

House Proceedings

**House of Representatives - RECOGNIZING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF BERLIN AIRLIFT'S SUCCESS**

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Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 398) recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift's success.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. Res. 398

Whereas pursuant to mutual agreement among allies concluded at the Potsdam Conference following the unconditional surrender of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist (NAZI) regime on May 8, 1945, the German capitol of Berlin was divided into four zones of military occupation controlled by the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France;

Whereas in a bid to maintain leverage over Germany by perpetuating its economic instability, and in opposition to the United States' Marshall Plan and the allies' proposal for a new, more stable German currency, then Soviet Dictator Joseph Stalin ordered a blockade of Berlin on June 22, 1948;

Whereas Stalin's blockade prohibited all ground access to the city, blocking the people of Berlin;

Whereas three 20-mile-wide free air corridors had been agreed on November 30, 1945, to provide unfettered access to Berlin along accepted flight routes;

Whereas the Soviet regime insisted that the Western Allies allow food and medicine to be supplied to these sectors only through Soviet-controlled East Germany, effectively allowing Soviet control over West Berlin;

Whereas President Harry S. Truman ordered the stationing of U.S. B-29 Superfortresses at British airfields on June 28, 1948;

Whereas Britain's Foreign Minister Ernest Brevin, at the suggestion of Commander Sir Brian Robertson, proposed employing a military airlift as an alternative to an armed convoy through the Soviet sector to provide humanitarian relief to Berlin's traumatized and beleaguered population;

Whereas General Lucius Clay, then United States military governor of Germany, and Major General Curtis LeMay, Commanding General of the United States Air Force in Europe, requested Douglas C-54 Skymasters, the largest transport plane available to the United States Air Force, to help supply the colossal strategic air mission;

Whereas the first Skymasters arrived at Rhein-Main Air Base on June 28, 1948, and were immediately loaded to begin Operation Vittles to convey supplies to Berlin;

Whereas the Soviet regime publically derided the airlift, announcing that it would be impossible to carry out and maintain such an operation, characterizing the mission in the East German press as, "the futile attempts of the Americans to save face and to maintain their untenable position in Berlin";

Whereas Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand joined Great Britain and the United States in what became the largest humanitarian operation ever undertaken by the United States Air Force;

Whereas Lt. General William Turner, honored in the Air Cargo Hall of Fame for his tactical brilliance as commander of the Berlin Airlift, was called upon to lead the Berlin Airlift and worked tirelessly to ensure that the aircraft he commanded supplied the besieged city of Berlin with essential supplies including coal, heating oil, medicine, and food from July 28, 1948, through the official conclusion of the mission on September 30, 1949;

Whereas the Berlin Airlift resulted in the total delivery of 1,783,573 tons of supplies by the United States and 541,937 tons of supplies totaling 2,300,000 tons delivered on 277,569 total flights to Berlin;

Whereas the United States Air Force's C-47s and C-54s alone logged 92,000,000 miles in the Berlin Airlift;

Whereas the commitment of the United States to aid the besieged people of Berlin resulted in the tragic loss of 101 allied personnel, of which 31 were United States casualties;

Whereas the following Air Force units, aided by the United States Navy and Army, are known to have contributed to the success of the Berlin Airlift—

- (1) HHS1 Air Life Task Force;
- (2) 10 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (3) 11 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (4) 12 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (5) 14 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (6) 15 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (7) 29 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (8) 39 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (9) 40 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (10) 41 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (11) 47 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (12) 48 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (13) 53 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (14) HHS 60 Troop Carrier Wing;
- (15) HQ 60 Troop Carrier Group;
- (16) 60 Troop Carrier Group;
- (17) HQ60 Maintenance Support Group;
- (18) 60 Maintenance Squadron;
- (19) 60 Supply Squadron;
- (20) 60 FIN DIS UT;
- (21) 60 COMM Squadron;
- (22) 60A Police Squadron;
- (23) 60 Food Service Squadron;
- (24) 60 Install SQ;

- (25) 60 Motor Vehicle Squadron;
- (26) 60 Base Services Squadron;
- (27) 60 Medical Group;
- (28) HHS A B Group;
- (29) HQ61 Troop Carrier Group;
- (30) HQ313 Troop Carrier Group;
- (31) HHS61 Troop Carrier Wing;
- (32) HQ317 Troop Carrier Group;
- (33) HQ317 Maintenance Supply Group;
- (34) 317 Maintenance Squadron;
- (35) 317 Supply Squadron;
- (36) HHS 317 A B Group;
- (37) 317 Communications Squadron;
- (38) 317A Police Squadron;
- (39) 317 Food Services Squadron;
- (40) 317 Installation Squadron;
- (41) 317 Motor Vehicle Squadron;
- (42) 317 Base Services Squadron;
- (43) 317 FIN DIS UT;
- (44) 317 Medical Group;
- (45) 330 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (46) 331 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (47) 332 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (48) 333 Troop Carrier Squadron;
- (49) HHS 513 A B Group;
- (50) HQ 513 Troop Carrier Group;
- (51) 513 Troop Carrier Group;
- (52) HQ 513 Maintenance Sup Group;
- (53) 513 Maintenance Squadron;
- (54) 513 Supply Squadron;
- (55) 513 Communications Squadron;
- (56) 513A Police Squadron;
- (57) 513 Food Service Squadron;
- (58) 513 Install Squadron;

- (59) 513 Motor Vehicle Squadron;
- (60) 513 Base Services Squadron;
- (61) 513 Finance Distribution Unit;
- (62) 513 Medical Group;
- (63) HHS 7350 A B Group;
- (64) 7351 Maintenance Supply Squadron;
- (65) 7352 AF Police Squadron;
- (66) 7353 Installation Squadron; and
- (67) HHS 7497A Lift Wing;

Whereas Col. **Gail Halvorsen**, also known as the "Candy Bomber" and recipient of the 1948 Cheney Award, distinguished himself by launching Operation Little Vittles, a magnanimous effort that parachuted over 3 tons of candy to the children of Berlin, including children in the Soviet sector;

Whereas in the face of the massive allied goodwill offensive, the Soviets capitulated and lifted the blockade on May 12, 1949;

Whereas the Berlin Airlift consolidated the successful use of air transport in military operations and led to the creation of the Air Mobility Command;

Whereas German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer noted that the Berlin Airlift "was a truly visible sign that America recognized her duty to be the leader of free nations and wanted to fulfill it."; and

Whereas the determined actions of the Berlin Airlift sent a clear message to the Soviet Union that the United States held an unquestionable commitment and unwavering resolve to prevent tyranny in Europe: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

- (1) recognizes the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, and commends all of the operation's United States veterans for their valor and determination to represent the noble ideals that thwarted the fall of the Iron Curtain over Berlin's western strongholds;
- (2) honors the veterans of the Berlin Airlift who lost their lives to bring the means of survival and sustenance to civilians under siege in the service to their country;
- (3) commends the spirit of collaboration which characterized this united allied operation involving both military and civilian aircraft and crews; and
- (4) honors the men and women of the United States military whose continued dedication to the ideals of integrity, compassion, and liberty upholds the honorable legacy of the United States Armed Forces, as illustrated by the Berlin Airlift, and renews [H12161] our faith in the power of freedom and goodness to prevail over tyranny.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. Walz) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Stearns) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

General Leave

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3949, as amended, and H. Res. 398.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before I talk about the importance of the resolution before us today, I want to thank the Committee on Armed Services for working with the Veterans' Affairs Committee to bring this bill to the floor. And I include for the Congressional Record the exchange of letters waiving jurisdiction between the Committee of Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services.

Committee on Armed Services,

House of Representatives,

Washington, DC, October 6, 2009.

Hon. Bob Filner,

Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Chairman: On May 4, 2009, the House Resolution 398, "Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift's success," was introduced in the House. As you know, this measure was sequentially referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

Our Committee recognizes the importance of H.R. 398 and the need for the legislation to move expeditiously. Therefore, while we have a valid claim to jurisdiction over this legislation, the Committee on Armed Services will waive further consideration of H.R. 398. I do so with the understanding that by waiving further consideration of the resolution, the Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claims over similar measures.

I would appreciate the inclusion of this letter and a copy of your response in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Very truly yours,

Ike Skelton

Chairman.

House of Representatives,

Committee on Veterans' Affairs,

Washington, DC, October 14, 2009.

Hon. Ike Skelton,

Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, Rayburn House Office Building, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Chairman: Thank you for your letter regarding House Resolution 398, "Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift's success." This measure was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and sequentially referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

I agree that the Committee on Armed Services has certain valid jurisdictional claims to this resolution, and I appreciate your decision to waive further consideration of H. Res. 398 in the interest of expediting consideration of this important measure. I agree that by agreeing to waive further consideration, the Committee on Armed Services is not waiving its jurisdictional claims over similar measures in the future.

During consideration of this measure on the House floor, I will ask that this exchange of letters be included in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

Bob Filner,

Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 398 recognizes the 60th anniversary of one of our Nation's most commendable humanitarian airlift operations in history.

As a whole, the United States Armed Forces is equipped with advanced and powerful equipment which gives them significant capabilities used not only for defense but also for humanitarian relief, as was so ably demonstrated in Berlin from July 1948 through September 1949.

During a time of tyrannical regime, the people of Berlin were left without the basic necessities, such as food and heat. The first Skymasters delivered humanitarian relief to the Berlin people, demonstrated our commitment to a free Berlin, and brought hope to all of Eastern Europe.

I am in full support of this resolution which honors the veterans of the Berlin Airlift who lost their lives in the service to their country to bring the means of survival and sustenance to civilians under siege.

The Berlin Airlift embodied the spirit of collaboration, valor, and the goodwill of all mankind. The operation stands as a testament of the perseverance and commitment to excellence of the United States Armed Forces. It is only right to honor the brave men and women involved in the Berlin Airlift who set an example of our faith in the power of freedom and goodness to overcome tyranny.

House Resolution 398 does this, and it honors the men and women of today's Armed Forces who continue to uphold the ideals of integrity, compassion, and liberty demonstrated by those involved in the Berlin Airlift.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 398, a resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift's success.

The Berlin blockade from June 1948 to May 1949 was one of the first major international crises of the Cold War and the first such crisis that resulted in casualties. During the multinational occupation of post-World War II Germany, the Soviet Union blocked the Western Allies' railway and road access to the sectors of Berlin under their control. Their aim was to force the Western powers to allow the Soviet zone to start supplying Berlin with food and fuel, thereby giving the Soviets practical control over the entire city.

The Truman administration reacted quickly by setting up a continual daily airlift that brought much-needed food and supplies into the city of West Berlin. This airlift lasted until the end of September 1949, even though the Soviet Government yielded and lifted the blockade itself on May 12, 1949. The Berlin Airlift resulted in the total delivery of 1,783,573 tons of supplies by the United States and 541,937 tons of supplies totaling 2,300,000 tons delivered on 277,569 total flights into Berlin.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution not only details a history of the Berlin Airlift, but also provides a list of all the units involved in the heroic effort at that time. The Berlin Airlift sent a clear message to the Soviet Union that the United States was unwavering in its resolve against tyranny in Europe.

I would like to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Fortenberry), for introducing this legislation, as well as Chairman Filner and Ranking Member Buyer for moving the bill as quickly as they could through the subcommittee and to full consideration here on the House floor today.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 398.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, sixty years ago, the United States, joined by Great Britain, Australia, and South Africa embarked on a historic operation to sustain and defend the vulnerable, entrapped people of Berlin, Germany. The Berlin Airlift was a colossal strategic mission that inspired strength and fortitude in those held captive by then Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's blockade of the Western-held sectors of Berlin. Today, this Congress honors those responsible for this noble feat.

The Veterans of the Berlin Airlift struck the first major blow in the new Cold War, forcing Stalin on May 12, 1949, to lift the blockade that impoverished Germany's capitol, thwarting the fall of the Iron Curtain over the Western strongholds.

These airmen embodied the highest virtues of American air defense, fusing tactical brilliance and innovation with goodness and heart in one of the greatest humanitarian efforts of all time. In providing food, coal, and medical supplies to the besieged citizens of West Berlin, our veterans of the "Greatest Generation" led a seminal goodwill

offensive that alleviated the suffering inflicted by a communist regime that threatened not only the peace and prosperity of Berlin, but the peace and prosperity of the world.

As Col. **Gail Halvorsen** and his colleagues carpeted the streets of Berlin with chocolates and candy during Operation Little Vittles, they drew the hearts and minds of Berlin's children to notions of goodness and liberty, and away from the pervasive communist propaganda that sought to turn them against the West.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, let us remember the veterans who exemplified our highest ideals of brilliance and innovation in air defense, and whose integrity and dedication to liberty have inspired so many vulnerable people throughout the world. Their example renews our faith in the power of freedom and goodness to prevail over tyranny.

As memories of World War II and the Berlin Blockade fade with the passing years, I believe it is even more important to commemorate the spirit of kindness that led our veterans to bring hope and joy to the weary and beleaguered citizens of Berlin. May we honor their legacy and follow their example.

I am grateful for this opportunity to commemorate this noble endeavor and to honor the memory of those who are surely with us in spirit, those who gave the last full measure of devotion to a cause greater than themselves, a cause that changed the course of history for the better.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H. Res. 398, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. Walz) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 398.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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