

HB 1352 Testimony; Janell and Paul Rudel; PO Box 235; Fessenden ND 58438
Janell Rudel – Retired Wells County Auditor
Paul Rudel – Farmer ‘Freedom Farms Inc’

Honorable Representatives and Senators and Sponsors:

Thank you, Senator Jerry Klein, District 14 including Wells County for sponsoring!!!!

Patrick Gene Glennon was my Brother-In-Law that I never met. (Joyce Rudel was previously married, divorced and moved home with two Glennon sons.) Patrick joined the Navy in 1966 after graduating from Fessenden ND High School. He was assigned to the US Gridley for 2 years before receiving orders to the USS Frank E. Evans (DD-754) on October 3, 1968.

Seaman Glennon assisted the ship in completing Readiness Training off the Western seaboard following an overhaul period at Long Beach Naval Shipyard. He was promoted to Boatswain's Mate Third Class in April of 1969. The USS Frank E. Evans, was commissioned in 1945 and during her life span, she accumulated 11 battle stars between WW2, Korea and Vietnam. A “Greyhound of the Fleet,” the Sumner Class destroyer was sleek, fast and well-armed. She was also home to a crew of as many as 11 officers and 325 enlisted men.

On the night of June 3rd, 1969, the Frank E. Evans was steaming in formation with more than 40 other ships representing a number of navies belonging to the South-East Atlantic Treaty Organization. They were participating in Operation Sea Spirit, a large battle group screening the Australian Navy's anti-submarine aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne (R-21).

All ships were in blackened condition for night operations in the waters between the coast of Vietnam and the Spratly Islands when the Melbourne signaled the Frank E. Evans to take up position as “plane guard,” a duty that would place the Frank E. Evans approximately 1000 yards astern of the carrier and allow her to be in prime position to rescue any pilots from aircraft accidents during flight operations.

While conducting the maneuver, the two ships collided with the larger ship cutting the Frank E. Evans in two. The forward section of the ship drifted along the port side of the carrier in the darkness before sinking in about 3 minutes, taking 74 members of the crew. Petty Officer Patrick Glennon was asleep in the 1st Division berthing space below deck in the forward section of the ship.

Despite countless efforts, the Defense Department refuses to recognize these 74 men as casualties of the Vietnam War and their names are not displayed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Please say ‘YES’ to HB1352 in dedicating a Bridge as a Patrick G Glennon Vietnam Memorial Bridge to properly respect Patrick and these men who faithfully served and died for their country.

God bless the memory of Patrick Gene Glennon and the “The Lost 74.”
Only one body was retrieved from the water.
The remaining 73 share a grave at the bottom of the South China Sea.