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## Senate

### RECOGNITION OF WORLD WAR II EXERCISE TIGER OPERATION

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, this past April 28, 1997, the Missouri and New Jersey Exercise Tiger Associations, in conjunction with Veterans of Foreign War Post 280 of Columbia, MO recognized a group of heroic men. Until recently, few people knew of the secret operation code named 'Exercise Tiger,' because the details of the tragedy were not disclosed until after the Battle of Normandy and even then proper recognition was not given.

In December 1943, several training operations began in order to prepare for the Battle of Normandy. These operations, organized by the United States Army, were undertaken off a beach in Devon, England. It was known by all participating parties the dangers they could encounter. At the time, several German ships patrolled this stretch of water looking for American and English ships. One such evening during practice operations, with only one English ship to guard, there was a surprise attack on the American ships.

On April 28, 1944, the German Navy 'E' boats, patrolling the English Channel, attacked the Eight American tank landing ships who became aware of the attack only after the U.S.S. LST-507 was struck by an incoming torpedo. Next, the U.S.S. LST-531 was attacked and sunk in a matter of minutes. The convoy returned fire and the last ship to be torpedoed, the U.S.S. LST-289, valiantly struggled to reach Dartmouth Harbor.

Even after this frightening turn of events, to its credit, Exercise Tiger continued operations and remained on schedule. Normandy was attacked as planned and the D-day invasion was a success.

Information of the fatalities was not released until after the D-day invasion due to the secrecy of the mission and in order to keep the Germans from becoming aware of the impending strike. It took many years, and the passage of the Freedom of Information Act, to learn of the significance of these missions. I feel now is the time for these courageous men to get the long-awaited recognition they deserve.

Four thousand men participated in this operation and of those, nearly a quarter were killed in action.

Records from the Department of Defense estimate 749 men died consisting of 551 Army and 198 Navy casualties. Of Tiger's death toll, 201 men were from the 3206th quartermaster company in my home State of Missouri.

This Memorial Day weekend commemorates the heroic actions of the men who participated in Exercise Tiger and particularly the ones who lost their lives in this crucial preparation for the D-day invasion. The Exercise Tiger Associations and VFW Post 280 have the great privilege of being first in the State of Missouri to recognize these brave individuals.

In the words of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, 'Old soldiers never die, they just fade away \* \* \*' I hope that through this long delayed acknowledgment of these fine soldiers, their memory will not fade away, but will remain in our minds and hearts for years to come. These men were an example for all American soldiers to live by and a credit to the United States as it remains the free and great country that it is today.