

107TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 411

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 8, 2002

Received

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing the exploits of the officers and crew of the S.S. HENRY BACON, a United States Liberty ship that was sunk on February 23, 1945.

Whereas during World War II the United States Liberty ship S.S. HENRY BACON was assigned the task of conveying war materials and supplies to the beleaguered Russian nation via the dangerous Arctic Ocean passage (referred to as the Murmansk Run) from Iceland or Scotland to Murmansk in northern Russia, and faithfully fulfilled her mission;

Whereas in early 1945 the British navy, having rescued a number of Norwegian civilians from occupied Norway and transported them to Murmansk, distributed them among the HENRY BACON and certain other merchant ships for transportation to England, with 19 of such refugees being assigned to the HENRY BACON;

Whereas a convoy carrying those refugees, designated as Convoy RA 64 and consisting of 35 ships and naval escorts, departed Murmansk on February 17, 1945, amid one of the worst storms ever registered in the Arctic Ocean;

Whereas the HENRY BACON, with a full crew and refugees on board, sailing as part of that convoy, suffered damage from the force of the storms and from internal mechanical problems;

Whereas the HENRY BACON, while suffering from a loss of steering capacity, lost her place in the convoy and became a stray, unable to communicate with the convoy and required to maintain radio silence;

Whereas the HENRY BACON was left to her own devices and was in such dire straits that engine room workers used a sledgehammer and wedge to physically turn the ship;

Whereas on February 23, 1945, the HENRY BACON, alone in the freezing sea some 50 miles from the convoy, came under attack by 23 Junker JU-88 torpedo bombers of the German Luftwaffe;

Whereas armed with only the small but formidable anti-aircraft battery with which such merchantmen were equipped, the United States Navy Armed Guard on board the ship and the ship's merchant sailors fought gallantly against the oncoming torpedo bombers;

Whereas although mortally wounded after a German pilot succeeded in scoring a hit with a torpedo to the ship, the HENRY BACON fought back, shooting down a confirmed three enemy planes and crippling at least two more;

Whereas when the HENRY BACON began to sink, her captain ensured that all 19 Norwegian refugees on board received a place in one of the undamaged lifeboats;

Whereas when the lifeboat supply was exhausted, crewmen made rough rafts from the railroad ties that had been used to secure locomotives delivered to Russia;

Whereas the HENRY BACON went down with 28 members of her crew, including Captain Alfred Carini, Chief Engineer Donald Haviland, Bosun Holcomb Lammon Jr., and the commanding officer of the United States Navy Armed Guard unit aboard, Lieutenant (junior grade) John Sippola, but in its sinking kept the German planes from looking further and locating the main body of the convoy;

Whereas the 19 Norwegian refugees, as well as the other survivors, were rescued by British destroyers and those refugees were ultimately returned to Norway; and

Whereas the actions of the officers and crew of the HENRY BACON were in the finest tradition of the United States Merchant Marine and the United States Navy and have been recognized by the people of Norway and Russia but, until now, have not been acknowledged by their own Nation: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
- 2 *concurring)*, That the Congress recognizes the valiant
- 3 deeds of the officers and crew of the S.S. HENRY

- 1 BACON, a World War II United States Liberty ship that
- 2 was sunk by German aircraft on February 23, 1945.

Passed the House of Representatives October 7,
2002.

Attest:

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk.