

107TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 487

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., should be recognized as a courageous warrior, an extraordinary officer, and a great American hero.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 16, 2002

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., should be recognized as a courageous warrior, an extraordinary officer, and a great American hero.

Whereas in 1936, General Davis was the first African-American to graduate from West Point Military Academy in the 20th century;

Whereas during his four years at West Point, he was officially “silenced” by all cadets because he was African-American and not a single classmate spoke to him except in the line of duty;

Whereas in spite of this racial injustice he graduated 35th in a class of 276 students;

Whereas in 1941 he joined 12 cadets in the first flying training program for African-Americans at Tuskegee, Alabama, and in 1942 he received his flying wings after becoming the first African-American officer to solo an Army Air Corps aircraft;

Whereas during World War II, in 1943, he commanded the “Tuskegee Airmen” of the 99th Pursuit Squadron and in 1944 he took command of the 332nd Fighter Group and was deployed to Italy;

Whereas on June 9, 1944, then-Colonel Davis led 39 Thunderbolts escorting B-24s to targets in Germany, taking on more than 100 German fighters and destroying five Me-109s;

Whereas for his leadership and bravery on that mission he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross;

Whereas he later commanded the 332nd Fighter Group, whose aircraft was the distinctive “Red Tail” P-51 Mustang, and flew more than 15,000 sorties against the Luftwaffe in which not one friendly bomber under the group’s protection was lost to enemy aircraft during escort missions;

Whereas his leadership of America’s only all-African-American air unit of World War II helped speed the integration of the Air Force;

Whereas in 1954 he became the first African-American to reach the rank of Brigadier General in the United States Air Force;

Whereas when General Davis retired from the Air Force in 1970 as a Lieutenant General, wearing three stars, he was the senior African-American officer in the Armed Forces; and

Whereas in 1998, Lieutenant General Davis was awarded his fourth star, advancing him to full General: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., hav-
2 ing died on July 4, 2002, America's day of independence,
3 should be recognized for his achievement as one of Amer-
4 ica's most accomplished military officers, whose strength,
5 determination, and character in the face of racial injustice
6 and bigotry could not prevent him from serving with the
7 highest honor and distinction for the country he so proud-
8 ly loved.

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