

Introduction

By Representative Mary Schneider

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

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee

Larry Luick, Chairman, and Janne Myrdal, Vice Chairman

February 20, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Luick, Vice Chairman Myrdal, and distinguished members of the Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee:

House Continuing Resolution 3005 may sound familiar to you. Last session we passed a joint Senate-House resolution to have the names of the 74 sailors of the *United States Ship Frank E. Evans*, who died on June 3, 1969, 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 resolution, 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 from the resolution:

- The *Evans* was part of combat support in and for the war in Vietnam, and it had participated in active combat;
- The ship was ordered from that combat to temporarily participate in a multinational training mission in furtherance of that combat support mission;
- The sea maneuvers in the South China Sea, and crash with the Australian ship, *HMAS Melbourne*, that basically cut the ship in half, 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, or playing with their grandchildren, today.

You may remember from last session a review of testimony from a North Dakota veteran who was part of the ship and sailors' recovery team, and you may have read in testimony the stirring floor speech given by the House GVA Chairman 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 Interior Secretary, our new Governor, and a new national administration which could add the Evans sailors to the monument.

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 join the unanimous support of the House GVA Committee and the 88-0 House approval to finally secure the recognition these servicemen deserve.