

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 234

Recognizing the Sailors and Marines who sacrificed their lives for ship and shipmates while fighting the devastating 1967 fire onboard USS Forrestal and, during the week of the 50th anniversary of the tragic event, commemorating the efforts of those who survived.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2017

Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. COTTON, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KING, Mr. CRUZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mr. WICKER, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. REED, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. KAINE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. PERDUE, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. STRANGE, and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

OCTOBER 24, 2017

Committee discharged; considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Sailors and Marines who sacrificed their lives for ship and shipmates while fighting the devastating 1967 fire onboard USS Forrestal and, during the week of the 50th anniversary of the tragic event, commemorating the efforts of those who survived.

Whereas in 1967, the ongoing naval bombing campaign against North Vietnam from Yankee Station in the Gulf of Tonkin was the most intense and sustained air attack operation in the history of the United States Navy;

Whereas in June 1967, USS Forrestal and Carrier Air Wing Seventeen departed Norfolk, Virginia, for duty in the Gulf of Tonkin;

Whereas, on July 28, 1967, during an underway replenishment, the crew of USS Forrestal unloaded deteriorated bombs, which were more vulnerable to explosion at high temperatures;

Whereas, on July 29, 1967, the ordnance load for the strike was changed at the request of the crew of USS Forrestal to expend the inventory of the newly unloaded older bombs as soon as possible;

Whereas despite safety precautions taken by the crew, a devastating fire erupted on USS Forrestal after—

- (1) an electrical surge in a parked aircraft caused the aircraft to fire a Zuni rocket that ruptured a fuel tank on another aircraft; and

- (2) the burning fuel ignited a chain reaction of 9 bomb explosions on the flight deck;

Whereas the explosions destroyed multiple aircraft and tore massive holes in the armored flight deck of USS Forrestal, and burning fuel dripped into the living quarters of the crew and the below-decks aircraft hangar;

Whereas for 18 hours, Sailors and Marines on USS Forrestal, assisted by others from accompanying destroyers, fought to bring the fire under control while hospital corpsmen navigated the mangled flight deck and tended to the wounded; and

Whereas the fire onboard USS Forrestal ultimately—

- (1) left 134 men dead and 161 men severely injured;

- (2) destroyed 21 aircraft; and

(3) caused USS Forrestal to terminate its support to the fight in Vietnam and return to Norfolk, Virginia, for repairs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes that—

3 (A) if not for the heroic actions of the crew
4 of USS Forrestal, the consequences of the fire
5 would have been far more devastating to the
6 Sailors and Marines onboard and the aircraft
7 carrier itself; and

8 (B) the selfless sacrifices of those who
9 came to the rescue of fellow shipmates and
10 USS Forrestal represent, and are consistent
11 with, the highest traditions of the United States
12 Navy;

13 (2) commemorates the 50th anniversary of the
14 USS Forrestal fire; and

15 (3) expresses gratitude to the Sailors and Ma-
16 rines who served aboard USS Forrestal for their
17 faithful service.

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