

May 25, 2006
Statement

Floor Statement on Legislation to Name East Greenwich Post Office for Commander
Richard L. Cevoli

MR REED: Mr. President, today I pay tribute to one of Rhode Island's most highly decorated soldiers, Commander Richard L. Cevoli of East Greenwich.

Commander Cevoli served our nation bravely in both World War II and the Korean War. In honor of his sacrifices and service to his nation, I am introducing a bill, along with Senator Chafee, to name the post office located at 5775 Post Road in East Greenwich, RI, the ``Richard L. Cevoli Post Office."

Commander Cevoli was born in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, on October 24, 1919, and died in a tragic plane crash in Florida on January 18, 1955. He went to Rhode Island State College, which is now the University of Rhode Island, and earned a degree in civil engineering. In 1941, after graduation, he moved to New York and began working for the engineering firm of Merritt, Chapman & Scott.

The month after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Richard Cevoli returned to Rhode Island and entered the Navy. He was sent to flight training in Dallas, Sanford, and Pensacola before being assigned to Squadron VF-18, based on the USS Intrepid in the Pacific.

It was during his service with the VF-18 that Commander Cevoli was awarded the second-highest medal awarded in the Navy--the Navy Cross. This honor was given to Commander Cevoli during the Battle of Leyte Gulf off the Philippines coast in October of 1944. Along with other fighters, Commander Cevoli strafed the largest Japanese ship, silencing many of its guns. The following day, he severely damaged a Japanese aircraft carrier with a 500-pound bomb. On a subsequent attack on the Japanese forces, as is recorded in his medal citation, ``Cevoli disregarded the terrific antiaircraft opposition and scored a near miss on a Kongo class battleship with a 500-pound bomb. Then, pulling out he made a second run to strafe a destroyer, silencing its antiaircraft weapons and thereby contributing to our successful bombing and torpedo attacks which followed. His outstanding courage and determination were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service." Following his service during the war, he returned to Rhode Island and continued his Navy career at Naval Air Station, Quonset Point. However, the peace was short-lived. North Korea invaded South Korea, and another major conflict quickly began.

From 1949 until 1951, Commander Cevoli served as the Executive Officer in Squadron VF-18 on board the USS Leyte, seeing action in Korea. In addition to the Navy Cross, Commander Cevoli earned two Distinguished Flying Crosses and eight Air Medals during his active flying career.

Once the conflict in Korea had ended, Commander Cevoli was able to spend more time at home. He took classes at the Naval War College in Newport and in July, 1954 he was placed in command of Squadron VF-73. Tragically, he died serving his country when his plane crashed during a training mission.

Commander Cevoli left behind a wife, Grace, and three children, Steven, Carol, and Elizabeth. A life-long resident of East Greenwich, Commander Cevoli's legacy is memorialized in the Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame.

This legislation will pay tribute to this hero of Rhode Island and the United States, and I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Commander Cevoli by supporting this bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of this legislation be printed in the Record.

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