

## INTRODUCTION

By Representative Mary Schneider

### **HCR 3005-Inclusion of the Frank E. Evans Sailors on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall**

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, Austen Schauer, Chairman

January 23, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Schauer and fellow members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. I'm Mary Schneider, and I proudly represent the residents of central Fargo and West Fargo who live in District 21. I'm before you today to support the men of the United States Ship Frank E. Evans, and its 74 sailors who died on June 3, 1969. This bill is an effort to have their names inscribed forever in stone, as they deserve, on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. For the North Dakotans on board, Patrick Gene Glennon of Fessenden and Robert James Seale of Grand Forks, the black granite of the Memorial Wall would be the grave marker they deserve, for their bodies were never recovered from the sea.

Looking at this bill, it tells the partial story of the crew of the Frank E. Evans and the tragedy that woke them from their sleep on a darkened ship and tossed them violently into the sea. It sets out the facts that make a compelling case mandating their names be listed on the Memorial Wall with others whose deaths were caused by the Vietnam War. Here are some of those facts:

- The Evans was part of combat support in and for the war in Vietnam;
- It was ordered to participate in a multinational training mission in furtherance of that combat support mission;
- The sea maneuvers and crash with the Australian ship, HMAS Melbourne in the South China Sea was a direct result of the war, and an indirect result of military training in support of the war, and our combat troops;
- After training, the ship and crew would have resumed their duty stations off the shores of Vietnam; and
- If it hadn't been for the war, and the sailors' assignment to combat support duty in Vietnam, sailors Glennon and Seale, with their drowned shipmates, might be with us, and their grandchildren, today.

For those of you here last session, you will remember the stories told by Jim Nelson who was part of the recovery team, and the stirring floor speech given by Chairman Schauer on behalf of the resolution at that time. But the story isn't finished, and the job isn't done. Our mission hasn't been completed. By passing this resolution in 2025, we will continue the fight to inscribe these sailors' names on the memorial dedicated to those who lost their lives because of the Vietnam war. Along with a national group and similar sponsors in other states, this resolution will seek the support of our slightly changed

North Dakota Congressional delegation, our new Governor, and a new national administration which could add the Evans sailors to the monument--as they deserve.

This story would make a compelling documentary, a gripping book, or a heart-wrenching movie, and maybe that's what it will take to make a change. But until then, we can keep fighting for these servicemen who fought for us.

The sailors of the Frank E. Evans earned their right to share the Wall with their fallen comrades, to have their permanent place in history. They paid with their lives. So, our work to right this wrong is a small price for us to pay. Please pass this bill again on their behalf and send it on to those who can make the needed change. Like our combatants in every war--we should never give in or give up--until we can no longer try. Let's fight for these men like they fought for us. Please give HCR 3005 a do pass.