

SENATE RESOLUTION 415—HONORING THE LIFE AND RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WILLIAM KARNET “BILL” WILLIS, PIONEER AND HALL OF FAME FOOTBALL PLAYER FOR BOTH OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE CLEVELAND BROWNS

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) submitted the following resolution:

S. RES. 415

Whereas William Karnet Willis (“Bill”) was born on October 5, 1921, in Columbus, Ohio;

Whereas, in 1942, Bill Willis began playing college football for the Ohio State University’s Buckeyes and was a member of the 1942 National Championship team;

Whereas Bill Willis earned All-American honors at the Ohio State University in 1943 and 1944, becoming the first African American All-American at the Ohio State University;

Whereas Bill Willis was twice chosen to play in the College All-Star Game, in 1944 and in 1945;

Whereas, on August 7, 1946, Bill Willis was the first of a pioneering foursome to sign a contract to play professional football for the Cleveland Browns, forever ending the race barrier in professional football;

Whereas Bill Willis was named 3 times an All-America Football Conference all-league player, named 4 times a National Football League all-league player, and was named to the first 3 Pro Bowls;

Whereas, in 1950, Bill Willis was a member of the National Football League champion Cleveland Browns and was named the team’s Most Valuable Player;

Whereas, in 1971, Bill Willis was inducted into the National Football Foundation’s College Football Hall of Fame;

Whereas, in 1977, Bill Willis was inducted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame;

Whereas Bill Willis was synonymous with his number 99 jersey in the Ohio State University community, and that number was retired on November 3, 2007;

Whereas Bill Willis dedicated his life to helping others and served his community honorably on the Ohio Youth Commission;

Whereas Bill Willis was a beloved community leader, husband, and father; and

Whereas Ohio has lost a beloved son and a trailblazing pioneer with the passing of Bill Willis on November 27, 2007: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) honors the life and accomplishments of William Karnet “Bill” Willis, a dedicated family man, civil servant, and football legend; and

(2) respectfully requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution for appropriate display to the family of Bill Willis.

SENATE RESOLUTION 416—RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AS AN INDEPENDENT MILITARY SERVICE

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GRAHAM,

Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. ALLARD) submitted the following resolution; which was:

S. RES. 416

Whereas President Harry S Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947 on July 26, 1947, to realign and reorganize the Armed Forces and to create a separate Department of the Air Force from the existing military services;

Whereas the National Security Act of 1947 was enacted on September 18, 1947;

Whereas the Aeronautical Division of the United States Army Signal Corps, consisting of one officer and two enlisted men, began operation under the command of Captain Charles DeForest Chandler on August 1, 1907, with the responsibility for “all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred subjects”;

Whereas in 1908, the Department of War contracted with the Wright brothers to build one heavier-than-air flying machine for the United States Army, and accepted the Wright Military Flyer, the world’s first military airplane, in 1909;

Whereas United States pilots, flying with both allied air forces and with the Army Air Service, performed admirably in the course of World War I, participating in pursuit, observation, and day and night bombing missions;

Whereas pioneering aviators of the United States, including Mason M. Patrick, William “Billy” Mitchell, Benjamin D. Foulois, Frank M. Andrews, Henry “Hap” Arnold, James “Jimmy” H. Doolittle, and Edward “Eddie” Rickenbacker, were among the first to recognize the military potential of air power and courageously forged the foundations for the creation of an independent arm for air forces in the United States in the decades following World War I;

Whereas on June 20, 1941, the Department of War created the Army Air Forces (AAF) as its aviation element and shortly thereafter the Department of War made the AAF co-equal to the Army Ground Forces;

Whereas General Henry H. “Hap” Arnold drew upon the industrial prowess and human resources of the United States to transform the Army Air Corps from a force of 22,400 men and 2,402 aircraft in 1939 to a peak wartime strength of 2.4 million personnel and 79,908 aircraft;

Whereas the standard for courage, flexibility, and intrepidity in combat was established for all Airmen during the first aerial raid in the Pacific Theater on April 18, 1942, when Lieutenant Colonel James “Jimmy” H. Doolittle led 16 North American B-25 Mitchell bombers in a joint operation from the deck of the naval carrier USS Hornet to strike the Japanese mainland in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor;

Whereas President Harry S Truman supported organizing air power as an equal arm of the military forces of the United States, writing on December 19, 1945, that air power had developed so that the responsibilities and contributions to military strategic planning of air power equaled those of land and sea power;

Whereas on September 18, 1947, W. Stuart Symington became the first Secretary of the newly formed and independent United States Air Force (USAF), and on September 26, 1947, General Carl A. Spaatz became the first Chief of Staff of the USAF;

Whereas the Air National Guard was also created by the National Security Act of 1947 and has played a vital role in guarding the United States and defending freedom in nearly every major conflict and contingency since its inception;

Whereas on October 14, 1947, the USAF demonstrated its historic and ongoing commitment to technological innovation when Captain Charles “Chuck” Yeager piloted the X-1 developmental rocket plane to a speed of Mach 1.07, becoming the first flyer to break the sound barrier in a powered aircraft in level flight;

Whereas the USAF Reserve, created April 14, 1948, is comprised of Citizen Airmen who serve as unrivaled wingmen of the active duty USAF in every deployment, mission, and battlefield around the globe;

Whereas the USAF operated the Berlin Airlift in 1948 and 1949 to provide humanitarian relief to post-war Germany and has established a tradition of humanitarian assistance in responding to natural disasters and needs across the world;

Whereas the USAF announced a policy of racial integration in the ranks of the USAF on April 26, 1948, 3 months prior to a Presidential mandate to integrate all military services;

Whereas in the early years of the Cold War, the USAF’s arsenal of bombers, such as the long-range Convair B-58 Hustler and B-36 Peacemaker, and the Boeing B-47 Stratojet and B-52 Stratofortress, under the command of General Curtis LeMay served as the United States’ preeminent deterrent against Soviet Union forces and were later augmented by the development and deployment of medium range and intercontinental ballistic missiles, such as the Titan and Minuteman developed by General Bernard A. Schriever;

Whereas the USAF, employing the first large-scale combat use of jet aircraft, helped to establish air superiority over the Korean peninsula, protected ground forces of the United Nations with close air support, and interdicted enemy reinforcements and supplies during the conflict in Korea;

Whereas after the development of launch vehicles and orbital satellites, the mission of the USAF expanded into space and today provides exceptional real-time global communications, environmental monitoring, navigation, precision timing, missile warning, nuclear deterrence, and space surveillance;

Whereas USAF Airmen have contributed to the manned space program of the United States since the program’s inception and throughout the program’s development at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration by dedicating themselves wholly to space exploration despite the risks of exploration;

Whereas the USAF engaged in a limited campaign of air power to assist the South Vietnamese government in countering the communist Viet Cong guerillas during the Vietnam War and fought to disrupt supply lines, halt enemy ground offensives, and protect United States and Allied forces;

Whereas Airmen were imprisoned and tortured during the Vietnam War and, in the valiant tradition of Airmen held captive in previous conflicts, continued serving the United States with honor and dignity under the most inhumane circumstances;

Whereas, in recent decades, the USAF and coalition partners of the United States have supported successful actions in Panama, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other locations around the globe;

Whereas Pacific Air Forces, along with Asia-Pacific partners of the United States, ensure peace and advance freedom from the west coast of the United States to the east coast of Africa and from the Arctic to the Antarctic, covering more than 100 million square miles and the homes of 2 billion people in 44 countries;

Whereas the United States Air Forces in Europe, along with European partners of the