

May 27, 2003

Senate Energy & Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Suite 366
Washington, DC 20510-6150

Re: Senate Bill S 296
"The Fairness of All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003"

The Honorable Senator Peter V. Domenici, Chairman.

As the mother of a deceased veteran of the Vietnam War, I thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony.

I understand the purpose of this hearing is to consider the merits of the bill S 296 for recommendation to the Senate and to the House of Representatives to create a final bill for the President's approval. I hope you will deem the merits of this bill worthy; that it is not a budget related item, it does not change any current policies and, most importantly of all, that it will give evidence to families of deceased veterans that Congress has not forgotten them.

My son, John T. Norton, Jr., Ens. USNR, was lost in the South China Seas on June 3, 1969 while serving aboard the destroyer, USS Frank E. Evans. He had graduated from Columbia University the previous year after 4 years in the Naval ROTC. That in itself was a tribute to his dedication and courage, considering the political climate of that time.

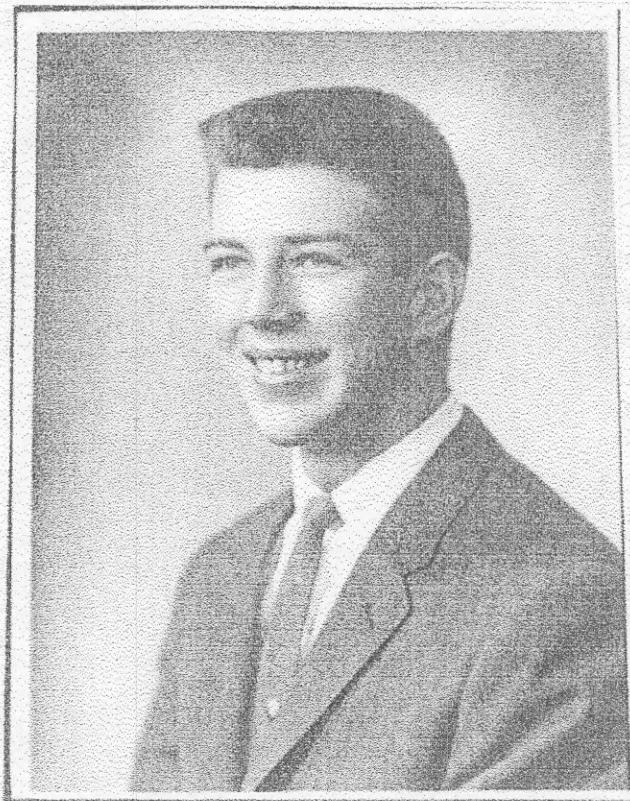
I need not dwell on the pain of losing a child - it is a life-long wound that does not heal. Added to that is the agony of never having had his body brought home. There is a very human need to have a place, a tangible place, to memorialize a life. I have a plaque at his father's grave (My husband, John T. Norton Sr., was a veteran of WW 11, having served with Gen. Patton's Third Army in the ETO.) There is another plaque at the lake Johnny loved and where he spent summers as he was growing up. But these are private memorials. As I enter the closing years of my life I find it increasingly important to be assured that my country remember this boy and his shipmates. Their names added to the Vietnam War Memorial Wall would be fitting, reparative, and a measure of comfort..

Thank you for your kind attention to my plea.

Sincerely yours,

"Signed"

Lena B. Norton (Mrs. John T. Norton, Sr.)



John T. Norton, Ensign, U.S. Navy Reserve
Born March 8, 1947
Died June 3, 1969

Lost at Sea, Destroyer USS Frank E. Evans

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

25 May 2003

Anthony L. Palumbo, AUS
Lieutenant General (Ret)

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenenci (Chairman) and Committee Members,

I am Lt. Gen. Anthony L. Palumbo, (Ret). Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony.

On 3 June 1969, the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans was briefly outside the combat zone, participating in a SEATO training exercise, was cut in half from a collision with the HMAS Melbourne, resulting in the loss of 74 military personnel.

These individuals deserve recognition for having given their lives in the service of their country as dedicated loyal Americans. Further, enactment of S296 will give further positive evidence to all Vietnam veterans, and especially to the families to those deceased veterans that the congress and the American people have not forgotten their sacrifice.

May God bless your efforts on behalf of every veteran who has given his/her life in defense of our freedom. May your efforts serve to remind all members of our Armed Forces of the high respect and recognition such sacrifice has held in the minds and hearts of all Americans and that they will not be forgotten.

Sincerely,

“Signed”

Anthony L. Palumbo, Lt. Gen AUS (Ret)

Cal Rankin

May 29, 2003

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Suite 364
Washington, C.C. 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee members,

My name is Cal Rankin, and I am Chairman of the Memorial Committee for the USS Frank E. Evans Association, Inc. and I am writing in support of SB296 "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Services Members Act of 2003".

In June, 1950 I enlisted in the US Navy, after Boot Camp I was assigned to the USS Frank E. Evans DD754 for re-commissioning for Korean Service. I have four brothers, all served in the US Military, one in WWII, two in Korea and one in Vietnam. I enlisted in the Navy to fight for my Country, just as my brother had in WWII before me.

In order to have dedicated enlistees "for the cause" it is essential that you pass SB296 to further demonstrate to future Servicemen and Women that anyone serving in our Military that pays the ultimate price to defend our freedom will never be forgotten by our Country or our Government.

As memorial Chairman I represent all Veterans that served aboard the USS Frank E. Evans, currently 670 members are registered all across the United States, all which believe they would and should, be recognized in such an incident. They enlisted knowing they were giving their lives for their Country, regardless of circumstances. How do you draw a line in the sand?

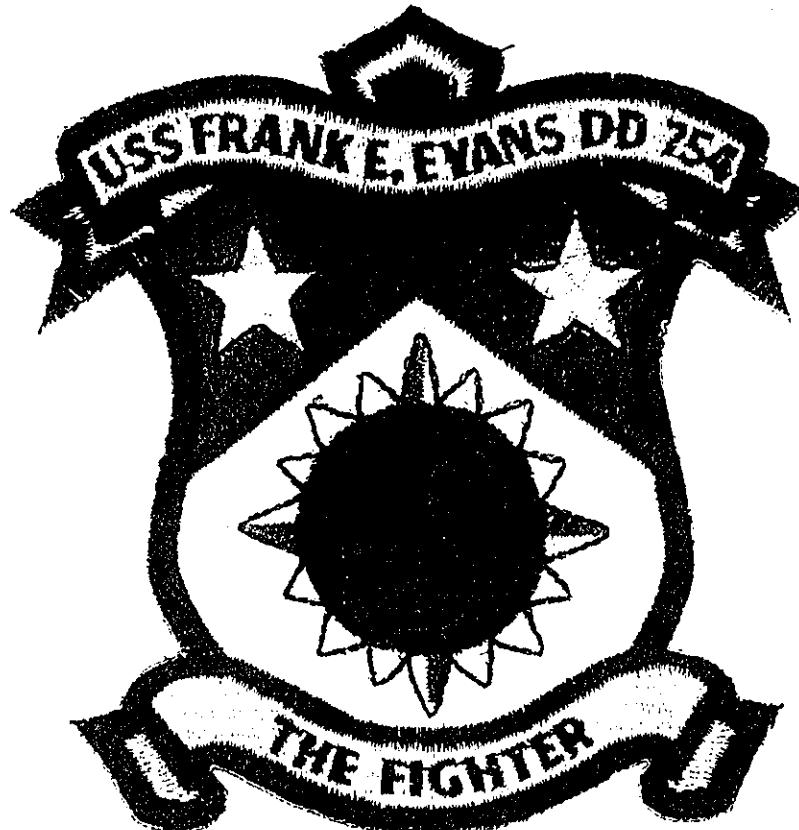
Please pass SB296 "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Services Members Act of 2003" and bring closure to their families. God Bless America and the souls of the men and women that gave their lives.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Cal Rankin, Memorial Chairman
USS Frank E. Evans Memorial Association

"Lest we forget"



Heroes of the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans (DD 754)

June 3, 1969

Ensign Alan Herbert Armstrong
 Seaman Apprentice James Robert Baker
 Seaman Apprentice Andrew James Botto
 Seaman Thomas B. Box
 Electronics Technician 3rd Class
 James Franklin Bradley
 Ensign Robert G. Brandon
 Seaman Recruit Melvin Harris Brown
 Boilerman 2nd Class
 William Daniel Brown, II
 Chief Hospital Corpsman
 Charles William Cunningham
 Radarman 3rd Class Christopher J. Carlson
 Seaman Michael Kale Clawson
 Seaman Apprentice Danny Victor Clute
 Electronics Technician 3rd Class
 Larry Wayne Cool
 Seaman Apprentice
 Patrick Michael Corcoran
 Seaman Joe Eddie Craig
 Electronics Technician
 James Wilburn Davis, Jr.
 Seaman Apprentice Leon Larry Deal
 Seaman Apprentice James Fred Dykes, III
 Seaman Apprentice
 Raymond Joseph Earely
 Gunnersmate 3rd Class
 Steven Frank Espinosa
 Seaman Apprentice Stephen Don Fagan
 Seaman Apprentice William Donald Fields

Seaman Apprentice Alan Carl Flummier
 Seaman Apprentice Henry Kenneth Frye
 Stewardman Francis Joseph Garcia
 Sonar Surface Technician 3rd Class
 Melvin Holleman Gardner, Jr.
 Seaman Apprentice Donald Eugene Gearhart
 Seaman Patrick Gene Glennon
 Seaman Kenneth Wayne Glines
 Seaman Apprentice Joe Luis Gonzales
 Sonar Surface Technician 3rd Class
 Larry Allan Gracely
 Seaman Apprentice Devere Ray Grissom, Jr.
 Seaman Steven Allen Guyer
 Radarman 3rd Class Terry Lee Henderson
 Chief Electricians Mate Edward Phillip Hess
 Radarman 2nd Class Gary Bradbury Hodgson
 Seaman Apprentice Dennis Ralph Johnston
 Seaman Apprentice James William Keir
 Boatswains Mate 1st Class Willie Lee King
 Radarman 1st Class George Joseph Laliberte
 Radioman 2nd Class Ray Patrick LeBrun
 Radarman 1st Class Eugene Francis Lehman
 Seaman Apprentice Issac Lyons, Jr.
 Seaman Apprentice
 Frederick Conrad Meissier
 Seaman Apprentice Douglas Roy Meister
 Seaman Apprentice
 Andrew Martin Melendrez
 Seaman Apprentice Timothy Lynn Miller
 Ensign John Townsend Norton, Jr.

Ensign Gregory Koichi Ogawa
 Seaman James Richard Omeyla
 Seaman Apprentice
 Michael Anthony Orlikowski
 Electrician 3rd Class Linden Russell Orpurt
 Ensign Dwight Scott Pattee
 Yeoman Seaman Apprentice
 Ead Frederick Preston
 Seaman Apprentice Craig Allen Pennell
 Seaman Apprentice Jerome Pickett
 Fireman Lawrence John Reilly, Jr.
 Radarman 3rd Class Victor Thomas Rikall
 Radarman 3rd Class Gregory Allen Sage
 Seaman Recruit Gary Loren Sage
 Seaman Recruit Kelly Jo Sage
 Seaman Recruit John Allan Sauvey
 Boilerman-Fireman Robert James Seade
 Seaman Recruit Gerald Wayne Smith
 Seaman Recruit Thurston Perry Smith, Jr.
 Sonar Surface Technician 2nd Class
 John Raymond Spray
 Ensign Jon Kenneth Stever
 Seaman Thomas Fred Tallon
 Radarman 3rd Class
 Ronald Arthur Thebodeau
 Seaman Recruit John Wayne Thomas
 Seaman Recruit John Thomas Tolar
 Seaman Gary Joseph Vigue
 Radarman 3rd Class Con Wesley Warnock
 Seaman Recruit Henry D. West, III

ROY PETERS

May 23, 2003

Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee
Senator Dirksen Office Building
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

RE: SENATE BILL S 296 –FAIRNESS TO ALL FALLEN VIETNAM WAR SERVICE MEMBERS ACT

Honorable Pete V. Domenici and Committee Members:

I am Roy "Pete" Peters, survivor of the US Navy destroyer, USS Frank E. Evans (DD-754) that was cut in half in a collision with the Australian aircraft carrier, HMAS Melbourne on 3 June 1969, taking the lives of 74 of my shipmates. Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony.

For 14 years or so after the collision, I guess I just assumed that the names of my fellow shipmates who lost their lives that morning were on The Wall. When the Moving Wall visited a park near my office in Hawthorne, California, I went over to pay my respects to the 74, but each one that I asked about was not listed. I thought it was just another government oversight and that possibly The Wall was just not complete. How could there possibly be a memorial to those that died in Vietnam without listing my friend, Russell Orpurt, or Larry Reilly, Jr. or "Little Red" (William Brown), or Robert Searle, or any one of the 68 other sailors that died in that collision with the Melbourne that morning?

I cannot believe that a country as great as ours would have to think about whether it is right to honor these men or if it is appropriate to list their names alongside those of their brothers that died in service to our country on the memorial that is accepted by our nation as the place to honor those of such valor. Because of overly restrictive guidelines that leave no room for interpretation, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund can not place the names of not only my fellow shipmates, but countless other Sailors, Soldiers, Marines and Air Force protectors of our freedom on The Wall. They have been denied the respect they deserve because of immaterial technicalities.

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell's Senate Bill, S 296 will provide the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund the latitude they need to review and consider the addition of the names of those that died in service to our country to The Memorial Wall. Passage of this bill will give positive evidence to all Vietnam Veterans and the families of those that gave their all that Congress has not forgotten them.

The morning of the collision, while hanging on to what remained of the steam pipes in the forward engine room and seeing the faces of those I loved appear before me, as the water continued to rise up past my chest, I had accepted the fact that I was going to die. God obviously had other plans for me and He allowed me and the others that were on watch in the engine room that morning to find the inboard hatch and climb out into the

passageway. In addition to being blessed with a 33-year marriage, two wonderful stepdaughters, and two grandchildren, I truly believe His plan for me is to help bring proper recognition to all Vietnam Veterans that died in that war, including our 74 that died in the collision. I am truly dedicated to this cause.

I sincerely hope that all members of Congress will support and pass Senate Bill S 296.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

In Memory Of The 74,
Lest We Forget,
They Died In The Vietnam War

"signed"

Roy "Pete" Peters

May 23, 2003

Lawrence John & Marion Reilly

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510-6150

Gentlemen:

We urge and implore all members of Congress to vote for Senate Bill S293
"The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003"
especially since it is not a budget related item.

Our son Lawrence John Reilly, Jr. was lost at sea that night so long ago, June 3, 1969, when the HMAS Melbourne cut the USS Frank E. Evans in half. You just never get over the loss of a child, it leaves a tear drop in your heart forever.

Our whole family would feel so proud if just this one time our boys from Vietnam could be honored with the same dignity and respect accorded the WW2 and Gulf 2 veterans.

Very truly yours,

(signed)

Mrs. Marion T. Reilly

(signed)

Lawrenc J. Reilly, Sr.
GMC US Navy Retired (Father)
Survivor of Collision

Enc: Four (4)

June 20, 1969

Dear Mrs. Reilly,

The tragic news of the loss of the gallant ship which was named for my beloved husband has left me in a state of shock and disbelief. I never dreamed that such a disaster would befall my ship which has served its country with such distinction for almost 25 years.

But my own personal grief is greatly deepened by the loss of so many fine young men and I want to offer my sympathy and condolences to you in the loss of your son, Lawrence. May you and your husband somehow find comfort in the knowledge that he was serving his country in an Honorable and admirable way.

My prayers and blessings are with you in this time of sorrow..

Sincerely,

(signed)
Alleen Fisk Evans

Mrs. Frank E. Evans

July 18th, 1969

My dear Mr. Reilly:

Your note was deeply appreciated and I grieve for you over the loss of your beloved son, and I grieve for the loss of my beloved ship which had won so many distinctions and awards. Its loss seems unbelievable to me even yet.

I want to thank you for all the kind things you said about my ship and I am going to send your letter on to the Chief Of Naval Operations to be filed with the record of the ship.

It occurred to me that you might find some comfort in the enclosures which I am sending you. You can be proud of your son who wore his uniform with such pride and of your devotion to both him and the ship. Bless you for all the kind thoughts you expressed and may you always remember that even though your son and my ship rest in the depths of the China Sea their spirit will live on through-out eternity,

With every blessing.

(Signed)

Aleen Fisk Evans

DAD, SON ON SHIP,

* * *

Boy Is Among 73 Lost

A father and son, formerly of Lindenhurst, were serving on the U.S. destroyer Frank E. Evans when it was cut in half by the Australian carrier Melbourne just before dawn yesterday in the South China Sea.

The father, Senior Chief Gunners Mate Lawrence J. Reilly Sr., 44, a former circulation supervisor for The Press in Suffolk, was among the 199 survivors taken from the after section of the destroyer and put aboard the Melbourne. Later Reilly was transferred to the U.S. aircraft carrier Kearsage, where he formerly served as an officer.

His son, Fireman Lawrence J. Reilly Jr., 20, is among the 73 missing following the collision. He was in the Evans' forward section, which sank almost immediately.

The Navy notified Lawrence A. Reilly, a widower of 107-06 Liberty Avenue, Ozone Park, father and grandfather of the seamen.

"We prayed and had hopes Lawrence Jr. would be found alive but now that the Navy has terminated its search for the missing men what can I say," he said.

Reilly Sr.'s daughter, Sister Montfort, a science teacher at Christ the King High School in Middle Village, was contacted by telephone by her brother's wife, the former Marion Thomas of Ozone Park, now living in Costa Mesa, Calif.

"He was taken to Manila," he feels in good shape, and expects to go to California tomorrow," Mrs. Reilly said late last night.

The gunners mate joined the Navy when he was 18 and being in the Navy Reserves has been called back into service from time to time. He has four children, James, a West Point graduate who switched to Navy and is presently a Lieutenant Junior Grade in Charleston, S.C.; Gerald, Lu Anne, and Susan.

The missing sailor, who enlisted about two years ago, is the husband of Mrs. Joyce E. Reilly of Long Beach, Calif., and they have a son, Lawrence J. Reilly 3rd, 14 months old. He and his father requested assignment to the Evans a year and a half ago.

IN MEMORIAM

That the members of the City Council of the City of Long Beach, for and on behalf of all the citizens of this community, by these presents, express to the entire ship's company of the USS Frank E. Evans and the survivors of all those courageous men who were lost in the recent tragic event involving the ship, their heartfelt sympathy and condolences in these days of their bereavement..

That the members of the City Council recall with great pride that the home port of the USS Frank E. Evans was this City and that many members of the crew had their residences here; we feel a great sense of loss;

That we are certain, that God, in His infinite wisdom, as to those who will not come back, will bless them and keep them, will make His face to shine upon them; and be gracious unto them, and will give them peace., both now and forevermore;

That it is respectfully requested that Commander Albert S. McLemore, commanding officer, convey these sentiments to the ship's company and to the survivors of those who will no longer be with us;

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep ;
O hear us when we cry to thee
For those in peril on the sea.
O Trinity of love and power,
Our brethren shield in danger's hour,
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;
Thus evermore & shall rise to thee
Glad hymns of praise- from land and sea
Amen

That the City Clerk is hereby directed to forward: certified copies of this resolution to the commanding officer and to such other persons and entities as to the Mayor may seem appropriate in the circumstances. Let the Great Seal of the City of Long Beach be affixed hereto.

ADOPTED this 10th day of June, 1969.

From:
James T. Reilly

To:
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Suite 364
Washington DC 20510-6150

The Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee Members:

I am James T. Reilly, brother of BT3 Lawrence J. Reilly, Jr., who was killed in service on June 3, 1969, in the sinking of the USS Frank E. Evans (DD754). Our father, Lawrence J. Reilly, Sr., GMCM, US Navy (Ret.) was one of the survivors of that sinking.

Thank you for considering this written testimony and that of others who may write to your committee in support of "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003" (SB S296).

I am writing to urge favorable action on this bill by your committee. I am confident that others have suggested the various policy reasons why it would be appropriate to pass this bill. Rather than repeat them, I would like to express my personal feelings about the bill and the opportunity it will present for future consideration of the inclusion of the Frank E. Evans casualties on the Vietnam Wall.

During a recent visit to Washington DC, I visited the Wall for the first time. On it, I was able to locate the names of several of my West Point classmates and other friends. Doing so was an emotional experience, on the one hand sad and on the other inspiring. It was, however, also disappointing in that the names of my brother and the other 73 men lost in the Frank E. Evans collision were not there.

I was in the Navy myself at the time of the collision and had, in fact, visited with my Dad and brother on the Frank E. Evans during the ship's previous deployment to the Vietnam war zone in 1968. During that visit, I met several other officers and men who would lose their lives the following year.

When the Frank E. Evans was sunk, she was on a deployment to the Western Pacific and the Vietnam war zone. Although the collision occurred during a brief training exercise which was taking place outside the war zone, my family has always considered the deaths of my brother and the other Frank E. Evans crewmen to be combat related, in that the training exercise was in direct support of the war effort taking place only a short distance away. The ship was also scheduled to return to combat duties upon completion of the training exercise.

Attached is a photograph of my brother, who was 20 at the time of his death and left behind a young wife, Joyce, and a son, Lawrence J. Reilly III, who has no memory of his father.

My youngest son, Sean, who was born after the end of the Vietnam War, leaves home on the day your committee meets to attend Army boot camp at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He does so with pride in his military heritage: in addition to myself, the uncle he never knew and my Dad (who served not only in Vietnam, but also extensively in the Pacific during World War II), his other grandfather, Joe M. Douglas, landed at Normandy and fought his way across Europe.

Enactment of Senate Bill S296 will not only provide support for the ongoing effort to have the names of the Frank E. Evans crewmen added to the Wall, it will also demonstrate to all Vietnam veterans and the families of those killed in that war, as well as current servicemen like my son, that Congress remembers and appreciates the sacrifices of those who serve -- and, as we have seen again recently, all too often die -- in defense of our country.

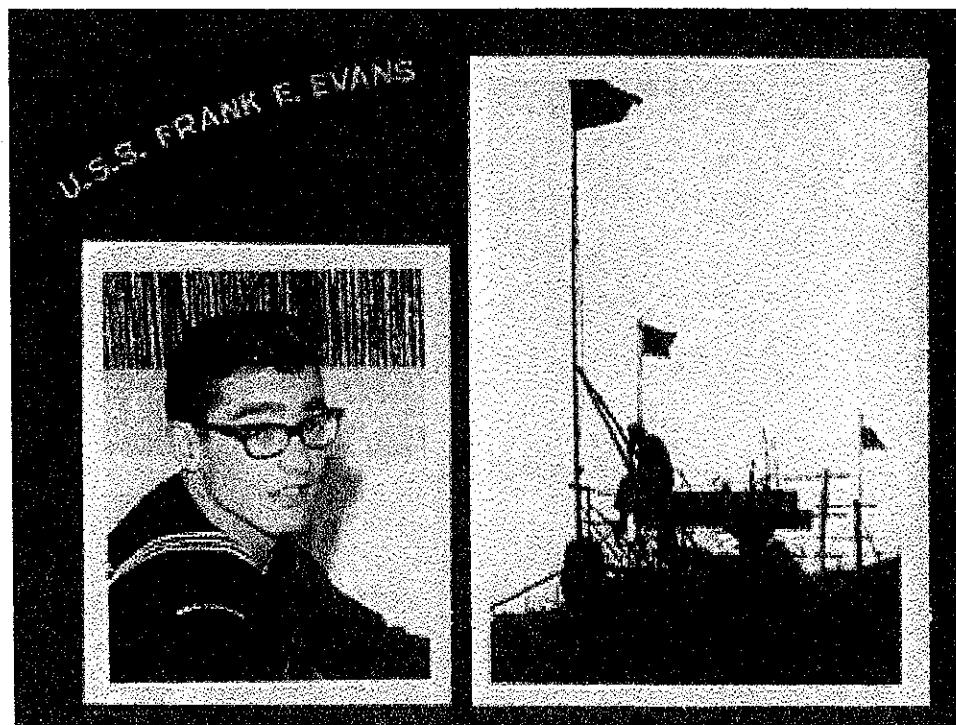
Thank you again for your favorable consideration of this bill.

JAMES T. REILLY

United States Military Academy, West Point, Class of 1967

Lieutenant, United States Navy (1967-1971)

Vietnam Veteran (1967-1968)



Larisa Joy Reilly

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Suite 364
Washington, DC 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee Members,

I am Larisa Joy Reilly, granddaughter of Lawrence John Reilly Sr. (survivor) and niece of Lawrence John Reilly Jr. (lost crew member) of the USS Frank E. Evans. Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony.

When the USS Frank E. Evans went down on June 3, 1969, my Uncle Larry lost his life and my grandfather narrowly escaped with his own. That night changed my family forever. My grandmother lost her child and almost lost her husband. My father lost his brother. My cousin never knew his father. The repercussions of this incident continue to be felt to this very day. I never knew my uncle - I wasn't born for another eight years after the accident. I regret that I never had the opportunity to know him, but I regret even greater that his name has been left off the Wall due to the technicality of where the accident occurred.

Therefore, I urge you to do anything within your power to support Senate Bill S296. S296 is not a budget item. It does not change current policies, but provides an opportunity and time for the Department of Defense to conduct a study of the Vietnam-related deaths of the men of the Evans and others like them. Please support S296 and let us know that you respect the sacrifice these men made for their country and that you support their families. There is nothing to hold you back from correcting this mistake.

My little brother Sean enlisted in the Army and leaves for boot camp next week on the anniversary of the USS Evans accident. When we look at old photos of my uncle, it is remarkable the resemblance between Sean and Larry. Please support S296. Tell us that the sacrifice we have already given is respected. Let us know that as we continue to give our brothers and our sons to the service of this country that we are not making these sacrifices in vain.

Sincerely,
Lest We Forget
They Died in the Vietnam War

(signed)

Larisa Joy Reilly

Luanne Reilly Oda

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg
Suite364
Washington, DC 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici and Committee Members:

I am the sister of Lawrence John Reilly Jr. BT3 US Navy, Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony. I am urging you to vote in favor of the passage of Senate Bill, S296 "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003". I hope you will consider the following when making your decisions:

- a) S296 is not a budget related item
- b) Requires no decision now on changing current policies
- c) Gives adequate time for an update review on those policies in light of current conditions and greater appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans of the Vietnam War era, as stated in the title of the bill
- d) Yet, enactment of S 296 will give positive evidence to all Vietnam veterans and to the families of those deceased veterans, that the Congress has NOT forgotten them
- e) Therefore, ALL members of Congress should in good conscience be able to support S 296, who will in turn receive favorable reactions of the voters.

June 3rd marks the 34th anniversary of the death of my brother along with 73 shipmates aboard the USS Frank E. Evans. The Evans was involved in an accident with an Australian aircraft carrier while briefly outside the combat zone in the South China Sea. My father Lawrence John Reilly senior was also aboard the Evans yet survived the accident that took his sons life. My brother left behind a grieving family, a young wife, and a one-year-old son that would never know his father. The call of his death came from my elder brother, an Academy graduate, and a naval officer himself. He had recently returned from his tour of duty in Vietnam. Imagine a 24-year-old young man having to give that news to his mother. Imagine a mother receiving this news with her younger children at home. Imagine my father grieving the loss of his namesake along with 73 of his shipmates. Would they have been there if not for the Vietnam war, most likely not. Are their lives worth any less than those a few miles away in the combat zone? Please give the young men that lost their lives the honor they deserve for giving their lives for their country. Thank you for taking the time to consider this issue.

Lest We Forget,

Signed,

Luanne Reilly Oda

Sister Dorothy Reilly, DW

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Suite 364
Washington DC 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee Members,

I am the sister of Master Chief Gunner's Mate Lawrence J. Reilly, Sr. and the aunt of the Chief's son BT3, Lawrence J. Reilly, Jr.

Thank you for allowing me to give this testimony.

My brother, the Chief, survived the disaster of the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans on June 3, 1969. He is a veteran of World War II and as a reservist, was called back into active duty in the early 60's.

His twenty year old son, Lawrence J. Reilly, Jr., joined the Navy at the age of 17. He followed his father's footsteps as well as those of his older brother, James Reilly, who was commissioned in the Navy upon his graduation from the academy in 1967. Larry, Jr. Did not survive the crash.

The pictures in the newspaper showed a platform sheared in half by the accident. My nephew had been on duty in that part of the ship when the collision occurred. There was no hope of survival.

My brother was thrown into the water, after having had a hatch opened by other chiefs, one of who did not make it out. How difficult it must have been for him not knowing the fate of his son! How difficult it must have been for his shipmates to tell him that Larry Jr. had not been rescued!

The U.S.S. Frank E. Evans had served in the combat zone and was briefly outside the combat zone, participating in a training exercise, when the Melbourne hit it.

I heard the announcement in New York City at the end of Walter Cronkite's program at 7:30 PM EDT on June 2. I had no definite news for quite a while after that as to whether I had lost my brother or nephew or both or neither. At that time all I could do was pray and that I did, with all the Sisters of my Roman Catholic Congregation of nuns, my family and friends. When I got the word that my nephew was lost, my first thought was: Greater love no one has ... and Larry showed his love for his country by giving his life, leaving behind a young wife and a fourteen month old son.

I was able to go to the services at Long Beach and the memory I will always have is that of a fourteen month old baby, Larry J. the 3rd, crying out, "Daddy". And what is still heartbreaking for me is that that son and his children are not able to see their father and grandfather's name on the Vietnam memorial.

I watched the Memorial Day program in Washington, DC this weekend and when it showed the Vietnam Memorial, without the names of the 74 of the Evans, and other Vietnam veterans on, I felt a deep regret and sorrow.

When I saw the Gold Star mothers who were featured on that program, I thought of my sister-in-law, a Gold Star Mother, who has yet to see her son's name on the Wall.

I know there must be many other families around the country who are experiencing the same thing as I am, having lost a loved one, who for some reason, will not have his (her) name on the Wall.

The S296 is not a budget related item . It asks for an updated review of the present policies in light of current conditions. It looks for a greater appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans of the Vietnam War era.

In light of the above, I ask that you and all members of Congress give support to **S296 - The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003**. So that all Vietnam veterans and their families will know that the Congress and the people of the United States have not forgotten them.

Sincerely,
Lest We Forget
They Died in the Vietnam War

"Signed"

Sister Dorothy Reilly

GERALD G. SIMONEIT

Senate Energy and National Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Suite 364
Washington, DC 20510-6150

Re: Senate Bill S296 "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003"

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee Members:

I am Gerald "Jerry" Simoneit, a member of the "USS Frank E. Evans Association". Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony.

I was aboard the Frank E. Evans (DD754) until October of 1968, just eight months prior to the collision with the Australian Aircraft Carrier Melbourne. Seventy-four crew members, including several close friends, were lost in that collision which occurred just outside the Vietnam combat zone while participating in SEATO training maneuvers.

Our association has been instrumental in attempting to have those and other Vietnam Veterans included on the Vietnam Wall.

Enactment of this bill would give positive reinforcement to all Vietnam veterans and their families, especially families of those deceased, that the United States and its Congress has not forgotten them. It would be the beginning of negotiations with the Department of Defense asking for persons to be included on the Vietnam Wall.

I am asking for your consideration of this bill which would give time for an updated review of past practices. In light of current events, it is more important than ever to show appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans of all eras, especially the Vietnam War Era.

Senate Bill S296 is not budget related. Therefore we ask for positive action on the part of the committee to recommend approval to the full Senate.

**Lest We Forget
They Died in the Vietnam War**

"Signed"

GERALD G. SIMONEIT

Betsy Ann Smith

May 27, 2003

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee members,

I am Betsy A. Smith, sister of the late Thurston Perry Smith lost on the Frank E. Evans.

My mother went to her grave two years ago knowing my brother died without recognition for his efforts in the Vietnam War.

I am writing to urge you, as the committee hearing this bill to recommend favorable action to the full Senate. S296 "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003" asks only for a study to be performed in support of all Vietnam veterans.

Thank you for your interest in my quest on behalf of my brother.

Sincerely,
Lest We Forget
They Died in the Vietnam War

"Signed"

Betsy A. Smith

Charles M Smith

29 May, 2003

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Dear Senator Domenici and committee members:

I am writing to support the passage of Bill S296, "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003".

This bill will place the 74 in their rightful place as proud distinguished veterans of the Vietnam war, and gives the families and friends a place to go as we have no grave to visit for the 73 who gave all for their country.

Tremendous price to pay for no recognition,

Lest We Forget
They Died in the Vietnam War

"Signed"

Charles M Smith, Survivor
USS Frank E Evans DD 754

Johnnie Smith OS2

USS Cole DDG 67

USS Bulkeley DDG 84

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Subject: Senate Bill S296, "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003".

Dear Senator Domenici and committee members:

I am writing to support a positive recommendation of the committee on Senate Bill S296, "*The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003*".

This bill will place these patriotic sailors who gave their all for our freedom in their rightful place with Heroes of the Vietnam war, and comfort the families and friends who still to this day, grieve for their loss. Just as we aboard the USS Cole when terror struck, were not in a "combat zone", the point is seventeen sailors gave their lives. We were in a fight of terror where the whole world has become a combat zone, yet no arbitrary lines have been set. Does the sacrifice of the Evans' 74 mean any less, if the impact on their families lessened by an arbitrary line. Each and every family member who lost a loved one, still today says that, they lost that loved one in Vietnam.

Keep Freedom's Torch Burning.

B Z "Signed"

Johnnie Smith

Lauren Spray

May 27, 2003

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee members,

I am Lauren Spray, widow of John R. Spray, one of the 74 who died aboard the Frank E. Evans on June 3, 1969. Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony.

I was a 20 year old newlywed when this accident changed the course of my life forever. My husband was 23. Years later when I heard that there was going to be a memorial in Washington, D.C. to honor those who lost their lives in Vietnam, I was very happy knowing there would be recognition for those fallen heroes. I was sure John's name would also be inscribed. In 1997, I had the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. for the day on business. I made a special side trip to the memorial. I consulted the directory to determine the panel where I should look for his name. I couldn't find it listed. I thought there had been some mistake and I searched the panel for June 3, 1969, anyway. I left very sad, disappointed and confused. Only later did I learn of the criteria for inclusion on the wall.

I have had the opportunity to read S296. It gives an example of some, like the 74 aboard the Frank E. Evans, who may deserve further consideration for inclusion on the wall. It requires no decision now on changing the current policy; however, it does give time for a review of that policy in light of current conditions. As stated in the title of the bill "The Fairness to All Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003", it will give greater appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans of the Vietnam era. All members of Congress should in good conscience be able to support it. In turn, they will receive favorable reactions from the voters.

I respectfully urge the Committee members to recommend approval for Senate Bill S296. Enactment of S296 will give positive evidence to all Vietnam veterans and to those families of the deceased that Congress has NOT forgotten them.

Sincerely,

Lest We Forget

They Died in the Vietnam War

"Signed"

Lauren Spray

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510 - 8150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee Members,

My name is Mr. Robert Wilson Winston, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony. My relationship to this issue is, that at the time of the accident on the 3rd of June 1969 I was a member of the Royal Australian Navy. My service number was R64495 and branch, rating were N.A.A.H (Naval Airman Aircraft Handler) Fleet Airarm.

I had served 7.1/2 years and was medically discharged because of the accident on the 3rd June 1969. Of that 7.1/2 years, 4.1/2 years were served on board the H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE the Aircraft Carrier.

The Duties that I had at that time was the L.S.O. (Landing Singles Officer.) operations and the night of the accident I had finished my shift and just got the head down at 02.45 up on the Forecastle, this was on a banana bed (fold out stretcher) and was just dozing off to sleep when the sound of metal and a very hard knock with a noise that you couldn't talk over with steam every where as well. I made my way around to my mess which was 2 Foxtrot Portside just in time to look out from our little catwalk to see the front section of a ship go down with screams of help.

I went in to the mess and got dressed then quickly up on to the flydeck to see the back section bounce down the side of our ship. By this time the men were starting to fall in on the Quarter Deck, as this was happening I grabbed a rope and asked some of the boys to tie it off while I jumped on to the after section to tie it on one of the hand rails next to the Chimney, off (one of the boys said, "what happens if I missed" and I responded, "then its to save me") then I proceeded to the Quarter deck to start the evacuation of those that were left.

This is the reason I have such an interest in getting some reconnection for the 74 that lost their lives that night along with the 3 SAGE BROTHERS. The deaths that night not only affected those that were there but all of the family members as well. It is about time that these boys got some recognition for the supreme sacrifice that they made.

The question that has had me puzzled since that night is why such a big SEATO Exercise held of the coast of North Vietnam while a war was going on not that far a way. There has not to my knowledge of an exercise of that size ever taking place since.

There are too many questions still unanswered, but now we might be able to get some recognition for the lost 74 service personal and not have them just forgotten about. They are not forgotten by us that were there and will never be.

LEST WE FORGET.
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

Mr. Robert Wilson Winston J.P.
Queens Commendation, American Medal of Merit.

Dean Wyse

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Bldg.
Suite 364
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici {Chairman} and Committee members

I'm Dean Wyse Frank E. Evans {DD754} survivor, Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony.

I'm writing this letter trying to gain your support on the legislation Bill S-296 "The Fairness To all Fallen Vietnam War Service Members Act of 2003". I feel the present process for selecting the names that appear on the "Vietnam Wall Memorial "is highly prejudicial not for the names that are on the wall but for the names that are omitted.

The real cost of lives in Vietnam War lost cannot be set by a imaginary line 100 miles off the coast of Vietnam .The " Vietnam Wall Memorial "should be a complete list, to mean a lot more to me and to thousands of other people that lost love ones

As a survivor of the collision of US Frank E. Evans [DD754] and the Australian aircraft carrier, HMAS. Melbourne that occurred on 3 June 1969 just" 90 miles from that imaginary line" taking the lives of 74 of my shipmate .I feel an obligation to see that those 74 that died that morning receive the proper recognition that they deserve for their sacrifice .We would have never been off the coast of Vietnam had it not been for the Vietnam War. We had just left the gun fire support line shortly before this exercise and were in a SEATO simulated war time operation at darkened ship maneuvering conditions at night, on zig-zag courses to evade the determined simulated enemy submarines, with the carrier when the collision happened .I would greatly appreciate your support on this bill.

Thank your for your assistance

(Signed)

Dean C. Wyse

Steve & Jo Commodore J.P. Stevenson. R.A.N. (Ret'd)

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Suite 364
Washington, C.C. 20510-6150

Honorable Senator Pete V. Domenici (Chairman) and Committee members,

I am John Philip Stevenson, the captain of H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE at the time of the accident, June 3rd, 1969. I thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony.

Prior to, and at the time of, the said accident, ships from all the SEATO countries were operating under full war time conditions, i.e. No lighting was permitted; hand were at battle stations for long period of time, considerable tension was built up as ships maneuvered at high speed whilst aircraft took off and landed on carriers. The destroyer U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS had been pulled off the Vietnam line to take part in this advanced exercise. When the survivors of the FRANK E EVANS were brought on board MELBOURNE, I was struck by their steadfastness in the face of near death. Some of their experiences have been published: the stories recording many acts of extreme bravery which in my view merited recognition. Similar acts of heroism were carried out by MELBOURNE'S crew, and those I recommended received decorations for their bravery. These Gallantry Awards included the George Medal, the Air Force Cross, British Empire Medals, Queen's Commendations, Naval Board Commendations and an M.B.E.

I strongly support action that would give the ships' company of the U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS its well-earned recognition in honor of their dedication to duty in the dangerous waters of South East Asia in 1969.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

J.P. Stevenson Commodore, Royal Australian Navy, Ret'd.