

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 13, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Esper:

We write to request a meeting with you to discuss adding the names of the 74 sailors lost aboard the USS *Frank E. Evans* on June 3, 1969 to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The legacy of these brave Americans, the "Lost 74," should no longer go unrecognized due to an arbitrary line on a map.

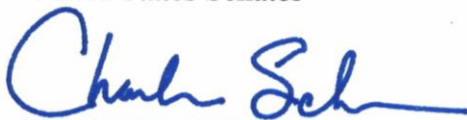
As you may be aware, after serving multiple tours off the coast of Vietnam, the USS *Frank E. Evans* was ordered to participate in a nearby training exercise. During practice maneuvers on June 3, 1969, the ship collided with an aircraft carrier and sank, killing 74 sailors who were aboard the ship. Each of these service members made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our nation, yet their names are not located on the Vietnam Memorial wall. While the incident occurred approximately 100 miles outside of the official combat zone, the ship and a majority of the deceased sailors had previously provided naval gunfire off the coast of Vietnam, including during the Tet Offensive. The ship was also set to return to combat after the exercise, and the other ships in the Evans group returned to Vietnamese waters following the exercise.

Last year marked 50 years since we lost these 74 sailors. Honoring the sacrifice of these 74 sailors alongside the nearly 60,000 other service members who died in Vietnam is long overdue. We look forward to a meeting with you and working together to ensure their names are added and their sacrifice is rightfully commemorated.

Sincerely,



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

John Hoeven

John Hoeven
United States Senator

M. Michael Rounds

M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator

Doug Jones

Doug Jones
United States Senator

Pat Toomey

Pat Toomey
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Maggie Hassan

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Steve Daines

Steve Daines
United States Senator