

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4787

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2021

Mr. CURTIS (for himself, Mr. MOORE of Utah, Mr. OWENS, and Mr. STEWART) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

To rename the Provo Veterans Center in Orem, Utah, as the “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 GAIL S. HALVORSEN**

4 **“CANDY BOMBER” VETERANS CENTER.**

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

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

9 (2) After a brief stint at Utah State University,
10 Gail Halvorsen joined the Civilian Pilot Training

1 Program where he earned his pilot's license in 1941.
2 During that same year, Halvorsen joined the Civil
3 Air Patrol as a pilot.

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

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

13 (5) Negotiations deteriorated, and in June of
14 1948 Soviet forces locked down all land routes con-
15 necting Western Germany with the allied portions of
16 Berlin. Approximately 2,000,000 people in West
17 Berlin were left completely isolated. Starvation, pov-
18 erty, and desperate want ensued.

19 (6) In an effort to alleviate the immense human
20 suffering, the allies decided to drop supplies to peo-
21 ple of West Berlin from the air until a diplomatic
22 solution to the blockade could be reached. Termed
23 by United States forces "Operation Vittles", the
24 Berlin Airlift began on June 26, 1948.

1 (7) Gail Halvorsen was assigned to Germany in
2 1948 to work as an airlift pilot where he flew C-47
3 and C-54 cargo planes as part of Operation Vittles.

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

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

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

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

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

24 (13) The children of Berlin gave Halvorsen
25 many nicknames including “Uncle Wiggly Wings”,

1 “The Chocolate Flier”, “The Gum Drop Kid”, and
2 “The Chocolate Uncle”. He eventually became
3 known around the world as “The Candy Bomber”.

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

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

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

20 (17) Halvorsen retired from the military in
21 1974 after 31 years of service and more than 8,000
22 hours of flying time.

23 (18) Since his retirement, Halvorson has con-
24 tinued his humanitarian service. He has voluntarily
25 represented the United States Air Force and the

1 United States abroad and has re-enacted his famous
2 candy drops several times in Berlin and around the
3 world.

4 (19) Halvorsen has also been a tremendous
5 boon to his community through church service and
6 other local contributions.

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

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

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

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