

2004 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 250

Commending the American seafarers in the United States Merchant Marine and Maritime Service from Mathews County.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 11, 2004

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 12, 2004

WHEREAS, the greatest armed conflict of all time, World War II, ended 59 years ago; and

WHEREAS, the men of the United States Merchant Marine and United States Army Transport Service served their country with courage and determination; and

WHEREAS, merchant vessels (troop ships, tankers, cargo ships) manned by 250,000 Merchant Marine officers and seamen delivered nearly 300 million tons of war cargo and billions of gallons of petroleum, transported more than 11 million men and women to theaters of war worldwide, and returned them home; and

WHEREAS, merchant seamen were present in all invasions and theaters of World War II; and

WHEREAS, an average of 30 merchant ships were sunk each week during the first years of the war; and

WHEREAS, 9,750 mariners gave their lives, 12,000 received disabling injuries, 1,100 died from their wounds in public health hospitals and Allied military hospitals abroad, and only 62 of 710 taken prisoner of war returned home; and

WHEREAS, an additional 17 United States owned or chartered ships were attacked before Pearl Harbor, beginning on October 9, 1939, and at least 240 mariners were killed between February 18, 1940, and the attack on Pearl Harbor; and

WHEREAS, today's Merchant Marine fulfills the same important role, and Major General Ann Dunwoody, USA, Commanding General of the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command 2002-2003 praised the United States Merchant Marine and United States citizen seafarers during Operation Iraqi Freedom for their support in moving equipment and supplies to Iraq during the first phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Mathews County, Virginia, lost 22 men assigned to the United States Merchant Marines (totaling 45 percent of her war dead and per-capita one of the highest casualty rates of any town or borough in the United States) as casualties of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Mathews County has had a tremendous history of supporting our maritime industry and many county residents have served in the United States Merchant Marine; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby recognize the heroic service of the American seafarers in the United States Merchant Marine and Maritime Service from Mathews County, Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the commander of Mathews Post 83 of the American Legion and the chairman of the Mathews County Board of Supervisors as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for the courageous service of Mathews County citizens in the United States Merchant Marine during World War II.

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