

Date of Hearing: July 1, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

SCR 143 (Gonzalez) – As Introduced April 29, 2024

SENATE VOTE: 37-0

SUBJECT: USS Frank E. Evans Lost 74 Memorial Interchange and Bridge

SUMMARY: Designates the interchange at the junction of State Highway Route 710 and State Highway Route 1 in the County of Los Angeles as the USS Frank E. Evans Lost 74 Memorial Interchange and the bridge on State Highway Route 1 over the Los Angeles River in the County of Los Angeles as the USS Frank E. Evans Lost 74 Memorial Bridge. The measure requests that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) determine the cost of appropriate signs showing these special designations and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering those costs, erect those signs.

EXISTING LAW: Assigns Caltrans the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways. This includes the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, but the measure requests that Caltrans determine the cost of appropriate signage consistent with requirements for the state highway system, and only erect the appropriate signage upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost.

COMMENTS: On March 29, 1969, the officers of the USS Frank E. Evans departed from the Port of Long Beach for the Western Pacific to carry out the operational orders of their Commander in Chief during a time of war with the North Vietnamese government. The USS Frank E. Evans was ordered to withdraw from combat operations to participate in an allied naval exercise with the Australian aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne and return to combat operations when the exercise was completed.

At 0315 hours on June 3, 1969, the USS Frank E. Evans, while participating in the exercise, was involved in a collision with the HMAS Melbourne in the South China Sea, near the coast of Vietnam. The collision severed the ship into two sections, with the forward section sinking in less than three minutes, taking the lives of 74 American sailors.

Members of the United States Armed Forces who died during the Vietnam War have been memorialized by placing their names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. so long as they died within the war zone.

The United States Department of Defense maintains that the USS Frank E. Evans does not meet the criteria because the accident occurred outside of the war zone, and continues to deny placing the names of the lost 74 sailors on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Since the Vietnam War zone boundaries were created for tax purposes, were ill defined, and have been changed over time, they should not be the defining reason to exclude the names of the lost 74 sailors on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Other members of the United States Armed Forces who died outside of the Vietnam war zone have had their names placed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Other states have memorialized the fallen sailors of the USS Frank E. Evans by adding them to their Vietnam Veterans Memorials.

The State of California recognized 22 California residents of the USS Frank E. Evans and added their names to the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the “Remembering California’s Heroes” ceremony on March 29, 2015. The lost 74 sailors’ memory will live forever in the hearts and minds of their families, relatives, survivors, shipmates, and friends

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

None on file

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Aimee Anspach / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093