

2021 -- H 6186

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF JOHN O'HARA

Introduced By: Representatives Tanzi, Filippi, McEntee, Blazejewski, Fogarty, Knight,  
Cortvriend, C Lima, Fellela, and Solomon

Date Introduced: March 30, 2021

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, John O'Hara of Narragansett, was born in Reddish, Stockport, England, the  
2 son of John and Clara O'Hara. His family immigrated to the United States when he was two and  
3 moved to Riverside, before settling in North Providence; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. O'Hara grew up during the difficult times of the Great Depression. He  
5 graduated from La Salle Academy and shortly thereafter joined the Civilian Conservation Corps,  
6 and helped to build roads at Burlingame State Park; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1942, Mr. O'Hara enlisted in the United States Navy and served our  
8 nation with honor and bravery. Altogether, he was involved in thirteen major battles before his  
9 tour of duty ended, serving in the European, Pacific and Mediterranean theaters during World  
10 War II. In recognition of his service, Mr. O'Hara was the recipient of the Purple Heart, thirteen  
11 Battle Stars, two Silver Stars and three Bronze Stars along with numerous other medals and  
12 ribbons; and

13 WHEREAS, John O'Hara earned his Purple Heart while serving aboard the USS Hugh L.  
14 Scott, when a German submarine torpedoed the ship. He was seriously wounded and had to fight  
15 hard to escape the ship and its flames before it sank. All of his crewmates perished. While  
16 recovering, he was assigned to the battleship USS Alabama, where he served as a Gun Captain  
17 until the end of the war. He and his shipmates bravely fought kamikazes off the Japanese home  
18 Island of Kyushu and had the high honor of leading the United States Fleet into Tokyo Bay after  
19 the formal surrender of the Japanese; and

20 WHEREAS, In further recognition of Mr. O'Hara's heroic service during World War II,

1 he was an honoree at the National WWII Memorial in Washington D.C., the National WWII  
2 Museum in New Orleans, the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, the USS Alabama Battleship  
3 Memorial, and the USS Arizona Memorial. He appeared in three World War II documentaries, a  
4 Japanese documentary on Okinawa, and his war memoirs and poems are registered at the Navy  
5 College Library in Newport; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. O'Hara was a multi-talented person who was a professional  
7 photographer for more than fifty years, and the author of two books of poems. After the war, he  
8 moved to New York City to work at the New York Journal-American daily newspaper. He later  
9 returned to Rhode Island where he accepted a position with the United States Postal Service. He  
10 served for 34 years and rose to the position of Postmaster before he retired. He also had the high  
11 honor of meeting with President Kennedy in 1961 to discuss a United States Postal Bill, a  
12 meeting that was captured in a photograph; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. O'Hara was a beloved figure within the community and was always  
14 active in civic affairs. He and his wife Shirley raised their family in Seekonk, and Mr. O'Hara  
15 served on numerous Seekonk Boards and Commissions. He was a member of the AARP, Silver  
16 Haired Legislators and the Gazzero-VFW Post 2812 in Cranston. In his later years, he devoted  
17 much of his time visiting schools in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut, talking to  
18 children and young adults about his experiences in World War II. He was also a communicant of  
19 Saint Peters by the Sea Episcopal Church in Narragansett; and

20 WHEREAS, Mr. O'Hara leaves behind his six sons, Michael and his wife, Deane, Wayne  
21 and his wife, Grace, Brian and his wife, Judith , Brett, Dale and his wife, Sherri, and Jason. He  
22 was the brother of six siblings, the late Robert O'Hara and his wife, Brenda, his sister the late  
23 Irene Foster, and the late Mary, Marjorie, William, and George. He also leaves behind sixteen  
24 grandchildren, fifteen great-grandchildren, fourteen nieces and nephews, and many cousins from  
25 the United States, England and Australia; and

26 WHEREAS, Mr. John O'Hara leaves behind an enduring legacy of heroic service to our  
27 nation, of being a devoted and loving son, husband, father, grandfather, and friend to many, and  
28 of distinguished public service that bettered our communities; now, therefore be it

29 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
30 expresses its deepest condolences on the passing of John O'Hara and hopes his lifetime of service  
31 to our nation and local communities is long-remembered by future generations; and be it further

32 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
33 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Michael O'Hara, Wayne O'Hara, Brian

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