

and bought and dispatched. It is from these ships that they went to Omaha Beach.

Olin Tiger Teague of this body, the first chairman of the Committee on Space and longtime Member here departed from this ship. General Earl Rudder, who is next to the highest decorated veteran of World War II from Texas, just under Audie Murphy, embarked from this ship.

It means a lot to us and it means a lot to these old soldiers and sailors. After World War II, it was transferred to Greece. The government of Greece has requested the consent that it come back. I think all the bases have been tagged.

This ship was in Sicily. It was in Italy, Salerno, Normandy, Omaha Beach. It suffered casualties. It transported prisoners of war when the war was over. It is a ship that will find its home port in New Orleans with the help of these two fine leaders in Congress and the support their committees have given, and I appreciate it.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HALL of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thought this might be an appropriate moment, too, to reflect on the fact that today we do not have a lot of World War II veterans in the United States Congress. At one time we had a lot of them but we now have very few. I know the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) is a World War II veteran, I believe a pilot, and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SISISKY) is a World War II veteran.

I know on our side, on the national security side, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) is a World War II veteran. He claims he joined at the age of 11. I think he is trying to keep his age down there.

I just want to express my thanks to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) for all of the great service that he has given this country, long before he came to the House of Representatives. I believe we only have a handful of World War II veterans right now serving in the U.S. Congress. Is that accurate?

Mr. HALL of Texas. Those of us that are just the very healthiest and have really taken care of ourselves, live real clean lives, are still around.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4519, and I want to thank my colleague from Texas, Congressman RALPH HALL, for his leadership and persistence in bringing this bill to the House floor for consideration.

Earlier this summer, I was contacted by Mr. Peter Leaska and told about the history of the U.S.S. *Bowman County*. Mr. Leaska is a member of the LST Association of Massachusetts, an association of veterans who served on these LST vessels during World War II. He is a man of quiet dedication and courage, like his fellow members in the LST Association, who served our country during its time of greatest peril.

Mr. Leaska told me how the U.S.S. *Bowman County* was used to carry troops, tanks and

guns to Normandy as part of the amphibious assault to liberate Europe. His request was simple: Could the U.S.S. *Bowman County*, now in Greece, be transferred back to the United States and to the control of the non-profit U.S.S. LST Ship Memorial? The veterans who served on these vessels want to preserve the U.S.S. *Bowman County* and display her as a museum and memorial, so that their families and today's and future generations of children might recall the heroic deeds carried out by average American men and women and be honored and remembered.

I won't go into the details of how complicated it turned out to be to fulfill this simple request made by these World War II veterans. It has taken enormous perseverance on the part of LST Association members around the country to bring us to this moment. It has taken the determination of my colleague from Texas [Congressman RALPH HALL] to provide the Congressional authorization for the transfer of this vessel to a third party. And I hope in these final days of Congress, the Senate will approve this bill and also authorize the transfer of the U.S.S. *Bowman County* to these veterans.

It's popular these days to go see the movie, "Saving Private Ryan," a beautiful film about the sacrifices and horrors faced by the men and women who served during World War II. This is a simple act to reward and remember those veterans who served on LST vessels.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. HUNTER. 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 California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4519.

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.

□ 1130

ADDING BRONCHIOLO-ALVEOLAR CARCINOMA TO LIST OF SERVICE-CONNECTED DISEASES

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 559) to amend title 38, United States Code, to add bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma to the list of diseases presumed to be service-connected for certain radiation-exposed veterans.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 559

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

SECTION 1. PRESUMPTION THAT BRONCHIOLO-ALVEOLAR CARCINOMA IS SERVICE-CONNECTED.

Section 1112(c)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(P) Bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). Pursuant to the rule, the

gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 559.

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. STUMP asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 559 would add bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma to the list of diseases presumed to be service-connected for certain radiation-exposed veterans. This disease is a very particular type of rare lung cancer occurring among veterans who are exposed to ionizing radiation.

I would like to thank the cosponsor of this bill the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) who is also vice chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for his persistence in bringing this bill to the floor. The House has passed this bill in previous Congresses; however, it has never been agreed to by the Senate.

I would strongly urge my colleagues to vote for the bill at this time.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 559 which will provide a presumption of service-connection for atomic veterans who suffer from an extremely rare form of nonsmokers' lung cancer. For those veterans who died of this disease, benefits will be made available to their surviving dependents.

I commend the author of this legislation the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his tireless efforts on behalf of these veterans and all veterans and their dependents. I also want to thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) for bringing this bill to the floor today.

The time to redress these injustices has long since passed. H.R. 559 will provide justice to a small group of veterans. Congress can and should do more to compensate those veterans who sacrificed their health and in some cases their lives on behalf of our Nation. I urge all of my colleagues to support this measure.

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

Mr. STUMP. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the vice chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentleman

from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) for yielding me this time. There is no one who has done more for veterans in this country. I appreciate his working to get this legislation to the floor today. I do want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) for his strong support for this legislation.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 559 would do a very simple thing. It would add a rare form of cancer, bronchiolo-alveolar pulmonary carcinoma, to the list of cancers that are presumed to be service connected for veterans who were exposed to radiation, in accordance with the provisions of Public Law 100-321.

In 1986, Madam Speaker, I became acquainted with Joan McCarthy, a constituent from New Jersey. Mrs. McCarthy has worked for many years to locate other atomic veterans and their widows and she founded the New Jersey Association of Atomic Veterans.

Joan's husband, Tom McCarthy, was a participant in Operation Wigwam, a nuclear test in May of 1955 which involved an underwater detonation of a 30-kiloton plutonium bomb in the Pacific Ocean about 500 miles southwest of San Diego. Tom served as a navigator on the U.S.S. *McKinley*, one of the ships assigned to observe Operation Wigwam. The detonation of the nuclear weapon broke the surface of the water, creating a giant wave and bathing the area with a radioactive mist. Government reports indicate that the entire test area was awash with airborne particulates of the detonation. The spray from the explosion was described in the official government reports as, and I quote, an insidious hazard which turned into an invisible radioactive aerosol, close quote. Tom spent 4 days in this environment while serving aboard the U.S.S. *McKinley*.

In April of 1981 at the age of 44, Tom McCarthy died of a rare form of lung cancer, bronchiolo-alveolar pulmonary carcinoma. This illness is a non-smoking-related cancer. It is estimated that about 97 percent of all lung cancers are caused by smoking. On his deathbed Tom told his wife Joan about his involvement in Operation Wigwam and wondered about the fate of the other men who were stationed on the U.S.S. *McKinley* and other ships in the area.

Madam Speaker, it has been well documented that exposure to ionizing radiation can cause this particular type of lethal cancer. The National Research Council cited Department of Energy studies in the BEIR V reports, stating that, and I quote, bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma is the most common cause of delayed death from inhaled plutonium 239. The BEIR V report notes that this cancer is caused by inhalation and deposition of alpha-emitting plutonium particles.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs has also acknowledged the clear linkage between this ailment and radiation exposure. I include that information for the RECORD at this point.

The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards considered the issue of the radiogenicity of bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma and advised me that, in their opinion, this form of lung cancer may be associated with exposure to ionizing radiation. They commented that the association with exposure to ionizing radiation and lung cancer has been strengthened by such evidence as the 1988 report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, the 1990 report of the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiations (the BEIR V Report), and the 1991 report of the International Committee on Radiation Protection. The Advisory Committee went on to state that when it had recommended that lung cancer be accepted as a radiogenic cancer, it was intended to include most forms of lung cancer, including bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma.

Back in 1985, Madam Speaker, I met with former Secretary Brown of the VA and he assured me that the VA would not oppose Congress taking action to add this disease to the presumptive list. Notwithstanding this fact, the VA continues to deny Joan McCarthy's claim for survivor's benefits, a clear outrage and I think a miscarriage of justice.

Finally, just let me say that CBO estimates that this will cost the government on average about \$10,000 a year for each affected widow. CBO estimates that the cost will be approximately \$13.5 million over a 5-year period. I do hope that this legislation will get the full support of the body. While nothing can replace their loved ones, these widows deserve this very small compensation—it is the least we can do.

Mr. STUMP. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the distinguished chairman of our Committee on Veterans' Affairs the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) and the ranking Democratic member the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) for their cooperation in bringing this bill to the floor at this time. I want to commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for taking on this issue. We cannot do enough for our veterans. Where we have specific diseases that have been related to their service on behalf of our Nation, we must do whatever we can to make certain that they are going to be taken care of.

□ 1145

H.R. 559 in adding bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma to the list of diseases presumed to be service connected for certain radiation exposed veterans is an issue that deserves our consideration today, and I welcome this opportunity of participating in this legislation that will help a veteran who has been exposed to radiation of this kind in connection with his service, and we

must examine all cases of this nature to make certain that our veterans are going to be properly taken care of, and I know that our Committee on Veterans' Affairs under the Chair of the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) goes out of its way to make certain that we do not neglect our veterans, and for that I commend him.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 559, a bill which is long overdue. This bill represents one step for Congress to correct an injustice against some of our nation's veterans. By designating this rare lung disease as a service-connected illness, we can open the door to just compensation for those veterans with unexplained illnesses brought about from their service to our nation.

Radiation exposure is common among our troops. As we have seen in the aftermath of the Gulf War, thousands of our veterans continue to languish with unexplained illnesses which the DOD and VA are unable to designate as compensable diseases. Even with evidence that these illnesses could come from nowhere else but military service, our government has dropped the ball.

Mr. Speaker, passage of H.R. 559 will bring relief to the hundreds of veterans who suffer from this disease. On top of that, H.R. 559 should help usher in broader legislation to compensate the thousands of veterans who suffer from illnesses caused by exposure to radiation while in the service.

Mr. STUMP. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 559.

The question was taken.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GOVERNMENT WASTE, FRAUD, AND ERROR REDUCTION ACT OF 1998

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4243) to reduce waste, fraud, and error in government programs by making improvements with respect to Federal management and debt collection practices, Federal payment systems, Federal benefit programs, and for other purposes as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4243

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Government Waste, Fraud, and Error Reduction Act of 1998".