

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 605

Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift and honoring the veterans of Operation Vittles.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 26, 2008

Mr. DEMINT (for himself and Mr. BAYH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift and honoring the veterans of Operation Vittles.

Whereas in spring of 1948 Berlin was isolated within the Soviet occupation zone and had only 35 days' worth of food and 45 days' worth of coal remaining for the city;

Whereas military planners in the United States and the United Kingdom determined that 1,534 tons of flour, wheat, fish, milk, and other food items would be required daily to feed the 2,000,000 residents of Berlin;

Whereas military planners determined that 3,475 tons of coal and gasoline would be required daily to keep the city of Berlin heated and powered;

Whereas, on June 1, 1948, the United States Air Force created the Military Air Transport Service, the predecessor

to Air Mobility Command, to organize and conduct airlift missions;

Whereas, on June 26, 1948, “Operation Vittles” began when 32 United States Air Force C-47 Dakotas departed West Germany for Berlin hauling 80 tons of cargo, and the first British aircraft launched on June 28, 1948;

Whereas Major General William H. Tunner, a veteran of the aerial supply line over the Himalayas in World War II, took command of “Operation Vittles” on July 28, 1948;

Whereas Major General Tunner pioneered many new and innovative tactics and procedures for the airlift, including the creation of air corridors for ingress and egress, staggering altitudes of the aircraft, and implementing instrument flight rules which allowed aircraft to land as frequently as every 3 minutes;

Whereas one pilot, 1st Lieutenant Gail S. Halvorsen, who became known as the “Candy Bomber”, initiated “Operation Little Vittles” to bring hope to the children of Berlin, by dropping handkerchief parachutes containing chocolate and chewing gum as a symbol of American goodwill, ultimately resulting in more than 3 tons of candy being dropped in more than 250,000 miniature parachutes;

Whereas, on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1949, airlifters reached the pinnacle of “Operation Vittles” by delivering 13,000 tons of cargo, including the equivalent of 600 railroad cars full of coal, setting the single day record for the Berlin Airlift;

Whereas 39 British and 31 American airmen made the ultimate sacrifice during the Berlin Airlift, and 8 British and 17 American aircraft were lost;

Whereas airlifters delivered more than 2,300,000 tons of food and supplies on 278,228 total flights into Berlin;

Whereas the Soviet Union was forced to lift the blockade in light of the success of the 15-month airlift operation;

Whereas the Berlin Airlift marked the first use of airpower to provide hope and humanitarian assistance, and to win a strategic victory against enemy aggression and intimidation;

Whereas the enormous effort and cooperation of the Berlin Airlift laid the foundation for a deep and lasting friendship between the people of the United States and the people of Germany; and

Whereas, today, air mobility continues to play a vital role in United States foreign policy by helping to advance freedom and alleviate suffering around the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That Congress—

2 (1) recognizes the 60th anniversary of the Ber-
3 lin Airlift as the largest and longest running human-
4 itarian airlift operation in history;

5 (2) honors the service and sacrifice of the men
6 and women who participated in and supported the
7 Berlin Airlift;

8 (3) commends the close friendship forged be-
9 tween the American, British, and German people
10 through the Berlin Airlift; and

11 (4) applauds the men and women of the United
12 States Air Force's Air Mobility Command, who, in

1 the best traditions of the Berlin Airlift, still work
2 diligently to provide hope, save lives, and deliver
3 freedom around the world in support of the United
4 States's foreign policy objectives.

