

high, and as the cost of living has increased, so have their problems. And I know this is true of veterans around the country.

By permanently adjusting benefits to include automatic cost-of-living increases we are providing critical peace of mind to those who have bravely served our country. They will have the knowledge of knowing that assistance will be there.

Chairman RUNYAN and I have worked closely to improve this legislation since we first introduced the bill in February, and I fully support the amended version we are considering today. Changes concerning the round-down practice and the chained CPI are changes that will strengthen the bill.

I appreciate also the input we received from a number of veterans service organizations and believe that this improved version of the legislation clearly addresses their concerns.

In effect, H.R. 570 will direct the VA to increase rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities, as well as the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of veterans with specific service-connected claims.

The bill will protect veterans benefits from deteriorating over time as the costs of housing, medicine, food and clothing and utilities all increase.

□ 1300

I want to echo Ranking Member MICHAUD's sentiments regarding the importance of having these adjustments occur annually, regularly, and dependably. It's essential that Congress provide for the needs of our heroes, the brave men and women who answered the call to serve in our armed services, and for their families as well.

I thank Chairman MILLER and Chairman RUNYAN for their work on this important issue, and I urge my colleagues to support the American Heroes COLA Act.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'Rourke).

Mr. O'Rourke. I would also like to thank the chair of the subcommittee and the ranking member for sponsoring this legislation and the chairman and ranking member of the full committee for bringing it forward. I'm pleased to be a cosponsor of the American Heroes COLA Act.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to visit Arlington National Cemetery with other Members of Congress and had the opportunity to place a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This incredibly moving and grounding experience reminded me of the ultimate sacrifice given by so many of our veterans.

For those who return from service wounded or develop disabilities as they age, veterans benefits are what allow them and their families to live in some

level of comfort. These modest benefits are often the difference between paying the mortgage and putting food on the table or going without. The legislation before us offers veterans security and guarantees that cost-of-living adjustments will happen automatically and not depend on yearly congressional approval.

In addition, H.R. 570 will substantially increase benefits for the most severely disabled veterans receiving special monthly compensation. The bill also protects veterans from benefits cuts should a chained CPI be adopted for Social Security. While I oppose adoption of the chained CPI for Social Security, I think it is important we act now to take the issue off the table for veterans benefits.

I represent thousands of El Paso veterans who have served our country and rely on VA benefits to make ends meet. They deserve the security of knowing those benefits will be adjusted when their cost of living rises.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests for time. We're prepared to close, if the ranking member is as well.

Mr. MICHAUD. In closing, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 570, as amended, is a solid piece of legislation that the veterans service organizations support, that the committee supports, and I would urge my colleagues to support this bill.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I once again urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 570, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 570, the American Heroes COLA Act.

I am proud to cosponsor this bipartisan bill because it helps our Nation's veterans.

More specifically, it helps veterans with service-related disabilities.

H.R. 570 would make their annual cost-of-living adjustments automatic for their disability compensation.

Making this process automatic would finally allow veterans to count on their cost of living adjustment every year instead of waiting around on Congress.

I thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle—Mr. RUNYON and Ms. TITUS—for introducing this bill.

Helping our veterans isn't a partisan issue—it's a national responsibility.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 570, as amended.

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

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automati-

cally by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AWARDING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 324) to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 324

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 First Special Service Force (the "Force"), a military unit composed of volunteers from the United States and Canada, was activated in July 1942 at Fort Harrison near Helena, Montana.

(2) The Force was initially intended to target military and industrial installations that were supporting the German war effort, including important hydroelectric plants, which would severely limit the production of strategic materials used by the Axis powers.

(3) From July 1942 through June 1943, volunteers of the Force trained in hazardous, arctic conditions in the mountains of western Montana, and in the waterways of Camp Bradford, Virginia.

(4) The combat echelon of the Force totaled 1,800 soldiers, half from the United States and half from Canada.

(5) The Force also contained a service battalion, composed of 800 members from the United States, that provided important support for the combat troops.

(6) A special bond developed between the Canadian and United States soldiers, who were not segregated by country, although the commander of the Force was a United States colonel.

(7) The Force was the only unit formed during World War II that consisted of troops from Canada and the United States.

(8) In October 1943, the Force went to Italy, where it fought in battles south of Cassino, including Monte La Difensa and Monte Majo, two mountain peaks that were a critical anchor of the German defense line.

(9) During the night of December 3, 1943, the Force ascended to the top of the precipitous face of Monte La Difensa, where the Force suffered heavy casualties and overcame fierce resistance to overtake the German line.

(10) After the battle for La Difensa, the Force continued to fight tough battles at high altitudes, in rugged terrain, and in severe weather.

(11) After battles on the strongly defended Italian peaks of Samucro, Vischiataro, and Remetanea, the size of the Force had been reduced from 1,800 soldiers to fewer than 500.

(12) For 4 months in 1944, the Force engaged in raids and aggressive patrols at the Anzio Beachhead.

(13) On June 4, 1944, members of the Force were among the first Allied troops to liberate Rome.

(14) After liberating Rome, the Force moved to southern Italy and prepared to assist in the liberation of France.

(15) During the early morning of August 15, 1944, members of the Force made silent landings on Les Iles D'Hyeres, small islands in the Mediterranean Sea along the southern coast of France.

(16) The Force faced a sustained and withering assault from the German garrisons as the Force progressed from the islands to the Franco-Italian border.

(17) After the Allied forces secured the Franco-Italian border, the United States Army ordered the disbandment of the Force on December 5, 1944, in Nice, France.

(18) During 251 days of combat, the Force suffered 2,314 casualties, or 134 percent of its authorized strength, captured thousands of prisoners, won 5 United States campaign stars and 8 Canadian battle honors, and never failed a mission.

(19) The United States is forever indebted to the acts of bravery and selflessness of the troops of the Force, who risked their lives for the cause of freedom.

(20) The efforts of the Force along the seas and skies of Europe were critical in repelling the advance of Nazi Germany and liberating numerous communities in France and Italy.

(21) The bond between the members of the Force from the United States and those from Canada has endured over the decades, as the members meet every year for a reunion, alternating between the United States and Canada.

(22) The traditions and honors exhibited by the Force are carried on by 2 outstanding active units of 2 great democracies, the Special Forces of the United States and the Canadian Special Operations Regiment.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to the First Special Service Force, collectively, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) AWARD OF MEDAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the First Special Service Force under subsection (a), the medal shall be given to the First Special Service Force Association in Helena, Montana, where it shall be available for display or temporary loan to be displayed elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the First Special Service Force, including Fort William Henry Harrison in Helena, Montana.

SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 2, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medal, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and amounts received from the sale of such duplicates shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous materials for the RECORD on H.R. 324, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today to seek swift approval of H.R. 324, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force in recognition of its superior service during World War II. The bill, introduced by my colleague from Florida (Mr. MILLER), has 324 cosponsors, befitting the storied history of this unit.

Mr. Speaker, the bravery and valor of the Army Special Forces, more commonly known as the Green Berets, are well known to most Americans. But many don't realize that this unit was born out of the First Special Service Force and the courageous soldiers that fought with it during World War II. The award of the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of their heroic service will help ensure that this unit attains the historical recognition it deserves.

Formed in 1942 to take on the hardest jobs in the most adverse conditions, the First Special Service Force was composed of American and Canadian soldiers. The unit fought bravely in the Italian Apennine Mountains against elite German units—the 104th Panzer Grenadiers and the Hermann Goering Paratroops—who were defending Hitler's Gustav Line south of Rome. They defeated German forces at Monte La Difensa after fighting south of the center of the line at Monte Cassino and participated in the successful assault of Monte La Remetanea and several nearby mountains. Sadly, of the 1,800 of the First Special Service Forces fighting soldiers and their 800 support troops, there were 2,300 casualties suffered in the 250 combat days before the unit was disbanded in December of 1944.

Mr. Speaker, the men of the Special Forces fought with their faces blackened by their own boot polish. They were so feared that the Nazi defenders called them the Black Devils and the unit took that name as its own, calling itself the Devil's Brigade. Proud of their strength and bravery, Special Forces soldiers left cards with their patch insignia and the phrase “The Worst is Yet to Come” on corpses in enemy territory.

Following World War II, a permanent elite unit was formed based on the experiences of the Special Forces and OSS operatives during the war. Today, that unit has evolved into the Army's Green Berets and a similar unit in Canada, the Special Operations Regiment.

Today, we hear stories of brave men and women in uniform defending freedom around the world. I've seen some of this awe-inspiring bravery firsthand in both Iraq and Afghanistan as a soldier myself. But as we hail our soldiers of today, let us remember the heroism and bravery of the Greatest Generation during World War II. This legislation authorizes the striking and award of a single gold medal that will go to the First Special Service Force Association in Helena, Montana, the original training site of the First Special Force, and the sale of bronze duplicates of that medal.

I ask for immediate passage of this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON
HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC, May 20, 2013.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: I write to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on House Administration in H.R. 324, to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force in recognition of its superior service during World War II. The bill, as introduced in the House on January 18, 2013, contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on House Administration.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, I will waive Committee consideration of provisions that fall within the Committee's jurisdiction. However, agreeing to waive jurisdiction over these amendments should not be construed as waiving, reducing, or affecting the jurisdiction of the Committee on House Administration.

Additionally, the Committee on House Administration expressly reserves its authority to seek conferees on any provision within its jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference that may be convened on this, or any similar legislation. I ask for your commitment to support any request by the Committee for conferees on H.R. 324 for provisions within the Committee's jurisdiction.

I ask that a copy of this letter and your response be placed in the Congressional Record during any floor consideration of H.R. 324.

I look forward to working with you on matters of mutual concern.

Sincerely,

CANDICE S. MILLER,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, May 21, 2013.

Hon. CANDICE S. MILLER,
Chairman, Committee on House Administration,
Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MILLER: Thank you for your May 20 letter regarding H.R. 324, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II.

I am most appreciative of your decision to forego consideration of H.R. 324 so that it may move expeditiously to the House floor. I acknowledge that although you are waiving formal consideration of the bill, the Committee on House Administration is in no way waiving its jurisdiction over any subject

matter contained in the bill that falls within its jurisdiction. In addition, if a conference is necessary on this legislation, I will support any request that your committee be represented therein.

Finally, I shall be pleased to include your letter and this letter in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 324.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I rise today to give great support for H.R. 324.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, at the outset that the Congressional Gold Medal is our highest honor; and there is no greater recipient that we can give this honor to than the First Special Service Forces, known as the Devil's Brigade. They were courageous. They risked their lives. As a matter of fact, they were the unit that led the liberation of France and Italy from the Nazis with daring, with courage, with skill. So it is very important for us to stand here today and to give great recognition to this unit.

There is a special bond between Canada and the United States, and that special bond started in World War II. For it was the first unit—and the only unit—where two nations, Canada and the United States, formed a force that accomplished what many felt was impossible.

□ 1310

You know, the Lord Jesus Christ said that there is no greater love—no greater love—that you can show than one who would give his life for another.

What a great honor this is, Mr. Speaker. I am just proud to join with my colleague, Mr. MILLER from Florida—my good friend—and Mr. COTTON from Arkansas to give this recognition, this high nobility of purpose to the first unit.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are proud to have our Navy SEALs, our Green Berets, our Special Ops, those special soldiers who go where many times few others would go. But the foundation of that was the Devil's Brigade.

I can just imagine that Nazi soldier who wrote that note, scared out of his wits when he called them the "Black Devils," when they would go and put shoe polish on their faces so that they could be expertly disguised to go in and to help to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany.

So it is with great pleasure that I stand here to join my colleagues in urging unanimous passage of this extraordinary legislation to honor this extraordinary group of soldiers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COTTON. I appreciate that reference to John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Certainly, many members of the Devil's Brigade did that, as they do today in our Special Forces.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gen-

tleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I also thank my friend, Mr. SCOTT, for his kind words. I also want to thank Chairman HENSARLING and Ranking Member WATERS and Subcommittee Chairman CAMPBELL, with his Ranking Member CLAY, all the members of the Financial Services Committee and the House leadership for their support in bringing to the floor here today H.R. 324. It is a bill that grants the Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the First Special Service Force.

I also want to thank the members of the First Special Service Force Association, specifically Mr. Bill Woon for his advocacy, and for the association's efforts in continuing to spread the inspirational story of a truly heroic group of American and Canadian servicemen.

I would be remiss not to thank Congressman AL GREEN of Texas and Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ of Florida for encouraging support from their caucus members for this broad bipartisan piece of legislation, and the 324 Members of this body who have cosponsored the bill.

I join my colleagues today in support of a bill that bestows upon the First Special Service Force the Congressional Gold Medal. It's Congress' highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievement and contributions for their superior service during World War II.

The First Special Service Force was a covert World War II military unit born through the efforts of President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The Force conducted ultrahigh-risk military missions in Italy and in France. Once sent into action, the First Special Service Force never failed a combat mission.

The First Special Service Force achieved remarkable success in battle and contributed prominently in the liberation of Italy and France. Most notably, the Force conducted battles south of Cassino, including Monte La Difensa and Monte Majo, two mountain peaks critical to the German defensive line.

During the night of December 3, 1943, the Force ascended to the top of the precipitous face of Monte La Difensa, where the Force suffered heavy casualties and overcame fierce resistance to overtake the German line.

The First Special Service Force lost a total of 2,314 men, which was 134 percent of the original combat force. These heroic servicemen represent the breadth of intrepidity and courage, and they have earned our country's deepest gratitude and highest praise.

Though many of the brave troops of the First Special Service Force have been lost to us, this gold medal is an important step in immortalizing their service and honoring the forefathers of today's Special Forces.

With just 6 days remaining until Memorial Day, I cannot think of a more

appropriate way to honor the heroism and sacrifice of the warriors of the First Special Service Force, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

To all of the men and women who have guarded our great Nation in the name of protecting and defending liberty that we hold so dear, we say thank you. And to all of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, may you forever remain in our hearts and in our prayers.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I'll just take this opportunity to join all of us in the Congress of the United States to salute the First Special Service Force for the outstanding work that they have done.

I urge unanimous passage on this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COTTON. I yield myself the balance of my time.

I join my colleagues, the gentleman from Georgia and the gentleman from Florida, in urging unanimous passage of this very important legislation the week before Memorial Day to honor the Devil's Brigade.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 324, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HELPING HEROES FLY ACT

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1344) to amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to provide expedited air passenger screening to severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1344

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 "Helping Heroes Fly Act".

SEC. 2. OPERATIONS CENTER PROGRAM FOR SEVERELY INJURED OR DISABLED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND SEVERELY INJURED OR DISABLED VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 449 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section: