

the law for the award of the Medal of Honor. The three cases involve extraordinary valor in combat and represent well the high standard for bravery that is the hallmark of our Nation's most cherished decoration, the Medal of Honor.

Corporal Andrew J. Smith, 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, saved the regimental colors from capture on November 30, 1864, during the Battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina, when an assault left one-half of the regiment's officers and a third of the enlisted men killed or wounded.

Technician Fifth grade, James K. Okubo, Medical Detachment 442nd Regimental Combat Team, rescued several badly wounded members of his unit while under heavy enemy fire on October 28, 29, and November 4, 1944, near Biffontaine France.

Captain Ed. W. Freeman, 229 Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, repeatedly flew into one of the hottest and most embattled landing zones of the Vietnam War to provide essential supplies and evacuate wounded on November 14, 1965, at landing zone X-ray during the battle of the LaDrang Valley, Republic of Vietnam.

The legislation would provide the appropriate honors posthumously to three valiant Americans of very different backgrounds, engaged in three very different battles. No matter how different the men, no matter how different the tactical or technological aspects of the conflicts in which they found themselves, they each reflected the best character of the American soldier.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to note that this legislation would, if adopted by the House, permit Mr. Okubo's family to receive his medal along with other Asian-American veterans who will receive Medals of Honor in a White House Ceremony on June 21.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of S. 2722.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE).

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2722, which is before the House today authorizing the Medal of Honor for James K. Okubo, Ed. W. Freeman, and Andrew J. Smith for the heroic actions as outlined by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY).

□ 0120

These three individuals are highly deserving of this award for their conspicuous bravery under fire in the defense of our great nation.

I am particularly pleased that this legislation is the culmination of an exhaustive effort to recognize James K. Okubo for his valor during World War II. Mr. Okubo, a Japanese-American,

originally from Washington State, like hundreds of others was sent to an internment camp in California at the outset of World War II. Despite being subjected to this shameful treatment, he never wavered in his patriotism and dedication to this country.

James Okubo entered the Army and was assigned as a medic in the legendary 442nd Regimental Combat Team. In October of 1944, Technician Okubo and his unit were tasked with the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" from Texas. The "Lost Battalion" was surrounded by German forces and threatened with annihilation.

During a 2 day period of heavy machine gun fire, mortar and artillery fire, Technician Okubo provided first-aid to 25 fellow soldiers wounded in the battle. On two occasions he crawled within yards of enemy lines to evacuate wounded comrades. Later during the battle he ran 75 yards through withering machine gun fire directed at him and evacuated a seriously wounded crewman from a burning tank.

For his heroism displayed during these intense combat situations, Technician Okubo was recommended for the Medal of Honor. I think it is important to note that, Mr. Speaker, he was recommended at that time for the Medal of Honor. However, the award was downgraded with the explanation that since he was a medic, Technician Okubo was not eligible for any award higher than the Silver Star.

Sadly, Mr. Okubo passed away in 1967 without ever receiving the proper recognition he rightly deserves. However, we now have the opportunity to correct this injustice. Mr. Okubo's case has recently been reviewed, as the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) indicated, by the Department of the Army under Section 1130 of Title X. After a thorough review of the facts of the case, the Army determined that Mr. Okubo in fact deserves to be awarded the Medal of Honor recommended for him for his valor during World War II.

On June 21, the President will be recognizing 12 members of Mr. Okubo's former unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. These individuals have also earned the Nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor.

I strongly urge the House to join our colleagues in the Senate and pass S. 2722, so that James K. Okubo can be honored with his comrades on this momentous occasion.

Mr. Speaker, may I conclude and thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) again personally on this floor for not only his interest, but his dedication, and thank in particular Mike Higgins and Phil Grone, Ashley Godwin and Deborah Watta for making it possible for the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) and myself to appear on the floor in such an expeditious manner. They have done a terrific job with this, Mr. Speaker, and I am very

grateful. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Hawaii.

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

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 2722.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2000

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next, for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, June 9, I was unable to vote due to a family emergency, and on Rollcall Vote 251, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

On Rollcall Vote Number 252, had I been present, I would have voted yea.

I make the same requests on Rollcall Vote Number 253, I would have voted aye.

I make the same requests on Rollcall Vote Number 254, I would have voted no.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.