

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2514

To rename the Provo Veterans Center in Orem, Utah, as the “Col. Gail S. Halvorsen ‘Candy Bomber’ Veterans Center”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 28, 2021

Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. ROMNEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

To rename the Provo Veterans Center in Orem, Utah, as the “Col. Gail S. Halvorsen ‘Candy Bomber’ Veterans Center”.

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

3 **SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF THE COL. GAIL S.**
4 **HALVORSEN “CANDY BOMBER” VETERANS**
5 **CENTER.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Gail Halvorsen was born in Salt Lake City,
8 Utah, on October 10, 1920, and spent his youth
9 with his family on small farms in Utah and Idaho.

1 (2) After a brief stint at Utah State University,
2 Gail Halvorsen joined the Civilian Pilot Training
3 Program where he earned his pilot's license in 1941.
4 During that same year, Halvorsen joined the Civil
5 Air Patrol as a pilot.

6 (3) Gail Halvorsen joined the United States
7 Army Air Corps in 1942 and trained flying fighter
8 jets with the Royal Air Force. Upon his return from
9 training, he was assigned to fly transport missions
10 in the South Atlantic Theater.

11 (4) After World War II and the division of Ber-
12 lin into occupation zones, disputes broke out between
13 the Western Allies and the Soviet Union over the fu-
14 ture of Europe.

15 (5) Negotiations deteriorated, and in June of
16 1948 Soviet forces locked down all land routes con-
17 necting Western Germany with the allied portions of
18 Berlin. Approximately 2,000,000 people in West
19 Berlin were left completely isolated. Starvation, pov-
20 erty, and desperate want ensued.

21 (6) In an effort to alleviate the immense human
22 suffering, the allies decided to drop supplies to peo-
23 ple of West Berlin from the air until a diplomatic
24 solution to the blockade could be reached. Termed

1 by United States forces “Operation Vittles”, the
2 Berlin Airlift began on June 26, 1948.

3 (7) Gail Halvorsen was assigned to Germany in
4 1948 to work as an airlift pilot where he flew C-47
5 and C-54 cargo planes as part of Operation Vittles.

6 (8) While on mission at Tempelhof Airport in
7 Berlin, Halvorsen noticed a group of German chil-
8 dren standing just outside the barb wire fence.

9 (9) The children were destitute and clearly had
10 very little to eat. Halvorsen gave the children two
11 sticks of gum he had in his pocket, which they split
12 into little pieces to share among themselves.

13 (10) Colonel Halvorsen was deeply affected by
14 the experience and wanted to do more to help. He
15 promised the children he would drop more candy to
16 them from his plane as he flew his regular airlift
17 missions.

18 (11) Halvorsen told the children they would rec-
19 ognize his plane by a back-and-forth waggle of his
20 wings as he flew over.

21 (12) Colonel Halvorsen enlisted his copilot and
22 engineer in the project and began attaching their
23 candy rations to miniature parachutes which they
24 dropped from their plane to the starving children
25 below.

1 (13) The children of Berlin gave Halvorsen
2 many nicknames including “Uncle Wiggly Wings”,
3 “The Chocolate Flier”, “The Gum Drop Kid”, and
4 “The Chocolate Uncle”. He eventually became
5 known around the world as “The Candy Bomber”.

6 (14) Lieutenant General William H. Turner,
7 who directed the Berlin Airlift, learned about
8 Halvorsen’s efforts and officially expanded the idea
9 into a full-blown operation known as “Little Vittles”
10 as a play on the broader operation’s name.

11 (15) As the candy drops continued, word of Op-
12 eration Little Vittles reached the United States.
13 Families, schoolchildren, and candymakers in the
14 United States began contributing candy and home-
15 made parachutes that Halvorsen and other pilots
16 could drop.

17 (16) When the Berlin Airlift ended, an esti-
18 mated 250,000 parachutes containing approximately
19 21 tons of candy had been dropped by Halvorsen
20 and his fellow airmen as a part of Operation Little
21 Vittles.

22 (17) Halvorsen retired from the military in
23 1974 after 31 years of service and more than 8,000
24 hours of flying time.

1 (18) Since his retirement, Halvorson has con-
2 tinued his humanitarian service. He has voluntarily
3 represented the United States Air Force and the
4 United States abroad and has re-enacted his famous
5 candy drops several times in Berlin and around the
6 world.

7 (19) Halvorsen has also been a tremendous
8 boon to his community through church service and
9 other local contributions.

10 (20) Gail Halvorsen turned 100 years old on
11 October 10, 2020.

12 (b) DESIGNATION.—The Provo Veterans Center of
13 the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 360 State
14 Street, Orem, Utah, shall after the date of the enactment
15 of this Act be known and designated as the “Col. Gail
16 S. Halvorsen ‘Candy Bomber’ Veterans Center”.

17 (c) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regula-
18 tion, map, document, paper, or other record of the United
19 States to the veterans center referred to in subsection (b)
20 shall be considered to be a reference to the Col. Gail S.
21 Halvorsen “Candy Bomber” Veterans Center.

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