

Panama Canal. In almost every respect, this resolution is identical to House Concurrent Resolution 17, which I introduced in the 103d Congress and which was cosponsored by no less than 85 of my colleagues. The only significant differences is that the passage of time has made its enactment all the more imperative. That being the case, I urge my colleagues join me as soon as possible as cosponsors of this resolution. Without being too specific, it provides the direction necessary to bring about a canal security arrangement that is not only needed but in the best interests of all concerned.

TRIBUTE TO JANET PARKER BECK

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 4, 1995

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Janet Parker Beck—an award-winning journalist for the San Mateo Times, book author, devoted mother, and caring wife—who passed away last month after an 11-week battle with cancer. Having been a friend and admirer of Ms. Beck for many years, I know that her untimely death at the young age of 41 is a tremendous loss for her family, the San Mateo County community, and our country.

Ms. Beck was born and raised in San Mateo and began her journalism career at Crestmoor High School in San Bruno. After graduating from college—having served as editor for student publications at Skyline Community College and San Jose State University—she was hired by the Times. During her career at the newspaper, Ms. Beck covered medical issues and legal affairs, including a dozen death-penalty cases and more than 40 murder trials. Her writing was widely respected by both the subjects of her stories and her readers for its intellectual contents, integrity, compassion, and ability to convey complex situations in a simple manner. She also used her writing talents to author the book, "Too good to Be True: The Story of Denise Redlick's Murder," which sold 70,000 copies.

Ms. Beck earned over 50 awards for her journalistic achievements. Among the many accolades she received, Ms. Beck was named the California Press Women's Communicator of Achievement for 1994 and the National Federation of Press Women's first-runner-up for Communicator of Achievement for 1994. She also received the National Federation of Press Women's first place news writing award in 1986, 1987, and 1988. It was with a great source of pride that her award-filled career was capped off by being chosen to take her well earned place in the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame.

In addition to her considerable professional accomplishments, Ms. Beck took tremendous pleasure from her family, especially her husband of 16 years, Jim, and their five-year-old daughter, Mandy. Her desk was a well-known gallery for her daughter Mandy's artwork and photographs, while Jim was her constant companion since they met at a YMCA dance in 1970.

Mr. Speaker, Janet Parker Beck was one of the most remarkable individuals I have ever had the privilege to know and work with. Her

passing is a great loss for her family and our community. I ask my colleagues to join me at this time in paying tribute to her and the life of purpose she led, and extend our deepest of sympathies to Jim and Mandy, to her colleagues and to her community. She made us a better people with her all-too-brief 41 years of life.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MERCHANT MARINERS FAIRNESS ACT OF 1995

HON. JACK FIELDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 4, 1995

Mr. FIELDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to reintroduce, along with our distinguished colleague LANE EVANS, on this first day of the new 104th Congress, the Merchant Mariners Fairness Act.

During the last Congress, this bill received extensive consideration but, regrettably, it was not enacted into law. In fact, it was cosponsored by 241 Members and it was adopted by the House of Representatives on three separate occasions.

The bill I am reintroducing today is the product of that careful consideration. It has been endorsed by many diverse groups, including the largest American Legion post in the United States, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AFL-CIO. It deserves the support of every Member of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, by way of background, my colleagues should know that during World War II, some 17.9 million men and women were inducted into our Armed Forces. Of that figure, 6.3 million volunteered and the remaining 11.6 million were drafted. Of this total, some 6.4 million or 35.8 percent were rejected for active duty because of various physical or mental disabilities.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that of the nearly 12 million Americans who served in active duty status, 73 percent served overseas and, of these, 38.8 percent had rear echelon assignments. I have presented these figures only to illustrate that millions of uniformed men and women never served outside of the United States. In no way does this denigrate or negate their vital service to this country. It simply means that these individuals were needed here in the United States to train those who did go overseas.

Furthermore, some 270,000 men volunteered for service in the U.S. merchant marine. Many of these men joined the merchant marine because they had physical impairities, such as poor eyesight, or because they were too young to serve in the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps. Many of them could have avoided service but instead they chose to serve their country by enlisting in the U.S. merchant marine.

Of the 270,000 that volunteered, 37 died as prisoners of war, 6,507 were killed in action and 4,780 are missing and presumed dead. In addition, some 733 U.S. merchant ships were destroyed. In fact, the casualty rate for the merchant marine was only one-tenth of 1 percent lower than the Marine Corps, which had the highest casualty rate of any branch of service during the war.

In order to man our growing merchant fleet during World War II, the U.S. Maritime Com-

mission established various training camps around the country under the direct supervision of the Coast Guard. After completing basic training, which included both small arms and cannon proficiency, a seaman became an active member of the U.S. merchant marine.

These seamen helped deliver troops and war material to every Allied invasion site from Guadalcanal to Omaha Beach. They also transported troops back home to the United States and, when that task was completed, they carried food and medicine to millions of the world's starving people.

Mr. Speaker, it has been 49 years since the end of World War II. Nevertheless, there are still some Americans who served in that war who have not received the honors, benefits, or rights they deserve. H.R. 44 will correct that injustice by providing veterans status to some 2,500 merchant mariners who have become the forgotten patriots of World War II.

Unlike their brothers in uniform, America's merchant seamen came home to no ticker-tape parades or celebrations. Little, if anything, was said about the contributions they made to defeating the Axis powers or to preserving the freedoms that all Europeans and all Americans cherish. Worse, these merchant seamen came home to none of the veterans benefits enjoyed by other Americans who served their country during the World War II period.

In 1987, after years of litigation and delay, U.S. District Judge Louis S. Oberdorfer ruled that previous decisions by the Air Force rejecting veterans status for World War II merchant seamen were "arbitrary and capricious and not supported * * * by substantial evidence."

Despite the results of this landmark court case, then Air Force Secretary Edward Aldridge unilaterally decided that World War II ended on August 15, 1945, for those who served in the U.S. merchant marine.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, that was a most unfair and unsupportable decision. By establishing this date, the Secretary made a determination that has no basis in law. The August 15, 1945, date does not appear anywhere in the Federal court decision mandating veterans status and, according to the Air Force, there is no documentation, no precedent, and no justification for choosing V-J Day.

Let me briefly describe why the August 15, 1945, date is wrong and why these 2,500 Americans have earned the right to be given veterans status.

First, the Federal War Shipping Administration [WSA] was in control of all ship movements far beyond the date of August 15, 1945. In fact, the WSA did not go out of existence until August 31, 1946. Until that time, merchant mariners traveled under sealed orders on ships which were under the direct military control of the U.S. Navy.

During the hearings on this legislation, we learned that at least 13 U.S. merchant vessels were damaged or sunk after August 15, 1945—a greater number than were lost at Pearl Harbor. One of them was the S/S *Jesse Billingsley*, which was hit by a mine off the coast of Trieste, Yugoslavia, on November 19, 1945. One U.S. merchant mariner lost his life in that explosion.

In addition, we must remember that for the U.S. merchant marine, the war did not end on