

Legislation Text

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Urging the United States Department of Defense to include the names of the 74 fallen sailors of the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, including Philadelphia Native Patrick Michael Corcoran.

WHEREAS, A Philadelphia native, Patrick M. Corcoran, remembered as a typical “Irish Catholic Philly kid,” graduated from Father Judge High School in 1968. Concerned by the threat of the United States Army draft and a harrowing death toll of the Vietnam War, Corcoran joined the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, Corcoran served for several months aboard the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans, which had already collected four battle stars for actions during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, On March 29, 1969, the officers and men of the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans departed Long Beach, California towards Vietnam for the Western Pacific Deployment with the United States Navy to carry out the operational orders of their Commander in Chief; and

WHEREAS, On June 3, 1969, the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans, while on an allied naval exercise, collided with the Australian aircraft carrier, HMAS Melbourne, in the South China Sea near the coast of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The collision took the lives of 74 American sailors. Within a year after his high school graduation, Patrick Corcoran was one of the casualties; and

WHEREAS, Members of the United States Armed Forces who died during the Vietnam War have been memorialized by having their names engraved on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense, despite the favorable endorsement of the Department of the Navy that the names be added to “The Wall” in Washington, continues to falsely maintain that the men who died aboard the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans do not meet the criteria for inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial because the accident occurred outside the combat zone when, in fact, that ship and every other American ship in the vicinity was awarded a Vietnam Service Medal on the very day of the accident; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War’s combat zone boundaries, which were ill-defined and changed from time to time, should not be applied to exclude the names of the lost sailors from the Memorial because other members of the United States Armed Forces who died outside the designated Vietnam War combat zone have had their names placed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington still doesn't recognize Philadelphia’s own Patrick Corcoran and his 73 shipmates, five of whom were from Pennsylvania. Yet the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial lists Corcoran as a casualty, as many state and city Vietnam veterans memorials include this group of fallen American sailors; and

WHEREAS, The U.S.S. Frank E. Evans Association and Patrick Corcoran’s family have petitioned the Department of Defense for decades to have the names of the 74 sailors inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial in Washington, D.C. Philadelphia City Council adopted Resolution 140660, introduced by Councilman Dennis O'Brien and Councilman David Oh, on September 18, 2014, "Urging the United States Department of Defense to include the names of the 74 fallen sailors of the Destroyer U.S.S. Frank E. Evans on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial." The United States House of Representatives also passed a resolution in 2014 urging the inclusion of the names on the memorial, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars passed a similar measure at their national convention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we urge the United States Department of Defense to include the names of the 74 fallen sailors of the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, including Philadelphia native Patrick Michael Corcoran.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Thomas Corcoran, Patrick Corcoran's brother, evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.