

When rescue workers arrived to witness the horrible scene on the banks of the Hudson River, they found Engineer Frank Keeham dead, pinned at the throttle of the No. 181 Train. Twelve others were injured, many seriously. Thankfully and miraculously, all of the children survived.

Mr. Speaker, on August 23, 1998 the Town of Thurman, located in Warren County, New York, and the John Thurman Historical Society, will commemorate the fateful D&H railroad crash by placing a memorial plaque beside the railroad tracks at the site of the crash.

I invite all members to join me, with the Town of Thurman, New York in commemorating the D&H crash in the spirit of the Town's bicentennial motto, "looking forward to the future while cherishing the past."

THE JOHN THURMAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
Athol, NY, June 20, 1998.

Hon. GERALD B. SOLOMON,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SOLOMON: It was a peaceful August morning in 1946, along the Adirondack branch of the D&H Railroad line. The Hudson River gurgled lazily in its bed beside the tracks, as if to guide the southbound D&H passenger special long its way. One can imagine that the 318 children aboard were laughing, singing camp songs and chattering excitedly about being reunited with their families after a summer's stay at an Adirondack camp. Unbeknownst to these children and their adult chaperones, northbound Train No. 181 was headed straight toward them, proceeding on its regularly scheduled run. As the second train rounded a curve two miles south of The Glen, in Thurman, the two trains came face to face. The screech of brakes, grating of steel on steel, hissing of steam and the roar of telescoping railroad cars devastated the mountain stillness. When rescue workers arrived on the scene, they found the engineer of the northbound train dead at the throttle of his engine, crushed by folded steel and scalded by steam. Twelve others were injured, many seriously. Miraculously, all of the children survived the crash.

On the eve of restoration of rail service along the former D&H line, the John Thurman Historical Society heeds the message of the town's bicentennial motto by "looking forward to the future while cherishing the past." We will place a memorial plaque (authorized by The Warren County Board of Supervisors, Resolution 358 of 1998) beside the railroad tracks at the site of the fateful crash. We invite you to attend a brief ceremony dedicating that plaque at two p.m., Sunday, August 23, 1998. Those wishing to attend may proceed directly to the site, off River Road, as shown on the attached map, or meet at the Thurman Town Hall on Athol Road in Athol between one and one-thirty p.m. to caravan to the ceremony with others who know the way.

Following the ceremony refreshments will be served at the Town Hall and commemorative postal cachets and cancellations will be available.

We would be honored to have you share the afternoon of August 23 with us. The pleasure of your reply is requested.

Sincerely yours,

ROBIN CROISSANT,
President, John Thurman Historical Society.

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RESOLUTION NO. 358 OF 1998

(Resolution introduced by Supervisors Belden, Montesi, O'Neill, O'Connor, Rehm, Bennett and Landry)

AUTHORIZING PLACEMENT OF MEMORIAL PLAQUE BY THE TOWN OF THURMAN ON COUNTY RAILROAD PROPERTY

Resolved, that the Warren County grants the Town of Thurman's request to place a memorial plaque on County railroad property stating: "At this site on August 26, 1946, "passenger Extra" collided with a northbound passenger Train No. 181. Engineer Frank Keeham died in the cab pinned at the throttle.", now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Director of the Parks & Recreation Department be, and he hereby is, authorized and directed to approve the Town of Thurman's site location for said memorial plaque, and be it further

Resolved, that the Town of Thurman shall maintain said plaque.

IN HONOR OF U.S. MERCHANT
MARINE VETERANS

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 1998

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give tribute to all those who served in the U.S. Merchant Marines during World War II and to draw greater attention to Maritime Day.

The 18th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, which I have the privilege to represent, has a long and proud tradition of military service to our nation, and contains one of the highest concentrations of veterans in America. In this region of western Pennsylvania, there once was also the greatest concentration of steel mills and coke ovens in the world. As these industries provided the tools and materials necessary to defeat our enemies during World War II, so did our communities send their sons and daughters to fight in our defense. While service to our country is commemorated throughout my district, the town of Elizabeth does a particularly outstanding job in recognizing the merits of military service. I am including with my statement an article that appeared in The Pittsburgh Post Gazette which details this year's service.

Elizabeth, Pennsylvania is typical of the river mill towns that populate the Mon Valley. The residents of Elizabeth hold their ethnic values close in face of the demands of our modern society. Perhaps it is this steadfast attention to, and respect for, the traditions and accomplishments of those who came before them that accounts for their ever expanding reverence of our nation's veterans. Every year on Memorial Day, people from near and far travel to Elizabeth for the Veterans' Parade. It is always a distinct honor to participate in these ceremonies which are coordinated by local Veterans' of Foreign Wars chapters.

A few years ago, Elizabeth began recognizing Maritime Day. The celebration occurs on May 22 and honors the contributions the men and women of the maritime industry made to our nation. In fact, the service held in Elizabeth, which is sponsored by the American Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II, is the only one to occur throughout Allegheny County. It is a great honor to have a member

of the American Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II, Mark Gleason, sit on my Veterans' Advisory Committee.

Maritime Day is a holiday of great significance to the residents of my district for a number of reasons. During World War II, the Pittsburgh area was one of the most heavily recruited areas of the country by the Merchant Marines. Those who answered the call for service from eastern Ohio, northern West Virginia, and the Pittsburgh area all departed for training camp through the Pittsburgh recruiting center. From steel communities and rural regions alike, young men went to sea as crew members of merchant ships. Sadly to say, many of these young men never returned home. Between December of 1941 and December of 1946 over 830 ships were sunk killing 7,000 seamen and wounding 11,000 others. Without question, the actions of these sailors contributed to the outcome of World War II.

In a 1943 address to Congress, President Roosevelt reviewed the results of the war activities from the previous year. In this message President Roosevelt said:

Any review of the year 1942 must emphasize the magnitude and diversity of the military activities which this nation has become engaged. As I speak to you, approximately one and a half million of our soldiers, sailors, marines, and fliers are in service outside our continental limits, all through the world. Our merchant seamen are carrying supplies to them and to our allies over every sea lane.

Clearly, President Roosevelt did not differentiate between the actions of the different branches of the service. He later went on to express that Merchant Marines should not be discriminated against when it came to benefits. Unfortunately, this equality never came to fruition.

For years, Merchant Seamen have been working to have their service properly recognized by the United States. As a cosponsor of H.R. 1126, the Merchant Marine Fairness Act, I am hopeful that this goal of equality will soon be reached. I am pleased to report there is significant bipartisan support for this bill. Currently, there are 307 members of Congress who have lent their support to this measure. Together, we will not allow the events of 50 years to be forgotten.

I want to share with you some words that were spoken at the Elizabeth Maritime Day services in 1995:

Men from this area served in the Revolutionary War and helped a young country become a new nation.

They served in France and added names to the Crosses where poppies now grow row upon row in Flanders Field.

Our men served our country well in all the services in the war fifty years ago and gave us folk heroes such as Commando Kelly.

But thousands of other men also heard the call of the sea and served their country in the Merchant Marines. Their service helped win the war and save the world.

These valleys are more quiet and if we listen in the evening, we can sometimes hear the voices of those who went to sea and did not return.

We answer their call to us when they say, "Tell us shipmates, who tolls the bell for us?"

We do, here today in Elizabeth. We do.

Mr. Speaker, we handle many issues of great import within the halls of Congress and

the recognition of, and equity for, the Merchant Marines of World War II should be one of them.

[From the Pittsburgh Post Gazette]
 WW II'S UNSUNG HEROES
 (By Dave Budinger)

When troop ships came home at the close of World War II, disgorging thousands of GI's onto docks and quays of America's seaports, they were met with fireboat whistles, cheering crowds, bands and victory parades.

When scruffy, lightly armed cargo ships of the U.S. Merchant Marine would steam into harbor at war's end, they were greeted by indifferent work tugs and nudged up against empty piers. No whistles, no cheers, no "Johnny Comes Marching Home" for their war-weary crews.

And it's sort of been that way ever since, say the almost-ancient mariners who today spice retirement by gathering at restaurants to swap war stories and take potshots at a government that still regards them as second-class.

Their thoughts are particularly poignant during Memorial Day week when flags fly and the country takes special note of its war heroes.

"Our destiny seems to be to let people know we weren't a bunch of draft dodgers," said Henry Huminski of Carrick, a retired ship's master and member of the 90-member McKeesport-based Mon Valley Chapter of the U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans.

Memorial Day observances honor the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who gave their lives for their country. Homage has been slight, however, for the merchant mariners who died by the thousands in the South Pacific and on the infamous North Atlantic convoy routes that fed U.S. industrial might into the war against Germany.

After the war, GI veterans had the VFW and American Legion. They got the GI Bill, bonuses, insurance, help with housing, access to veterans hospitals and many other benefits. The 200,000 returning mariners got nothing—not even a free drink at the veterans clubs.

"We felt the deep division, compared to how the GIs were treated," Huminski said.

Left out of Memorial Day, the merchant sailors adopted little-known Maritime Day as their day of remembrance. Proclaimed by Congress in 1933, Maritime Day was set aside to commemorate the first transoceanic crossing by an American steam-powered vessel.

President Franklin Roosevelt, in one of his final proclamations, called upon the country to recognize the Merchant Marine war effort on Maritime Day, May 22, 1945. Since then, May 22 has become a traditional day to honor sailors from all the maritime services who were lost at sea.

As it has for several years, the Mon Valley Chapter organized a memorial service held Friday at Riverfront Park in Elizabeth.

It wasn't until 1988 that Congress granted veteran status and GI Bill rights to World War II mariners. "Too late for a lot of guys," Huminski huffed.

And even that measure fell short, the mariners say. Veteran status was applied to those who served in the Merchant Marine between Dec. 7, 1941, and Aug. 15, 1945. But veterans say civilian sailors were killed even in the waning weeks of the war, and want the cutoff point extended to Dec. 31, 1946.

Still, it was a step toward recognition as a bona fide arm of military service that the Merchant Marine seeks.

The reason for the Merchant Marine's unsettled status is that it was not quite military, but not entirely civilian. A merchant mariner in wartime was a hybrid. Although

recruited by the U.S. War Shipping Administration and trained by the Coast Guard at government-funded installations, they sailed on privately owned ships under contract to the government, and were paid by the ships' owners.

They were in most respects civilians, except for the fact they bled and died just like the people who wore the uniforms.

Under attack, they would often struggle side-by-side with Naval Armed Guard crews that manned the light armament aboard most of the merchant vessels. Mariners passed ammunition and sometimes took over gunposts when a Navy man fell.

When the war ended in 1945, 733 American cargo ships had been sunk in the European and Pacific theaters. More than 6,000 civilian sailors perished, including 57 from Western Pennsylvania. Another 11,000 were wounded and 604 were prisoners of war.

Early in the war, German U-boats sank two of every 12 ships that left U.S. ports. One convoy on a run from New York to England was hit by a U-boat wolfpack off Greenland and lost 22 of its 63 ships. Only a fog that blew in saved the rest of the convoy.

Huminski, 79, who sailed all the North Atlantic convoy routes including the treacherous Murmansk Run to Russia, was one of the lucky ones.

"I was never torpedoed. A lot of my friends were, but none of my ships were hit," he said.

Early in the war, German U-boats were ravaging the East Coast, sinking large numbers of unprotected vessels within sight of land. When his ship would set out from New York, "there was oil everywhere. You could see the flares on the horizon from ships burning at night," Huminski said.

"In the first four months, we lost more shipping tonnage than we lost at Pearl Harbor."

The average seaman was unaware of the heavy losses at sea.

"Everything was censored; complete secrecy. We didn't know what was going on, that so many ships were being sunk."

Huminski, a Depression era product and oldest son of a German-Polish family of 13 brothers and sisters, was in most respects typical of Pittsburgh recruits who signed up with the Merchant Marine.

He wanted to flee a crowded Hill District home and a stultifying job at Mesta Machine. He tried the Army but was rejected because of a jaw problem. "They called it malocclusion. I had a bad bite. I don't think they paid much attention to that kind of thing later in the war."

The day after Pearl Harbor, he signed on with the Merchant Marine. He left home Christmas Eve bound for the U.S. Maritime Training Center at Sheepshead Bay, N.Y. Except for one trip to Lake Erie when he was a youngster, Huminski had never seen a body of water larger than the three rivers. But he was excited about sailing.

"We were all so gung-ho back then. We were young. We didn't know what was ahead."

Unlike most of his Western Pennsylvania companions, Huminski stayed at sea after the war. He made the Merchant Marine a career, sailing 44 different ships, visiting 124 seaports and rising to ship's master, or captain, before retiring in 1981. The ships he crewed hauled "everything from ammo to horses and cows," and he served during the Korean and Vietnam wars. He estimates he spent 23½ years of his 40-year career on water.

More typical of Pittsburgh area Merchant Marine veterans is Henry Kazmierski of Clairton, who returned home after the war, married a local lass and raised a family while working at USSteel's Clairton Works.

Retiring in 1981 after 42 years in the mill, he's a regular at the monthly luncheon gatherings of the Mon Valley Chapter at the Old Country Inn Buffet in the Southland Shopping Center.

Not as lucky as Huminski in the North Atlantic, he can describe vividly the day his ship was torpedoed and sunk in the Barents Sea off the coast of Norway on the Murmansk Run.

It was a bitterly cold January day in 1944 aboard one of the new Liberty ships, the SS Penelope Barker. Kazmierski was standing his watch in the wheelhouse about 8:15 p.m. One of the 20 ships in the convoy had already been sunk, and the convoy had been under air attack during the day. Penelope's crew of 46 was on edge. Still, there was no warning when two torpedoes slammed into the side of the ship.

"I heard something hit, and I grabbed the wheelpost to stay up. The ship heeled to starboard."

He struggled out of the wheelhouse to the port side. "There was a tangled mess of lifeboats. I knew that wasn't going to work. I went to starboard. The water was coming up fast. I jumped over the side."

He gauged his jump to land close to a lifeboat already in the water.

"I went under. The water was icy cold. . . . I knew I couldn't last long."

His lifejacket popped him up just yards from the boat, and his shipmates quickly hauled him in.

The Penelope sank in less than 10 minutes. Had it been carrying ammunition instead of general cargo, it would have blown apart with the torpedoes' impact. As it was, 10 men went down with the ship.

Despite the close call, he was eager to get back to sea after 30 days "survivor's leave" at home.

"I never really saw anybody afraid out there. You get used to it," said Kazmierski, 78 who survived 11 crossings on the Murmansk Run.

"We'd just tell [the new guys] to 'Stand on your tiptoes and wait for somebody to pick you up' if you got sunk. You had to have some humor out there."

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CONVENTION CENTER AND SPORTS ARENA AUTHORIZATION ACT AMENDMENTS

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, due to the time at which the House considered H.R. 4237 under unanimous consent procedures, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight was unable to file the committee report on the bill. I am therefore entering the committee report as prepared into the RECORD at this time:

The Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 4237) to amend the District of Columbia convention center and sports arena authorization act of 1995 to revise the revenues and activities covered under such act, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

I. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION

A. BACKGROUND

As noted by the Committee in the 104th Congress, the current Convention Center was