

NATIONAL COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the fact that last week was the third annual National Cover the Uninsured Week.

The purpose of National Cover the Uninsured Week is to raise awareness of the problem of the uninsured and the need for reliable and affordable health care coverage. To this end, I shall briefly discuss the problem that we face as a Nation and call attention to some proposed movement towards solutions.

The challenge that we face as a Nation is grave. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 45 million Americans lack health coverage, a figure which includes 8 million children. In my home State of Illinois, 1,800,000 individuals lacked health coverage in 2003. This problem is not merely one of numbers, statistics, charts and figures. It impacts real live people in every State in the Nation.

Families forced to pay high medical bills out of pocket are the same families that default on loans, are unable to save for their children's education and are forced into bankruptcy. Children who lack coverage are children who are unable to get necessary preventative care or treatment. Additionally, the problem is the enormous burden on health care providers who sometimes must charge those who are covered more in order to care for those lacking coverage, as they are mandated to do in emergency situations. This situation only fuels the ever-increasing cost of health care in this country.

Sadly, I know all too well that I have not just shed light on a previously unknown problem. My colleagues in the House have surely heard this many times before. However, all of our talk has yet to provide solutions.

Fortunately, three bills have been introduced that will help to alleviate this grave and well-documented problem: the Medicare Early Access Act, the Family Care Act and the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act.

Together, these bills will help to expand access to Medicare to younger workers, provide incentive to States to extend the State Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, to working parents and eligible children, and make it easier for small businesses to cover their employees. It is quite possible that enactment of these proposals would extend coverage to 20 million more Americans.

While this is less than half of the total number of America's uninsured population, it is certainly a step in the right direction. After all, even a journey of 1,000 miles must begin with a single step. But the real deal is, Mr. Speaker, we need a national health plan, single payer, with everybody in, nobody out. Health care is indeed a

right and not a privilege. Every American should have it.

HONORING JAMES McCLAMMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute an almost 80-year-old veteran from my southeast Texas district. A dedicated American, a charter member of the greatest generation, Private James McClammy this weekend finally received the honors due him after 60 years.

A bit of history is in order, Mr. Speaker. Private McClammy was born in Canton, Mississippi, in the mid-1920s. James McClammy grew up during the Great Depression. Times were tight, tough and hard.

Mr. Speaker, he was a depression baby, as he calls himself. His family moved to Poke County, Texas, just outside of Livingston. That is in the Piney Woods of deep east Texas. He was the son of a State highway worker. And although he lived in a peaceful country atmosphere, the world would soon be at war again.

This teenager would be like thousands of other Americans; he, too, would go off to war. With the outbreak of World War II, Mr. McClammy was drafted right out of high school. A strapping 18-year-old, he has answered that call with abiding courage. He began his basic training in the Lone Star State at Fort Sam in San Antonio and then in Camp Walters, Texas.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that my dad about the same time was going through basic training at Camp Walters, Texas, and he, too, served in the great World War II in Europe.

At any event, Private McClammy later was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, for jump school to complete airborne training. Following the D-Day landings, Private McClammy was assigned to the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division's Easy Company and was deployed to Holland.

Having been a member of the famous Screaming Eagles for less than 4 months, this young private was about to experience a day he would never forget. It was Sunday the 17th, Mr. Speaker, a perfect Sunday in September of 1944. Private McClammy was one of more than 30,000 Americans and allied paratroopers involved in Operation Market Garden. They were charged with the important yet extremely perilous mission of descending into German-occupied Holland. Their objective was to secure the bridges across this occupied country's rivers so the allied forces could avoid the German defense line, the Siegfried line.

□ 1845

One of these bridges was referred to in the military history as a Bridge Too Far. The 101st traveled swiftly north-

wards and into the lowlands of Germany. If their valiant jump attempts were successful, many believed the war could be over by Christmas, but this was not to be.

Private McClammy recalls the morning of the daylight jumps. He says, "My memory is not as good as it used to be, but it was a beautiful day and there was no enemy fire. Our goal was to capture and hold a bridge, a railroad bridge in Veghel, Holland, to prevent the German Army from seizing and destroying it. While the Germans were initially caught off guard by the airborne landings, they were by no stretch of the imagination defeated."

The jump into Holland was unlike any of Private McClammy's other jumps because there was no swinging around after his chute opened. Because they were so close, they jumped and almost immediately hit the ground. During the mission, Private McClammy's personal duties were clear: move forward, capture the bridge.

The Screaming Eagles 501st Regiment was led by Colonel Howard Johnson. With all of but one of his battalions descending as planned into the drop zone near Veghel, Colonel Johnson's men, including Private McClammy, marched steadfastly into the city where they successfully completed their mission and held and followed their orders: hold until relieved.

He says, "We held the bridge and then got relieved by another unit. It wasn't until later in the day that the enemy fire started." While he completed that day's work unscathed, the next week he was not as fortunate. On September 23, the Germans started shelling and they continued to shell.

Amidst an artillery barrage, a nearby shell explosion sent shrapnel flying into Private McClammy's hip. He was the sole survivor because three of his teenage friends, other members of the 101st, were killed in that attack. He was trapped for several days, and finally evacuated to a field hospital in Belgium where they operated on him.

He was then flown to a facility in England where he spent the remainder of September until early December recovering from his wound. At that point, he traveled on a crowded ship back to the United States where he boarded a train from South Carolina to Texas that stopped at various cities in the southern United States to drop off wounded veterans.

Private McClammy was discharged after the war and, like many of his band of brothers, never learned he had earned the Bronze Star for his action in World War II. It was only recently that a friend and fellow soldier from the Easy Company, Willie Ray Fox, brought this to his attention.

Mr. McClammy tried for 2 years to get his medal without success. In March, he contacted my Jefferson County office, and he was awarded those medals last week.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the military and members of my office for