

Creek's story done by the Amarillo Globe News and High Plains Public Radio. And, finally, I want to thank the Creek family for their patience and understanding and dignity with which they have approached this matter.

Mr. Speaker, in the late 1960s, Thomas E. Creek was in many ways a typical young man from the Texas panhandle. He had worked in a variety of jobs since he was 11 or 12 years old. He was a fan of Elvis Presley. He enjoyed being with his friends, and one remembered that he liked being in the middle of things. His brother, Ross, has been quoted as saying that "he didn't think Tom was afraid of anything. That's what gets me," he said to the Amarillo Globe News. "If he was afraid of anything, he kept it inside."

Tom Creek left school early and joined the Marine Corps. On the 4th of July, 1968, he stepped foot in Vietnam. In letters home, he called it hell. But on February 13, 1969, Marine Lance Corporal Thomas E. Creek was a rifleman with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division. His unit was part of a resupply convoy that was ambushed by enemy forces using mortars, mines, fragmentation grenades, and small arms.

According to the documents recommending him for the Medal of Honor, the fierce combat found the men firing at point-blank range. Corporal Creek was struck in the neck by a bullet. Blood was seen flowing from the wound. But then he noticed a fragmentation grenade land between him and the rest of the squad. Though wounded, he threw his body on top of the grenade. One of the Marines with him recalled seeing him run towards the grenade and yell, "I've got it, Mac." His body absorbed the full impact of the grenade, saving the lives of at least five Marines nearby. His act inspired the rest of the squad to defeat the enemy and complete its mission to resupply the forward combat base. Eleven others were wounded, but only Tom Creek was killed.

Lance Corporal Thomas E. Creek was awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest honor our Nation can bestow. This bill, as the chairman mentioned, will rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Amarillo, Texas, the Thomas E. Creek Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Dr. Craig Barnes has said that as he read the book "The Greatest Generation," he was struck by the fact that each of those described was a regular person. No one was born a hero. But when pushed, they found something heroic inside themselves. Heroes are ordinary people who refuse to be governed by fear when times are hard, he said.

Tom Creek was a regular person. He was also a hero. He reached down within himself and made a decision in a split second, a decision to sacrifice his life in order to save the lives of others. It is the same kind of sacrifice which men and women have made throughout

our history, from the Revolutionary War to the streets of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan, sacrifice for others while serving and defending the Nation.

I believe that naming this veterans medical center for this 18-year-old who sacrificed everything he had is a fitting tribute to his incredible heroism and sacrifice; that it will enhance the honor that rightfully belongs to those who have served our Nation and will be treated in this facility; and I hope that it will remind the rest of us that we too can refuse to be governed by fear and find something heroic inside ourselves as our duties demand.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation to honor Lance Corporal Thomas E. Creek by renaming the Amarillo VA Medical Center for him. As we are once again forced to confront on an almost daily basis the sacrifice of the young men and women who are serving our Nation, it is fitting and appropriate that we continue to honor the uncommon bravery of those soldiers who came before them.

Thomas Creek embodied such bravery, when in February of 1969 he selflessly gave his own life to save the lives of fellow Marines in Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, by all accounts, Thomas Creek was a young man who deserves this honor which we can bestow upon him today, and I am proud to support this bill.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4836.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 4836.

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

There was no objection.

#### THOMAS P. NOONAN, JR., DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1318) to name

the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Sunnyside, Queens, New York, as the "Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic."

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1318

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

#### SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC, QUEENS, NEW YORK.

The Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Sunnyside, Queens, New York, shall be known and designated as the "Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic". Any reference to such clinic in any law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the "Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1318 would name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in the City of Sunnyside, Queens, New York, for Lance Corporal Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., a Marine, who on February 5, 1969, was killed in action in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam.

Lance Corporal Noonan was 25 years old on that fateful morning in Vietnam when serving as a fire team leader he was mortally wounded while valiantly trying to drag a wounded Marine to safety. For his heroic actions, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military decoration.

I want to commend my distinguished colleague on the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), for introducing H.R. 1318. This is the second naming bill the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has brought to the floor today to honor servicemembers who gave their lives in Vietnam. These are bipartisan measures which pay homage to our fallen heroes. I am pleased to bring these bills before the House for its consideration.

I hope that these stories of bravery and sacrifice are an inspiration to the new generation of soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen who are so ably serving our country in the war against terrorism. By naming these facilities to honor Lance Corporals Noonan and Creek, we also signify our intent to continue providing health care to veterans of our Armed Forces now and into the future.

Again, I am grateful to my friend and colleague on the other side of the aisle for introducing it.

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