

EXONERATION OF CAPTAIN
CHARLES B. MCVAY III

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to call to the attention of the House of Representatives a decision by the Department of the Navy that exonerates the late Charles Butler McVay III, captain of the heavy cruiser, the USS *Indianapolis* who was court-martialed and convicted 56 years ago after his ship sank in the closing days of World War II.

The survivors of that tragedy, Mr. Speaker, have relentlessly sought to have Captain McVay vindicated; and those who remain are relieved by the Navy's long-delayed yet justifiable decision.

On May 14, 1999, I ushered an 11-year-old student from Florida to drop H.J. Res. 48 into the system for consideration by the House. Hunter Scott went to a movie in Pensacola, Florida, and saw *Jaws*, in which there was a brief soliloquy about the sinking of the USS *Indianapolis*. Hunter's interest in the ship's disaster was the beginning of a school history project, trips to Washington, D.C., media attention, and an upcoming movie.

Language to exonerate Captain McVay was inserted in the Defense Authorization Act of 2001. The legislation expresses the sense of Congress that Captain McVay should be exonerated because some facts important to the case were never considered by the 1945 court-martial board. Classified data were not even made available to the board.

Survivors of the greatest sea disaster in our Navy's history at that time sought to have their captain's name cleared for periods that spanned several years, oftentimes efforts that drew controversy. The magnitude of the crusade was elevated by this young man's trip to the movies, his campaign to derive justice for the captain and the crew. Indeed, one person can make a difference.

Captain McVay's record has been modified to reflect his exoneration, a profound tribute to the crew, myself and young Hunter Scott especially.

Of the 317 survivors of the USS *Indianapolis* disaster, only 120 remain alive today. One of our strongest supporters has been Michael Monroney. Mike, the son of the late Senator A.S. Mike Monroney of Oklahoma and the retired vice president of TWR, Inc., is no stranger to Indiana. Mike served as administrative assistant to former Congressman John Brademas of Indiana in his first term.

Mike has an original poem, Mr. Speaker, which tells the story of the sinking of the USS *Indianapolis*, the fight for the survival of his crew, and the steadfast loyalty to their Captain.

I submit herewith for the RECORD his poem:

A TRIBUTE TO THE MEN OF THE USS
INDIANAPOLIS

(By Michael Monroney)

A still across the peaceful night
As the great ship split the sea
No omen nor warning
Of the disaster yet to be

The ship soon steered a straightened course
When the midnight bells did sound
Still no omen nor warning
Of the blast to drive her down
But then it struck in black of night
The death that came their way
With no omen nor warning
With no time for them to pray

The ripping crash of metal torn
The sound of dreadful screams
Though no omen nor a warning
It was, for some, the end of dreams
The torpedo hits had doomed their ship
She slipped into the deep
Too many of her youthful crew
Rode down to eternal sleep
Spread far across the heaving waves
In shock and left alone

The men of the *Indianapolis*
Had lost their mighty home

The dawn was slow in coming
But, when the sun rose in the sky
You could hear the sounds of moaning
From those who were yet to die

The tropic sea was cold at night
A merciless sun by day
Oh, yes, Lord be my shepherd
For the time had come to pray

They fought the thirst and hunger
And the monster from below
They shared their fears together
And watched their comrades go

As dead men slipped beneath the waves
Those left were heard to say
Oh, Lord, Please be my shepherd
Time had surely come to pray

The days went by, their ranks grew thin
And hopes began to fade
Would salvation ever reach them
As apparitions on them played

Ashore their ship was never missed
Their fate was in God's hands
But upon the empty ocean
Rose visions of fair lands

They had no food nor water
And more their rank grew thin
Until an angel flew above
A man named Wilbur Gwinn

An oil-slicked sea and blackened forms
Is what the pilot saw
What ship has sunk? He asked himself
As he looked down in awe

He dipped his wings, their spirits soared
Help must be on the way
And all their prayers seemed answered
On that sunny August day

Soon a second angel came in sight
His name was Adrian Marks
He set the plane down on the sea
To save them from the sharks

Their prayers were finally answered
Those living had been saved
Oh, yes, the Lord's their shepherd
For their ordeal have been waived

But no so for their captain
His anguish lay ahead
They blamed him for this tragic loss
Unjust charges to him read

His youthful crew was mystified
What could he have done wrong?

A man of such great honor
And they stood behind him strong
The trial took place, the statement heard
But facts were not exposed
The jury's verdict had been made
Yet truth was ne'er disclosed

The captain's name was ruined
And, though many questioned why,
So great the weight upon him
By his own hand did he die

Yet he's never been forgotten
By his crew he's still revered
And they'll remain united
Until his name's cleared

They seek the wrongful verdict
Struck from their captain's name
And all left from that fateful night
Stay angered by his shame

Their numbers dwindle through the years
Yet their fervor is still high
For their captain they'll seek justice
Until the last of them shall die

As legend grows around these men
Their story transcends time
Such loyalty to their captain
Should also live in rhyme

TO HONOR ADAM WALSH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to join me as a member of the Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus, and I choose to make yet another plea to my colleagues for them to join this caucus, because today marks the 20th anniversary of the abduction of Adam Walsh.

Many of my colleagues are familiar with John Walsh, the host of America's Most Wanted. John and his wife, Reve, lived through the personal tragedy of having their 6-year-old son, Adam, abducted and murdered at the hands of a stranger in 1981. After suffering through this tremendously emotional ordeal, John became a dedicated advocate to end violence against children, to fight crime, and to expand victims' rights in our criminal justice system.

John has shown, through his efforts and over 19 years of hard work, that one committed individual can make a difference to benefit all. Working with his wife, John became the Nation's leading advocate in the cause of protecting our children from violence and exploitation. He helped expand the powers of law enforcement authorities through the Missing Children Act of 1982, as well as working toward the creation of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Four years ago I came to Congress with what I thought was a very full agenda. However, in April of 1997, a 13-year-old constituent of mine was abducted and murdered, and my mission in Congress changed. I, along with the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER) and former Congressman Bob Franks