

GREAT NEWS! Today the House passed our amendment H.R. 4435 to the Department of Defense Bill asking for immediate consideration for placement of our "Lost 74" names on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. My special thanks goes out to Congressman Adam Schiff, Tim Bergreen, Cameron Gallegher, Kristina Griffin and Patrick Boland for their dedication to this objective. Also thanks go out to Frank Jablonski, Tim Wendler, Randy Slaughter and Louise Esola for their tireless efforts in keeping the ball rolling on this objective. WE ARE ONE STEP CLOSER!!!!, LEST WE FORGET, THEY DIED IN SUPPORT OF THE VIETNAM WAR.

Here's the release.



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Just Before Memorial Day, House Passes Rep. Schiff Amendment Urging Secretary Hagel to Put Names of "Lost 74" on Vietnam Wall

74 Sailors on U.S.S. Frank E. Evans Died in Service in South China Sea During the Vietnam War

Amendment Was Attached to Defense Authorization Legislation, Adopted Unanimously

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) announced that on the eve of Memorial Day, the House of Representatives has passed an amendment to the annual defense authorization bill urging Department of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to add the names of 74 sailors lost on the USS Frank E. Evans during the Vietnam War to the Vietnam Wall.

On June 3, 1969, the USS Frank E. Evans was cut in half by an Australian aircraft carrier in the South China Sea – 74 American sailors lost their lives. USS Frank E. Evans was participating in a joint Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) exercise called "Sea Spirit" in the South China Sea with more than 40 ships of SEATO nations, at the time of the collision with HMAS Melbourne. Despite operating in Vietnamese waters immediately before deployment to Exercise Sea Spirit, and being scheduled to return to activities supporting the war effort after the exercise,

it was determined that since Exercise Sea Spirit took place outside the geographical limit for the combat zone the crew was ineligible for inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

While USS Frank E. Evans was not in the combat zone as defined by Executive Order 11216, the ship was supporting the ongoing military conflict in Vietnam and the crew was instrumental in advancing American military objectives in Vietnam. Not to mention, the crew had participated in conflict just days before the collision. Vietnam veterans have long argued that inclusion on the monument should not be determined by geographic location, and exceptions to this rule have previously been made for service members killed as part of the conflict but not in Vietnam itself. For example, those involved in operations in Laos (Laos was later included in the combat zone) and those dying in transit to or from Vietnam have been made are eligible for the memorial.

Since first being approached several years ago by a family of a sailor lost on the ship, Rep. Schiff has been pushing the Administration and successive Defense Secretaries to rectify this situation. After meeting with Rep. Schiff in Nov. 2010, Secretary of the Navy Mabus expressed his support for adding the 74 sailors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

After the vote in the House, **Schiff stated:** “Hopefully today’s vote puts us one step closer to the reality of seeing the names of the Lost 74 of USS Frank E. Evans on the Vietnam Wall. They died serving our country during the Vietnam War and there is no reason for to deny these sailors their rightful place on the memorial.”

The USS Frank E. Evans Association praised the amendment and urged the Secretary to act quickly.

“The tragic loss of USS Frank E Evans on 3 June, 1969, continues to haunt the families and shipmates of the 74 lost sailors who gave their lives for their country,” **said Tim Wendler, President of the Association.** “I lost my father days before my second birthday, and my mom, became a much too young 21 year-old widow. This haunting continues because we, as a nation, have failed to adequately address an issue which could, once and for all, provide closure to the families, shipmates and survivors of this tragedy. We deeply appreciate the action of the House today, led by Congressman Adam Schiff, to remember our Lost 74 Heroes and begin the healing process.”

The **Vice President of the Association, Steve Kraus,** stated: “I can’t think how awful it must have felt in 1985 when the Box Family traveled to visit the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. to find their son, Thomas Belue Box was not on the Wall. Forty-five years later his name and the names of the other 73 lost are still not recognized for the greatest sacrifice one can give, their lives. Eunice Sage once told me all she ever wanted was ‘Her Boys’ to be added to the Vietnam Memorial Wall – she died never seeing that come true.” Eunice Sage lost three sons, Gary, Greg, and Kelly Jo on USS Frank E. Evans.

William “Randy” Slaughter, a constituent of Schiff’s in Glendale, stated: “I served on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Kearsarge at the time of the incident and the Evans was one of our escort ships and we were close by when the accident happened. The cause for the fallen 74 has been close to my heart since that morning when the sun came up and I looked down from the

Kearsarge flight deck at what I used to know as a proud American Navy destroyer. It's time to right a major wrong and get the names of the 74 on The Wall before any more of their families and the survivors and their families aren't with us anymore to witness it. We owe it to them.”

Rep. Schiff has continued to keep close contact with the [USS Frank E. Evans Association](#) and has once again sought to right this injustice. This summer, Schiff [wrote to Secretary of Defense Hagel to ask for a meeting](#) so that he can make the case personally that the names of the Lost 74 sailors of the USS Frank E. Evans be added to the memorial – Hagel is a Vietnam veteran, himself – and Schiff has now met with Hagel, and is continuing to follow up. [Schiff also wrote to Secretary Panetta](#).

Schiff’s amendment to the defense authorization bill reads:

Whereas the Congress notes the continued popularity and importance of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a place of reflection and healing for a generation;

Whereas the simple inscriptions of the names of the Nation’s dead bear mute testimony to the sacrifice of more than 58,000 Americans, serving as a deep source of comfort and pride for the families of those who were lost;

Whereas, 74 sailors were lost aboard USS Frank E. Evans, which sank after colliding with HMAS Melbourne on June 3, 1969 during a Southeast Asia Treaty Organization exercise just outside the designated combat zone;

Whereas Frank Evans had been providing support fire for combat operations in Vietnam before the exercise that resulted in the accident and was scheduled to return after the exercise;

Whereas the families of the 74 men lost aboard the USS Frank E. Evans have been fighting for decades to have their loved ones added to the Memorial;

Whereas exceptions have been granted to inscribe the names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for other service members who were killed outside of the designated combat zone, including in 1983 when President Ronald Reagan ordered that 68 Marines who died on a flight outside the combat zone be added to the wall;

Whereas Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, in a letter dated December 15, 2010, expressed support for the addition of the 74 names to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial;
Whereas heroism and sacrifice should never go unrecognized because of an arbitrary line on a map;

Now be it therefore resolved that it is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Defense should order that the names of the 74 military personnel lost aboard USS Frank E. Evans on June 3, 1969 be added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial