

Mahoney Speaks on Bill to Make Ft. Pierce Museum the National Museum of the Navy SEALs

Congressman Tim Mahoney

Floor Statement on H.R. 2779

October 1, 2007

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I want to thank my good friend, the Gentlewoman from Florida for yielding time to me this afternoon. Mister Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2779, legislation that I introduced to recognize the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of the Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Mister Speaker, I am sure that there are many today watching and asking how important is it to create a national museum recognizing the brave men and woman who have served in Underwater Demolition Teams, as Frogman and today as Seals.

In my life, I have had the privilege and honor of knowing and learning about brave men who have served our nation and have seen the hell of combat. People like Reggie White, my daughter Bailey's grandfather, who was a combat engineer and who like the men of UDT had the job of clearing Omaha beach that fateful day of June 6, 1944.

My Uncle, Bart Mahoney, a B-17 pilot and one of the first to be shot down over Germany. Bart survived combat and then survive German Concentration camps.

Bobbie Maynard who saw frontline action in Korea and survived some of the heaviest engagements in the Korean War.

My friend Pat Kelley who as a Medic in Vietnam had to endure the life and death realities of combat.

These men are heroes. These men have seen the horrors of war and survived them. These men, never bragged about their service. In fact they rarely spoke of it, preferring to let the horrors of their experience rest. This bill is important because it gives voice to the heroes whose stories and honor need to be captured and passed down to future generations.

The ground upon which the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum rests was the birthplace of the Navy Frogmen. Through World War II thousands of brave soldiers were trained as members of Naval Combat Demolition Units and Underwater Demolition Teams at the site. Since that time, the Frogmen have evolved into one of the most elite fighting forces in the world, the Navy SEALs.

The Navy UDT-SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the legacy of the honor, courage, patriotism, and sacrifices of those Navy SEALs and their predecessors, including the Underwater Demolition Teams, Naval Combat Demolition Units, Office of Strategic Services Maritime Units, and Amphibious Scouts and Raiders.

I would like to personally thank Captain Mike Howard, a retired Navy SEAL, Ruth McSween, Rolf Snyder, and others who have made the UDT Seal museum possible. I would also like to thank all the men and women who work to preserve the legacy of the Naval Special Warfare Community.

Since the museum opened, thousands of visitors have learned of the accomplishments of the Navy SEALs, through the museum's artifacts and photos tracing the history of Naval Special Warfare from its beginnings during World War II through the Navy SEALs current role in fighting in the War on Terror and in Iraq.

While we are here today to honor the Naval Special Warfare community, I would like to take a moment to remember Petty Officer 1st Class Robert Richard McRill and all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving our nation. Petty officer McRill, from Lake Placid, Florida, was killed while serving in Iraq as part of the Seals Group Two, when his team was hit by an IED.

By designating the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors, we are honoring Mr. McRill and all the warriors who have served in Naval Special Warfare. I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the honor, courage, patriotism, and sacrifices of the SEALs and their predecessors by supporting this legislation.

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