CONGRESSIONAL RECORD – HOUSE

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INTRUDER DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. PICKETT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PICKETT. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Navy honors the retirement of an old friend, the A-6 Intruder. Attack Squadrons 129 and 292 and Attack Squadron 75 stand down in the final two Intruder squadrons in simultaneous ceremonies at Whidbey Island, WA, and Virginia Beach, VA, respectively.

As the backbone of carrier attack aviation for the past 30 years, the A-6E Intruder stood ready to deliver its formidable payload in any weather, day or night. The A-6 put teeth in the term "carrier forward presence." It saw combat in Vietnam, Lebanon, Libya, in the waters of the Arabian Gulf, and over the shores of Kuwait and Iraq. It delivered iron bombs, laser-guided bombs, and every air-to-ground missile available in the Navy inventory for the past three decades.

The Intruder was never the prettiest plane on the flight deck, but it was always the hardest working. The pilots and bombardier/navigators who flew the Intruder affectionately referred to its Grumman ironworks origin. Some swore the aircraft was made of solid steel; whether the shells and missiles it faced flew from Hanoi or Baghdad, many an A-6 returned to the carrier full of holes, but ready to see combat soon after a few steel patch jobs.

We also honor the thousands of Intruder maintainers, both past and present, who kept this 18-ton bombing machine flying day and night, at sea and ashore. Foreign terms such as fly-by-wire and heads-up display never passed the lips of these hardworking men and women. Metal, pulleys, oil, and hydraulic fluid attack kept this archetype of attack airborne.

Finally, let us remember the Intruder crews who never returned. In service to our Nation, they paid the ultimate price flying this machine that they loved. We miss them still, and will never forget them. As we arrive today, the Navy must continue to carry on the legacy of those who paid the ultimate price flying this machine that they loved. We miss them still, and will never forget them.

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