

RECOGNIZING THE WORLD WAR II VETERANS OF 'IVORY SOAP' -- HON. TONY P.
HALL (Extension of Remarks - October 09, 1998)

[Page: E2006]

HON. TONY P. HALL

in the House of Representatives

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1998

- Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize some 5,000 World War II veterans of 'Ivory Soap,' a most unusual team of Army Air Forces, Navy Armed Guards, and civilian Merchant Marines who have gone unrecognized for 53 years for their contributions in bringing peace to the Pacific war. During 1944 and 1945, they served aboard 24 specially modified Liberty and auxiliary ships that operated as floating aircraft depot repair and maintenance shops. These supported our bomber and fighter forces on the front line of battle during the Pacific island hopping campaigns.
- Hundreds of B-29 bombers and P-51 fighters returned to battle to fight again because of these depot and maintenance ships. This is another one of the never-told stories out of the dust vaults of declassified secret records. This story was uncovered by one of the ship's crew seeking his comrades for a reunion. Only in the last few years have these documents been released to the public.
- The project's code word was 'Ivory Soap,' appropriately selected, because 'it floats.' This effort was so important to our air war in the Pacific that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were directly involved in its development. Because of the secret classification and the dispersal among the islands of these ships, few of the veterans ever knew of the extent and effectiveness of their tasks.
- Now that the word is out, a group of veterans from the ships have begun a search to find their shipmates so they may hold combined reunions to share their pride in being part of this special project.
- A combined reunion began today in Washington, D.C., and will run until October 11, 1998. The surviving veterans' ages run from their 70s to their 90s. I extend my best wishes and salute our heroes for their contributions and service to this great country. May the reunion brighten their spirits and bring together their comrades to renew old friendships.

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