

EVANS: Carrier sliced U.S. destroyer in half

FROM A1
coast for a naval exercise. At 3:10 a.m. on June 3, the World War II-era destroyer was hit by an Australian aircraft carrier.

On Friday, the men of the Evans — as many as 200 who served from its 1944 launch through its sinking — will come to Mount Washington Forever Cemetery in Independence for the unveiling and dedication of the “missing panel.”

The black granite slab, the exact shape and size of the panels that make up the memorial in Washington, lists the 74 sailors lost. Glines’ body was the only one recovered. His name is first on the list.

Two cemetery directors came up with the idea for the panel after learning that members of the USS Frank E. Evans Association wanted to visit Glines’ grave during their reunion this weekend in Excelsior Springs.

Dave Smith, a Mount Washington director, said he invited President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and other national leaders to the 10 a.m. dedication, which is open to the public. No response, Smith said.

But Eunice Sage of Niobrara, Neb., will be coming. She lost three sons on the Evans.

The invitation reads, in part: *The names of these brave men are not included on the Vietnam memorial wall in Washington D.C., but will be displayed here as a tribute to their service to our country.*

“I think Dad would have loved it,” Holland said. “It’s not the wall ... but it’s something.”

Glines’ family and members of the Evans association remain bitter. They suspect that rising casualties and sinking public support for the war in Vietnam influenced the Navy’s decision, and they have pushed for years to reverse the ruling.

The Navy did not respond to a written request from *The Kansas City Star* for an explanation.

Pete Peters, who was aboard the Evans that night, thinks the Navy decided as it did because

ABOUT THE EVANS

Ship type: Destroyer

Launched: Oct. 3, 1944

Crew: 336 officers and men

Service: World War II (Pacific), Korean Conflict, Vietnam

Collision: June 3, 1969

Removed from service rolls: July 1, 1969

the incident was an embarrassment.

He acknowledges, though, that not all shipmates agree.

“But I know our guys were over there doing what they were ordered to do, and that’s why we’re still fighting about this,” said Peters, who will travel here this weekend from California.

Ken Glines enlisted in early 1969, when anti-war fervor was rampant. His sisters believe he wanted to serve his country like their father, who had served in the Air Force during the early days of the Cold War.

But they also think he chose the Navy so he wouldn’t have to personally kill anyone.

The family last saw him when he came home on a leave in May that year. He didn’t tell anyone he was headed to Vietnam.

In early June, after a 10-day stint on the gun line providing support for ground troops, the Evans was ordered to participate in joint exercises with other countries in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.

Peters was in the ship’s engine room while the ship escorted the Melbourne, an Australian carrier. At 3:10 a.m. that June 3, the order came to go to flank speed — followed immediately by an urgent command for a “full emergency back down.”

“Then we hit a brick wall,” Peters remembered.

Bodies flew forward. The engine room went dark. Scalding steam hit most of the men. The

only thing that saved them from burning to death, Peters said, was the sea water pouring into the engine room.

The Melbourne had hit the 376-foot-long Evans broadside, severing bow from stern.

The bow sank in four minutes.

An inquiry determined that fault lay with the American ship’s officers.

J.C. Campbell, president of the Evans association, thinks the Navy is wrong to keep the names off the wall.

“These men gave their lives for our country, and they deserve to be up there,” Campbell said. “Vietnam was the reason the ship was over there.”

Lisa Gough, communications director for the memorial in Washington, said the four mili-

tary branches make the decisions to add names to the wall.

Since 1982, when the wall was dedicated, 314 names have been added.

On Friday morning, the Glines family, including Holland and her sister, Pam Chilcutt, will join the Evans survivors and others who served and their families for the unveiling of the missing panel.

“We just wish it would have happened a few years earlier, so our parents could see it,” Chilcutt said.

She doesn’t think the names of those lost on the Evans will ever be added to the real wall. Holland isn’t so sure. “Maybe our kids and grandkids can do something about it.”

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74 have a place in history, but not on the wall

Memorial here will honor those who died in 1969 naval accident in the South China Sea.

By DONALD BRADLEY
The Kansas City Star

After Kenneth Glines of Independence died when his Navy destroyer was cut in half in 1969, his father penned a letter to President Richard M. Nixon.

Kenneth was proud to have served in Vietnam, Larry Glines wrote, and the family took some satisfaction in knowing that the USS Frank E. Evans had fired its guns on enemy troops.

“At least he got his two cents in before he died,” the elder Glines wrote in his letter dated June 15, 1969.

But it seems that two cents

wasn’t enough. The names of 19-year-old Seaman Kenneth Glines and 73 shipmates — all of whom died when the bow of the Evans sank into the South China Sea — are not engraved in the black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.

Because the Navy ruled that the victims did not die as a result of the war, their names are not among more than 58,200 on the memorial wall.

“Our dad never got over that, and he fought them right up until he died,” Jackie Holland, Kenneth Glines’ sister, said this week. “He wanted Kenny’s name on that wall.”

The Evans had been ordered away from the Vietnamese