

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6863

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 15, 2022

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Memphis, Tennessee, as the “Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical Center”.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., was born De-
4 cember 16, 1922, in Grenada, Mississippi, then
5 moved to Memphis, Tennessee, at age five.

6 (2) Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., graduated from
7 Booker T. Washington High School and is an alum-
8 nus of Xavier University in New Orleans.

9 (3) Upon his graduation, Luke Joseph Weath-
10 ers, Jr., enlisted in one of the first training pro-
11 grams for Black pilots, beginning his journey as a
12 Tuskegee Airman.

13 (4) Within his first few years active in the war,
14 Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., named his plane “Spirit
15 of Beale Street”, in honor of his hometown, Mem-
16 phis, Tennessee. He flew this plane with the “Red
17 Tails”.

18 (5) He was credited with shooting down Ger-
19 man planes while protecting United States Army Air
20 Corps bombers and shooting down two Messer-
21 schmitt 109s in Italy while escorting a damaged B-
22 24 Liberator bomber.

23 (6) During his military service, he rose to the
24 rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

1 (7) Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., received numer-
2 ous honors and awards throughout his long and dis-
3 tinguished career.

4 (8) Among them, he was presented with an Air
5 Medal with 7 clusters and an American Theater Rib-
6 bon Victory Medal during his military service.

7 (9) Following the war, Luke Joseph Weathers,
8 Jr., returned to Memphis, receiving a hero's welcome
9 and a key to the city.

10 (10) On July 13, 1947, he married LaVerne
11 Nailling at St. Therese-Little Flowers Catholic
12 Church in Memphis.

13 (11) In 1960, he accepted a job with the Fed-
14 eral Aviation Administration (hereinafter, the
15 “FAA”) as an air traffic control specialist in An-
16 chorage, Alaska.

17 (12) In 1965, Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr.,
18 moved back to Memphis, becoming the first Black
19 air traffic controller in Memphis.

20 (13) Weathers later held positions with the
21 FAA in Atlanta, Georgia, and the District of Colum-
22 bia, where he eventually retired in 1985, after serv-
23 ing as a reservist in the military for 23 years.

24 (14) During retirement, Luke Joseph Weathers,
25 Jr., remained active with the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

1 and continued to support African Americans in the
2 military.

3 (15) In 1995, Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr.,
4 moved to Tucson, Arizona, shortly after marrying
5 Jacqueline Moore Weathers.

6 (16) In 2007, Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., and
7 the Tuskegee Airmen were honored with a Congres-
8 sional Gold Medal.

9 (17) On October 15, 2011, Luke Joseph
10 Weather, Jr., died in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of
11 90, leaving behind his wife, two sons and daughters,
12 12 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren as
13 well as a legacy of countless lives he touched.

14 (18) On January 20, 2012, Lieutenant Colonel
15 Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., was interred at Arling-
16 ton National Cemetery.

17 **SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF THE LT. COL. LUKE WEATHERS,**
18 **JR. VA MEDICAL CENTER.**

19 The medical center of the Department of Veterans
20 Affairs located in Memphis, Tennessee, shall, after the
21 date of the enactment of this Act, be known and des-
22 ignated as the “Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical
23 Center”. Any reference in any law, regulation, map, docu-
24 ment, paper, or other record of the United States to such

