

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF THE USS ``HOUSTON''

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, yesterday marked the 75th anniversary of the sinking of the USS Houston (CA-30), the ``flagship" of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, which fought bravely against the Imperial Japanese Navy Battle Fleet. During an engagement on March 1, 1942, the USS Houston and the Australian cruiser HMAS Perth were sunk at the Battle of Sunda Strait, suffering a combined loss of nearly 1,000 servicemen; the surviving sailors and marines became prisoners of war. After the war, it was revealed that they had been sent to Japan and then transferred to the mainland and used as slave labor for construction of the Thai-Burma Railway. Only 266 men from the Houston's complement of 1,008 and 214 of the Perth's complement of 681 returned home after the war.

The news of this horrific loss hit the Lone Star state hard, but with typical Texan gusto and determination, it prompted a mass recruiting drive for volunteers to replace the lost crew. On Memorial Day 1942, a crowd of nearly 200,000 witnessed 1,000 ``Houston Volunteers" inducted into the Navy. An accompanying bond drive raised over \$85 million, enough to pay for a new cruiser and an aircraft carrier, the USS San Jacinto. This historic event speaks to the American spirit and grit as well as our enduring alliance with Australia.

In honor of this occasion, we remember the brave men of Texas, and all of those from the Greatest Generation, who gave so much to preserve freedom in the Pacific and fight for America. They fought for country and liberty in the face of impossible odds. These sailors, soldiers, and marines represent America's unbeatable determination.

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U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)