RESOLUTION 14-31

SUBJECT: WORLD WAR II MERCHANT MARINE SERVICE ACT H.R 1288

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA

WHEREAS, Coastwise Merchant Seaman were tasked with the critically important role of transporting materials for the war effort along the U.S. coast during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Congress attempted to recognize the valiant efforts of the Merchant Marine with legislation via GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977, Merchant Mariners Act of 1988, and the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1988. These laws failed to include all who served in the Merchant Marine during World War II and placed onerous and sometimes impossible criteria on individuals to prove their service; and

WHEREAS, a majority of the documentation required to prove service no longer exists. The Coast Guard Commandant and Captains of tugboats and seagoing barges were relieved of the responsibility of submitting reports of seaman shipped or discharged. The deck or engine logbooks were turned over to the War Shipping Administration and were ordered destroyed. Shipping company records that indicated the vessel names and dates of voyages likely never existed due to communications relating to the movement of supplies and troops being strictly forbidden by U.S. military commanders; and

WHEREAS, less than 10,000 World War II Merchant Marines are alive and likely that only a few thousand Coastwise Merchant Seaman are still living; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 1288 will allow the Social Security Administration records, validated testimony by the applicant or closest living relative or other official records that would provide sufficient proof of service to determine eligible service in the Merchant Marine/Coastwise Merchant Marine; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that AMVETS support H.R. 1288, WWII Merchants Marines Service Act and initiate significant emphasis on passage of this bill to correct a travesty of over 70 years.