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## General Assembly Honors Heisinger

Wife accepts husband's posthumous honor.

By [Bonnie Hobbs, Centre View](#)  
January 5, 2007

Duane Heisinger couldn't be there in person, but he was there in spirit when his wife Judy recently received an honor on his behalf.

At the Dec. 20 meeting of the Sully District Council of Citizens Association's (SDC) membership meeting, Del. Tim Hugo (R-40th) presented her with a resolution from the General Assembly commemorating her husband's life.

Heisinger, of Centreville's Bull Run Estates community, died of cancer May 1 at age 75. He had a distinguished, 30-year career in the Navy, retiring as a captain. He and Judy were married 49 years.

One of his proudest accomplishments was writing a book called "Father Found," telling the story of his father's life and death as a Japanese POW in the Philippines during WWII. It also helped many other POW descendants find out what happened to their relatives who, like Heisinger's father, had been transported under inhumane conditions on what were later dubbed "Hell Ships."

"Duane told me about his book and I read it and it touched me," said Hugo. "I was also impressed with the courage and leadership his father demonstrated. I had this resolution done and planned before Duane's passing, and it talks about how he served his country in intelligence and in Vietnam. So I present this on behalf of the General Assembly; I'm sorry he's not here to accept it."

Patroned in the House by Hugo and in the Senate by Sen. Ken Cuccinelli (R-37), the resolution notes Heisinger's three tours in Vietnam, his commanding of a landing ship transport and a destroyer and his service in London as an attaché during the Falklands War.

It also applauds him for being "a driving force in the planning, fund-raising and establishment of the Hell Ships Memorial in the Philippines." Heisinger was at the memorial's dedication in Subic Bay in January, and his words honoring those POWs are inscribed on it.

The resolution states that Heisinger will be remembered and respected for his valuable contributions and that the General Assembly mourns "the passing of an American patriot and outstanding Virginian."

Accepting it, Judy Heisinger noted that more than 4,000 people, including Duane's father, died on the Hell Ships. And she told Hugo how much she appreciated the resolution honoring her husband. "Duane would have thought he didn't deserve this, any more than any other people," she said afterward. "His work was to honor his father and the other POWs. But, yes, he led an exemplary life, and it's very nice of Tim and the rest of the legislature to do this to honor him. The family is very pleased and proud."

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Photo by Bonnie Hobbs/Centre View  
**Judy Heisinger (center) receives the General Assembly's resolution from Del. Tim Hugo while her daughter, Jody Kopach of Fairfax, looks on.**



**Duane Heisinger**

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