

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing the priceless contributions of NIDA, NIAAA, and addiction counselors, and giving them our gratitude. Congress has shown strong support for this issue in the past in several ways—through legislation, through funding for the National Institutes of Health and the CDC, and through displaying a constant awareness of the gravity of this issue. Yet we are far from victory, and must continue our steadfast fight against drug and alcohol addiction. We look forward to the day when addiction to drugs and alcohol are eradicated, and these wonderful professionals can take their final bow. Until then, their hard work should be recognized and, more importantly, honored and appreciated.

REMARKS ON HURRICANE
KATRINA

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 13, 2005

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, with a heavy heart, I rise today in solidarity with my fellow Americans who suffered the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. We deeply mourn the loss of life. We share the pain of those who are suffering physically and emotionally from this trauma. And we also mourn the loss of some of our faith in government to respond in full measure to people in need.

In the past few days I have received scores of calls and e-mails from my constituents in Wisconsin expressing their support for the victims of the devastation and also their outrage at the slow and inefficient federal response to that tragedy.

Wisconsinites are deeply ashamed of the images of abandonment and neglect they saw on TV and desperate to help in rescue efforts. My heart goes out to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and to those family members here in Wisconsin and across the country waiting for word from their loved ones. While Americans are reaching into their wallets to support private relief efforts, there should be no doubt that the federal government must provide the leadership to ultimately meet the challenges of this situation.

Particularly disturbing is that we have spent more than \$36.7 billion dollars since the September 11th terrorist attacks planning for a response to a disaster of epic proportions. Now we've had one. Given the response of the Department of Homeland Security to this disaster, every aspect of that Department's performance and capability is now called into question and the security of every American hangs in the balance. Wisconsinites are not alone in calling for a government investigation into this catastrophic failure and an immediate overhaul of the system so that such a failure never again occurs.

Congress has now sent more than \$62 billion in federal disaster relief to help save and aid hurricane victims and I supported this authorization of money. But money, alone, will not solve the problems we face.

The response to this disaster showed us many things, among them that our social safety net has been badly neglected. It showed us also that we have been inadequate stewards of the environment.

Whether it's our failure to fight poverty and provide health care to all in America; or our failure to make proper and adequate investments in infrastructure (including our emergency communications infrastructure); or our failure to protect the natural buffers, our coastal wetlands and barrier island which serve as Mother Nature's shock absorbers; or our failure to listen to scientists long warning us of climate change; or our failure to embark upon a path that decreases (rather than increases) our dependence on finite resources so that future generations won't experience the fear and anxiety that grips all of our constituents when fuel becomes unaffordable.

All of this was revealed stunningly in recent days. Let us not ignore what was exposed to us. This time, let's seize the opportunity to work toward the common good; to help those with the least, not just those with the most; and to make good on the social compact.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we have the opportunity to reclaim the promise of America. Failure is not an option.

THE U.S. MERCHANT MARINE: WE
DELIVER THE GOODS!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 13, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, when I introduced H.R. 23, the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act" the positive response was overwhelming. Many of these Merchant Mariners have shared their harrowing, 60-year-old stories and experiences with me, and each personal account strengthens my resolve to see that these brave heroes are treated with respect by the U.S. government.

In my ongoing fight to correct the injustice being done to the U.S. Merchant Marines—men who have yet to be given full benefits as World War II veterans—I would like to submit the following article from *The American Legion* by Dan Allsup, a freelance writer from the St. Louis area, entitled, "We Deliver the Goods":

It's not that Bob Bodine wanted to avoid the World War II draft in 1943. He just didn't think being an Army infantryman sounded like a whole lot of fun.

Bodine tried to join the Army Air Corps but failed the vision test. He talked to a Navy aviation recruiter, but the Navy was bringing on 17-year-olds at the time. Bodine was too old at 18.

"What else is there?" he asked the recruiter. "Well, there's the Merchant Marine, but they've got a hell of a casualty rate," the recruiter said.

Bodine, now 80, recalls the conversation. "What does a teenager care about casualty statistics? I always liked boats, so the Merchant Marine sounded pretty good to me."

He secured a slot at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY. In his second year, Bodine sailed off on a required 9-month cruise to the Mediterranean. It didn't take long for him to realize that if he was trying to avoid the draft, he could have taken an easier route. Bodine was a crewmember aboard the USS *Fleming*, which was hauling a dozen P-51 aircraft and a huge load of vehicle and aviation fuel to the troops. The *Fleming* was part of a 110-ship convoy. While it escaped the war unscathed, 50 of her sister ships were sunk by German U-boats and floating mines.

Bodine is one of the more than 243,000 civilian volunteer mariners who served aboard ships that provided the greatest sealift in history. Critical to the war effort, the U.S. merchant fleet delivered troops, supplies, ammunition and equipment all over the world. It took part in every invasion from Normandy to Okinawa, often becoming sitting-duck targets for enemy submarines, mines, bombers and kamikaze pilots. Fighting was especially fierce in the Atlantic, where "wolf packs" of German submarines and deadly U-boats prowled the ocean destroying Merchant Marine ships in an attempt to isolate Great Britain. Closer to home, enemy submarines sank hundreds of ships off the eastern coast of the United States.

In the first 6 months of 1942, German U-boats alone sank more than 400 U.S. merchant ships. Because no official history has been written of the Merchant Marine in World War II, casualty numbers vary from source to source. It is believed, however, that about 9,300 mariners were killed during the war, and more than 1,500 of their ships were sunk. Fortunately, because most Merchant Marine ships traveled in convoys, many of the mariners aboard wounded vessels were fished from the sea by nearby ships. About 600 mariners were prisoners of war and another 11,000 were injured.

Susan Clark, public-affairs officer for the U.S. Maritime Administration—the Federal agency most involved with the Merchant Marine—said that other than the U.S. Marines, mariners had a higher death rate than any other branch of the service during the war. (Some mariners may take exception to that statistic. A web site for Merchant Marine veterans says their death rate was 1 in 26 and the Marine Corps was 1 in 34.)

President Franklin Roosevelt summed up the war contributions of the U.S. Merchant Marine: "The (mariners) have written one of its most brilliant chapters. They have delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult and most dangerous job ever taken."

Despite their losses and their importance to the war effort, surviving mariners weren't met with parades and flags when they returned home. They weren't considered veterans. They couldn't take advantage of the GI Bill, small business loans or medical care for disabilities. Officially, they were civilians. If they were lucky, they received a thank you letter and a lapel pin from the President. After years of fighting the system and a long court battle, some World War II mariners finally received limited veteran status on Jan. 19, 1988.

Sixty years after he last hung up his Merchant Marine uniform, Bodine and many of his Academy classmates still can't believe they weren't considered members of the U.S. Armed Forces during the war. "I didn't know otherwise until I realized that I wasn't eligible for the GI Bill or any other veterans benefits," he said.

Although some bitterness about the lack of recognition remains, the Merchant Marine sails on today. After the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, 29 Merchant Marine Academy students operated a fleet of boats into New York Harbor, transporting firefighters and other emergency workers, along with food and medical supplies.

Today, more than 8,000 mariners serve in the Military Sealift Command, most of them working in support of the Iraqi war. An average vessel moves the equivalent of about 300 C-17 cargo aircraft, freeing up aircraft for other critical missions.

From the Revolutionary War to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the U.S. Merchant Marine has delivered the goods.