

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 14, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to ask you to consider officially recognizing the 50th anniversary of a tragedy that took the lives of 28 Air Force and civilian personnel working at the "Texas Tower #4" radar station in January 1961.

Hurricane Donna badly damaged "Texas Tower #4" in September 1960. As the military and civilian crew worked to repair the radar station on January 15, 1961, all 28 aboard were killed when the weakened tower was hit by another storm and collapsed into the sea.

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of this tragedy. It is my hope that the family members of the radar station will finally receive official recognition for the service and sacrifice of their loved ones, helping at long last to bring closure to their families.

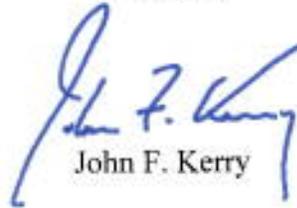
This recognition is a long time in coming. In 2006, I joined eight of my Senate colleagues on a similar letter asking that the 28 members of "Texas Tower #4" be recognized by the Bush Administration for their sacrifice. Unfortunately, that request did not receive any response. I am including a copy of this letter to President Bush and my more recent one to you. I also sent a letter to the Air Force on April 23, 2010 asking for a similar recognition. The Air Force did send a letter to the family members, but the honor of a letter from the President would provide the survivor families the closure they've been seeking.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the continued loyalty and perseverance of Don Slutzky, a surviving civilian volunteer who served aboard Texas Tower #4. Don has pursued recognition for the fallen for the past decade. His continued advocacy is a remarkable story of honor and fidelity. I have included for your review copies of letters Don has solicited over the years from Members of Congress and other relevant information to assist you in deciding on this issue. It is my hope that you will also be able to recognize Don's work on behalf of his fallen colleagues as well.

I would be pleased to provide you with any additional information that may be required to make this decision.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry

Encl:

1. Statement of Donald Slutzky on the history of Texas Tower #4.
2. Newspaper articles on the event.
3. Correspondence on this issue from May, 2000 to present.
4. Example of proposed recognition.