

### Flooding Becomes Threat In Buffalo

**BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)** — Residents of western New York may soon have to worry about the water in their basements as well as the snow on their roofs. After a three-day onslaught that dumped a historic 7 feet of snow on the Buffalo area and killed at least 12 people, the sun came out Friday, but so did predictions of flooding caused by rain, temperatures up to 60 degrees and blocked catch basins. "We are preparing now for more flooding than we've seen in a long, long time," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. "We still have that challenge to look forward to." Cuomo said the state was sending in pumps, boats, helicopters and high-axle vehicles that can operate in 4 to 5 feet of water. "If we're lucky we won't need any of it," he said. "But prepare for the worst and hope for the best." The National Weather Service issued a flood watch for Sunday to Wednesday.

### Cosby's Comedy Tour Starts To Crumble

**MELBOURNE, Fla. (AP)** — Performances by Bill Cosby in Nevada, Illinois, Arizona, South Carolina and Washington State have been canceled as more women come forward accusing the entertainer of sexually assaulting them many years ago. The director of The Broadway Center in Tacoma, Washington said Friday that it has canceled Cosby's April 18 appearance because it conflicts with the nonprofit organization's mission "to strengthen our community's social fabric by building empathy, furthering education and sharing joy." "We were not confident in our ability to meet those objectives by proceeding with Mr. Cosby's performance," David Fischer said. Cosby's lawyer has said claims by four women are untrue; a statement from Cosby on Sunday dismissed most of the others as "decade-old, discredited allegations." A sold-out Cosby comedy show in Melbourne, Florida, Friday night went on as planned. The 77-year-old comedian, wearing cargo pants and a shirt that said "Hello Friend," took the stage to a standing ovation and loud applause. One person shouted, "We love you Bill."

### ISIS Tries To Capture Key Town Of Kobani

**BEIRUT (AP)** — More than two months into its assault on Kobani, the Islamic State group is still pouring fighters and resources into trying to capture the besieged Syrian Kurdish town, but the drive has been blunted. Helped by more than 270 airstrikes from a U.S.-led coalition, the border town's unwavering Kurdish defenders are gaining momentum — a potentially bruising reversal for the extremists who only a few weeks ago appeared to be unstoppable. The setback in Kobani is "a statement of IS group's vulnerability," said David L. Phillips, an expert on Kurdish issues. Retired Marine Gen. John Allen, the U.S. envoy for the international coalition fighting the Islamic State militants, said the group continues to mass around Kobani, creating more targets for the U.S. and its allies. "ISIL has, in so many ways, impaled itself on Kobani," he said in an interview Wednesday in Ankara with the Turkish daily Milliyet, using an acronym for the Islamic State group.

# For Obama, It's A Long Road To Immigration Order

BY JULIE PACE AND JOSH LEDERMAN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's carefully cultivated Hispanic coalition was starting to splinter. Immigration legislation on Capitol Hill was going nowhere. Deportations were nearing 2 million under Obama's watch. And the president was resisting calls to use executive actions to address the issue. In early March, Obama's usually reliable supporters vented their frustration with a one-two punch to the White House: a scathing speech by a prominent immigration advocate who derided the president as "deporter in chief," then a threat from Hispanic lawmakers to vote on a resolution criticizing Obama for the soaring deportations. The moves sent the White House scrambling. Hours before the vote, Obama summoned three of the lawmakers to the Oval Office to tell them he was ordering Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson to study how the administration could enforce immigration laws "more humanely." That order set off nearly nine months of intense internal deliberations over the scope of Obama's presidential powers and political wrangling between the White House and Democrats over how potentially provocative executive actions would impact the midterm elections. Obama would ultimately wait until after the election to announce his decisions, unveiling sweeping measures Thursday to spare nearly 5 million people in the U.S. illegally from deportation. This account of how the president reached that decision is based on roughly two dozen interviews with lawmakers, administration offi-



GINA FERAZZI/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS  
From left, friends Miriam Lopez, Faby Jacome and Dulce Saavedra console each other as they are brought to tears while watching President Obama's speech on executive action on immigration during a rally outside the Los Angeles Metropolitan Detention Center on Thursday in Los Angeles.

cial, congressional aides and immigration advocates. Some spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations with the president and his top advisers. **LAST GASP FOR LEGISLATION** Even as Obama raised the prospect of executive actions, he was holding out hope that Congress would still pass broader legislation. The Senate had passed a wide-ranging bill in June 2013 with bipartisan support, but the measure languished in the Republican-controlled House. For months, Obama and House Speaker John Boehner talked privately about whether the House might take up immigration. Boehner suggested there was a narrow window of opportunity in early summer, after most Republican law-

makers were past their primaries. Obama was willing to accept that timeline, but administration officials said he was skeptical that it was just the latest in what he saw as Boehner's stalling tactics. A small handful of House Republican supporters of immigration reform, including Reps. Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida and Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, were indeed working on legislative options. But they struggled not only to get buy-in from reluctant Republicans, but also attention from a dubious White House. Any last hopes for a legislative breakthrough were derailed the night of June 10, when Rep. Eric Cantor, the Republican majority leader from Virginia, suffered a stunning primary defeat. Little-known challenger David Brat, an opponent of immigration reform, used Cantor's tepid support for

immigration legislation against him, making other Republicans fearful of taking on the issue before the elections. "That was the moment we realized immigration reform was dead, and we had to focus on Obama," said Kica Matos, a prominent immigration advocate. Around the same time, law enforcement agents were reporting a surge of undocumented minors from Central America arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border. White House critics quickly pinned the blame on Obama's 2012 decision to defer deportations for some young people, saying it had encouraged more people to try to enter the U.S. illegally. A House Republican leader aide said the already slim chance for action in the House quickly "narrowed to the point of vanishing." Two weeks after Cantor's defeat, Boehner arrived at the White House for an event celebrating golf, one of the few interests he shared with the president. Boehner told Obama there would be no vote before the end of the year. Days later, Obama gathered immigration advocates in the Roosevelt Room to relay what Boehner had told him. "You could tell he was pissed, miffed," said Frank Sharry of the advocacy group America's Voice. As the meeting closed, advocates were escorted to the Rose Garden, where reporters had been scrambled for a hastily arranged announcement: Obama planned to circumvent Congress and act on his own. "If Congress will not do their job, at least we can do ours," he declared.

## Honor

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unit fought in the Battle of the Bulge, helping turn back the major German offensive launched in December 1944. Oien also liberated Nazi concentration camps. Seven decades later, he still becomes distraught at what he found there. He wouldn't show those photos at a Veterans Day program for Gayville-Volin students because the images were so grotesque. Later, he showed pictures of the Flossenburg camp. Human remains were stacked in huge piles on the ground. "This was what came out of the gas chambers," he said. "(The Germans) had 55 of these camps, and they didn't want us to see any of this. I still don't like to talk about it." For his military valor, Oien has been awarded five Bronze Stars, one Silver Star and one Bronze Star. However, he seems miffed at how he qualified for the French medal. "My name kept coming up somewhere for the French government. I don't know why," he said. "I sent in the paperwork and waited to hear from them. I got a certificate, but I didn't expect a medal." Oien was officially presented the French medal during an impromptu Veterans Day ceremony at the VFW Post in Yankton. "State VFW Commander Don Dahlin and his wife from Beresford were at the Yankton VFW. I showed them the medal," he said. "(Dahlin) asked, 'When are you going to get it (presented to you)?' I said I didn't know, and he asked, 'What about tonight?'" Oien was taken aback at the sudden suggestion but agreed to the idea. "My family wouldn't be

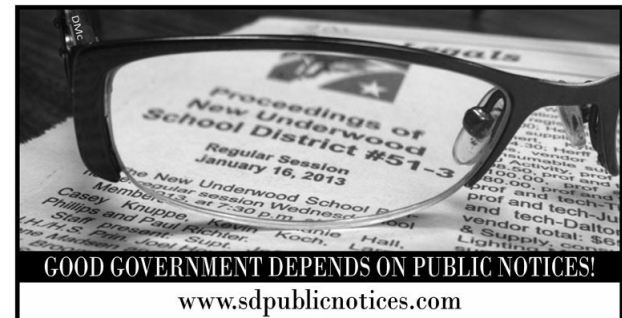
there, but they could read about it in the paper," he said with a chuckle. "There were 200 people there (at the VFW), so it was a good time to do it." Besides the medal, Oien received a letter from the French government on official letterhead. The letter read as follows: *"Dear Mr. Oien, It is a great honor and privilege to present you with the Knight of the Legion of Honor medal. Through this award, the French government pays tribute to the soldiers who did so much for France and Western Europe 70 years ago. You gave your youth to France and the French people. Many of your fellow soldiers did not return, but they remain in our hearts. Thanks to your courage and to our American friends and allies, France has been living in peace for the past six decades. You saved us, and we will never forget. For us, the French people, you are heroes. Gratitude and remembrance are forever in our souls. To show our eternal gratitude, the government of the French Republic has decided to award you the Legion of Honor. Created by Napoleon, it is the highest honor that France can bestow upon those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France. Thank you for what you did, and congratulations. Sincerely yours, Vincent FLOREANI Consul General de France a Chicago."*

He tried to find the spots where he had been before, but there wasn't too much." Oien doesn't need to revisit the battlefields. His memories keep alive those wartime experiences. He entered the military in March 1942, just before graduating from high school. The Volin farmboy was stationed in England, literally looking down on Patton. "We (soldiers) were getting ready to go over there (to France)," Oien said. "We were standing on a cliff, and Patton was standing down below giving us a pep talk. I shook hands with (Patton) even though he was a general." During the D-Day invasion, Oien hit the beaches of Normandy amidst waist-high water and gunfire so loud that he lost his hearing. The scene was chaos, with bullets coming from all sides. "We were strafed by our own men," he said. "Bullets came right next to me. I looked up and saw the planes that strafed us." When he was waiting for orders, Oien interacted with the civilians he liberated. He and a friend assisted an elderly couple who were harvesting barley. "In the house, they offered us a cup of coffee — and there was barley juice in the coffee," he said. Oien's unit rolled through Belgium and Luxembourg. When the Germans broke through the Belgian line, Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered Patton to provide assistance. "We were called in to help with the Battle of the Bulge and the 106th Division. We were 100 miles east of them," Oien said. "Patton said, 'We'll be there in the morning.' We moved all night and got there at 8 a.m." Oien was greeted by the sight of a German's burnt body lying on top of a truck. He recalled eating his Christmas dinner amidst combat, and he can still feel the frigid weather.

"The Battle of the Bulge, it was so blasted cold. We slept outside and it was 10 degrees below zero," he said. "We slept on the ground. We had 8 inches of snow that we pushed aside so we could sleep on the ground. And we had no clothes like now (for cold weather)." Oien recounted a close encounter with an overhead German fighter plane that just missed hitting him. The German pilot attempted to turn around and make another run, but he crashed and was killed. A local woman called on the Americans to help the German pilot, Oien said. "There was no way we were going near him, because the shells were going off all around us," he said. Oien recalled other close encounters with German troops. One time, British and American soldiers were on opposite high ground, with Germans on the flats down below. The Germans were trapped with horse-drawn equipment, with the horses suffering shrapnel wounds. Another encounter was even closer. "During the war, we were marching through the countryside and one soldier pulled in right behind us," Oien said. "We didn't recognize him, and he turned out to be a German soldier. He thought we were a German unit, then realized his mistake and dropped out." Oien ran into Hitler's best tank division in four different countries. As the war wore on, the Germans were weakened by the Allied artillery. "We were chasing Hitler's 11th Panzer Division across Germany," he said. "They were the best troops that Hitler had, and we gave them such a bad time that they gave up." Oien estimates his unit rolled through 1,800 miles of countryside during the campaign. Toward the war's end, the Germans generally fought in pockets rather than a solid line, he added. "We captured 15,000 Ger-

man soldiers," he said. "We turned them over (to other Allied units). We weren't looking for trouble." At one point, Oien was pulled out of Czechoslovakia after only three days. "We had to stop because we were too far ahead of the Russians," he said. **HEADED HOME** Amidst the death and horrors of war, Oien found amusing examples of everyday life. "A 16-year-old girl had a flock of 10 to 12 geese," he said. "The neighbor lady had her geese come out, but the geese never mixed. They geese knew to go where they belonged." Oien received the ultimate best news at a very unexpected time and place. "We were in Czechoslovakia, and a lady was with her family. They were wearing traditional outfits, and the little girl was holding a U.S. flag," he said. "We had on a radio station, and it was in German and Czech. I wanted to turn the station because I couldn't understand anything they were saying. But the woman didn't want me to change the station. She listened and got a big smile on her face. She was so blame happy — she told us the war was over." For Oien, the war's aftermath included the capture of 65,000 German prisoners and their weapons, along with the liberation of concentration camps. He was later amused to learn the United States held German prisoners on Ameri-

can soil. "They had prisoners here, around by Yankton," he said with amazement. Immediately after the war, Oien received physical therapy in Paris for a back injury. His return home was further delayed because the backlog of returning soldiers and equipment created a month's wait for a ship, he said. While in Paris, he took day trips with a French teenage boy who served as his guide. While he enjoyed learning more about the city, Oien couldn't wait to get home. He finally was shipped back, arriving at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, before taking a train to Sioux City. He hitched a ride to Mission Hill with a farmer who had just dropped off a load of hogs and was headed back to Yankton. Then, Oien did what so many other World War II veterans did — he landed a job and got married. He was married 67 1/2 years before his wife died earlier this year. "We had a pretty good life together," he said. And now, his life includes France's highest medal. Nearly 70 years after the end of World War II, Oien doesn't want to forget those who didn't come back — and he particularly doesn't want today's young people to forget it, either. "As long as people want to hear my story, I'll tell it," he said. You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.



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