

mastered glider-use techniques and was deployed in France on December 24. He first went to Camp Mourmelon, followed by Charleville-Mézières, where his division was attached to George Patton's U.S. Third Army. There, he was among those ordered to defend a 30-mile defensive position along the Meuse River whose mission was to prevent the German advance in the Belgian Ardennes area.

On January 5, 1945, Private First Class Aas crossed the Belgian border and settled in a wooded area near Bastogne. Combat ensued 2 days later as the Battle of the Bulge was raging. The fighting was so intense the area became forever known as Dead Man's Ridge. As he and his unit continued to advance toward Luxembourg, they pushed enemy lines back towards the Siegfried Line.

In February, after the battle had ended and after weeks of combat in exceptionally harsh conditions, he returned to France to Camp Châlons-sur-Marne. He was reassigned to the 194th Glider Infantry after his regiment disbanded because of heavy casualties. Private First Class Aas helped prepare for the airborne operation Varsity. On March 24, he left Coulommiers and landed in Germany near Wesel to help capture Rhine bridges and secure towns to protect Allied ground forces. The following day he was wounded by shrapnel and was hospitalized in Belgium and then Paris, where he spent several weeks recovering.

Private First Class Aas returned to North Dakota following the war, earned his law degree from the University of North Dakota, and served in the State legislature for four sessions. To this day, he remains a community leader in Minot. He is one of the best examples of the thousands of World War II veterans we proudly call "the greatest generation."

For his valorous conduct in action, Mr. Aas has received prestigious distinctions, including the Purple Heart Medal, the Bronze Star Medal for heroic and meritorious service in Belgium, as well as the Luxembourg Medal of Honor and the honorific diploma of Citizen of Utah Beach—Sainte-Marie-du-Mont / Citoyen d'Utah Beach—Sainte-Marie-du-Mont. It was my honor in October 2017 to join French Consul General Lacroix, who made a special trip to Minot to present France's highest military recognition, the Legion of Honor, to Mr. Aas, who was then 96 years old.

Mr. President, as we remember this 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, let us once again remember and honor the heroism and sacrifices of our American soldiers, who paved the way for victory in World War II and for our freedom today.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

• Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, 90 years ago, Inter-Island Airways launched the first scheduled commercial passenger air service in Hawaii. Now known as Hawaiian Airlines, it is our State's largest and longest serving airline. Its fleet of 67 aircrafts flies between our islands and connects Hawaii to the mainland and around the world.

As a State comprised of islands, safe, reliable air service is critical to the movement of people and goods. Whether it is transporting people and cargo for leisure, medical appointments, business, cultural and sports events or carrying fresh produce, equipment, or other supplies, Hawaiian has and will continue to be a major part of our highways in the sky.

From its modest beginnings—a \$3-per-person sightseeing tour on a five-passenger plane—Hawaiian transported 11.8 million passengers and 92,000 tons of cargo last year alone. Today, Hawaiian is one of the largest employers in the State, with more than 7,300 employees across its network, including some 6,600 who live in Hawaii.

Its impact is felt beyond jobs. Every year, Hawaiian and its employees partner with and help support hundreds of nonprofit organizations. As one example, Hawaiian leads a mentorship program that promotes aviation careers and provides students with hands-on learning about all aspects of the industry.

I am particularly proud of the steps Hawaiian has taken to adopt eco-friendlier practices throughout its operations to improve fuel efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and cut waste. In 2018, despite continuing to grow, Hawaiian lowered annual jet fuel burn by 7 million gallons and reduced annual carbon output by 86,300 metric tons. It is also contributing toward climate research by collecting air samples over the Pacific Ocean. The data is used as part of an international effort to measure climate change and air quality.

On behalf of the Hawaii congressional delegation, I wish to congratulate Hawaiian Airlines on its 90th anniversary and wish them continued success in serving the travel needs of our residents and introducing Hawaii to the world.●

##### TRIBUTE TO WALTER GRAFF

• Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to salute Walter Graff for his many years of dedicated service and forward-looking leadership at the Appalachian Mountain Club, AMC. Walter will soon retire from his role as senior vice president, the capstone to a career at AMC that began 45 years ago as a program manager in the mountains of northern New Hampshire. He leaves a legacy worthy of our praise and our gratitude.

The Appalachian Mountain Club is a nearly century-and-a-half old organization with a mission of connecting people to the outdoors. Its staff and many supporters not only encourage people to explore the natural world through activities like hiking, paddling, cycling, and skiing. They are also at the forefront of conservation efforts that seek to protect our forests, mountains, rivers, and trails for future generations to enjoy and cherish.

When Walter Graff was hired by the AMC in July of 1974, he spent his first months on the job screening environmental films for guests at what was then called Pinkham Notch Camp. The AMC was a much smaller organization back then with a few professional positions in New Hampshire and administrative services in Boston. But Walter had big dreams and an ambitious vision for the organization. He approached the Pinkham hutmaster at the end of the summer with the hope of developing a workshop program. He got signoff, as well as an excuse to venture outdoors. What began as a couple classes on topics like equipment maintenance and snowshoeing has since blossomed into one of the largest outdoor education programs in New England.

Walter has held many titles within AMC since that summer 45 years ago. His colleagues note that his leadership has touched every facet of AMC's mission. As director of education, he was influential in launching the group's renowned outdoor skills and leadership training program. As head of the AMC's Maine Woods Initiative, he was responsible for developing a program that promotes outdoor recreation, protects natural resources, encourages responsible forestry and deepens community partnerships. To date, the program is responsible for purchasing and permanently conserving 70,000 acres of forestland and creating over 120 miles of recreational trails.

As he nears his retirement, Walter is fond of looking to the past to see how much AMC has grown and how accessible our mountains, rivers, and lakes are to people across the region. He drives through the White Mountains and sees once-empty parking lots now full of people exploring the richness of the natural world. Yet Walter is also looking to the future as he approaches his final day as an AMC employee. He knows he will remain connected to the outdoors and will continue caring for the planet.

On behalf of the people of New Hampshire, I ask my colleagues and all Americans to join me in thanking Walter Graff for his years of service and wishing him all the best in the years ahead.●

##### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Kalbaugh, one of his secretaries.