gun cradled in his bandaged left arm with his right hand, he continued to lead his men against another ruthless German assault throughout the entire afternoon."

What an amazing, amazing hero. He was wounded at Hurtgen and again several weeks later at the Battle of the Bulge. In addition to the Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star, Bud Lomell received other awards, including the Bronze Star, Purple Heart with two oakleaf clusters, and France's highest medal, the Legion of Honor. Those are just some of the most remembered ones. There were others as well.

As was pointed out by my colleagues, he became an unbelievably effective lawyer, had his own law firm, and was very active in the community in Ocean County. He was even the head of Veterans Services in Ocean County, the first person to take on that position.

As President Reagan famously said in his speech at Pointe du Hoc, the men who invaded Normandy, including and most especially Bud Lomell, "had faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just God would grant them mercy on this beachhead or on the next." They were "the men who took the cliffs." They were "the champions who helped free a continent." They were "the heroes who helped end a war."

Mr. Speaker, in enduring gratitude to them, I ask my colleagues to vote for this legislation.

□ 1540

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2170 to honor this very deserving veteran, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2170.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### VETERANS EMPLOYMENT READINESS YIELD ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2625) to amend title 38, United States Code, to update certain terminology regarding veteran employment. The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2625

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2025" or the "VERY Act of 2025".

#### SEC. 2. UPDATE OF CERTAIN TERMINOLOGY REGARDING VETERAN EMPLOYMENT.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "employment handicap" each place it occurs and inserting "employment barrier"; and

(2) by striking "employment handicaps" each place it occurs and inserting "employment barriers".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2625.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

MR. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2625 offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS), my colleague.

H.R. 2625 would strike the term "employment handicap" from the Veteran Readiness and Employment statute, or VR&E, and replace it with the term "employment barrier."

This bill is simply a fix that would remove the negative implications of the term "handicap" and replace it with the broader term to ensure service-connected veterans can access the support they might need.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2625, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2625, the Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2025 introduced by my good friend Representative DON DAVIS.

The Veteran Readiness and Employment program, or VR&E, offers vital services to help veterans and service-members with service-connected disabilities and those determined to have