

By: Senator(s) Carmichael, Mettetal, King,
Kirby, Hyde-Smith, Michel, Davis, Chaney,
White, Burton, Wilemon, Pickering, Moffatt,
Browning, Thames, Albritton, Brown, Butler,
Clarke, Dearing, Doxey, Frazier, Gollott,
Gordon, Harden, Harvey, Jackson (11th),
Jackson (15th), Jackson (32nd), Jordan, Lee
(35th), Little, Morgan, Nunnelee, Robertson,
Ross, Thomas, Walls

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 553

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE GALLANT SERVICE OF
2 CAPTAIN BRYAN CREEL FROM THE CLARKDALE COMMUNITY AND THE PAVE HAWK
3 HELICOPTER CREWMEN WHO SURVIVED THE ELEMENTS AND ENEMY FIRE TO
4 SAVE FIVE FELLOW SOLDIERS WHOSE CHINOOK HELICOPTER HAD CRASHED IN
5 THE IRAQI DESERT ON APRIL 16, 2004.

6 WHEREAS, as the two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters landed in
7 darkness on a flight line at Balad Air Base in central Iraq, the
8 13 exhausted crew members realized they had accomplished something
9 extraordinary. The airmen has just rescued five soldiers from the
10 wreckage of a crashed CH-47 Chinook helicopter in an Iraqi desert;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, that April 16, 2004, mission is gaining a prominent
13 place in Air Force history. On December 5, 2005, the 13 airmen
14 were honored with the Mackay Trophy, a prestigious National
15 Aeronautic Association Award given annually to the crew of the Air
16 Force's most meritorious flight; and

17 WHEREAS, just getting to the crash site meant flying through
18 the night in near-brownout conditions for dozens of miles, combing
19 the desert in search of survivors who didn't have a working radio.
20 On their way back, they dodged two coordinated anti-aircraft
21 missile attacks. The three-hour mission left the crew drained;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, "I could barely pull myself out of my seat," Mission
24 Commander Captain Bryan Creel of Clarkdale, Mississippi (near
25 Meridian), said, describing how he felt after returning to Balad;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, the following men of Jolly 11 and Jolly 12, two
28 HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue crews, were home-based with the 347 Rescue

29 Wing at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia: Jolly 11: Captain Bryan
30 Creel, Mission Commander; Major Joseph Galletti, Co-Pilot;
31 Technical Sergeant Thomas Ringheimer, Gunner; Staff Sergeant
32 Patrick Ledbetter, Flight Engineer; and Staff Sergeant Vincent J.
33 Eckert, Pararescueman Jolly 12: Captain Robby Wrinkle, Aircraft
34 Commander; Captain Gregory Rockwood, Co-Pilot; Technical Sergeant
35 Michael Preston, Flight Engineer; Master Sergeant Paul Silver,
36 Gunner; Staff Sergeant Edward Ha, Pararescueman; Staff Sergeant
37 Matthew Leigh, Pararescueman; and Staff Sergeant Michael Rubio,
38 Pararescueman; and

39 WHEREAS, usual rescue procedures call for one Pave Hawk to
40 circle overhead, while the other is on the ground, but with
41 visibility so bad, both HH-60Gs landed. The pararescuemen hopped
42 out and moved toward the survivors. None had life-threatening
43 injuries. Jolly 11 took on three of the army aviators while two
44 were packed onto Jolly 12. After five minutes on the ground,
45 Jolly 11 lifted up. Jolly 12 waited two minutes to put a safe
46 distance between the two Pave Hawks. Again, the Pave Hawks found
47 themselves flying through a sandstorm, but this time they flew
48 aboveground obstacles by staying at 500 feet and higher. Then
49 they spotted the smoke trail of a missile. Four minutes after the
50 first attack and less than 20 miles from Balad ground fire erupted
51 again. Missile launch warnings sounded in both helicopters and
52 Jolly 11's crew saw two missiles pass to their left. This time,
53 Jolly 12 fired its right-side 50-caliber to distract the enemy.
54 Again, the enemy fire stopped and the helicopters continued to
55 Balad; and

56 WHEREAS, this was the most harrowing mission of Captain
57 Creel's 20-year flying career. "This is one of the most heroic
58 missions our guys have flown in the war on terrorism," their
59 deployed Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Lee dePalo, said of the
60 mission; and

61 WHEREAS, Captain Creel and Captain Wrinkle were honored with
62 Distinguished Flying Crosses, as were Co-Pilots Galletti and
63 Captain Gregory Rockwood. The other crew members received Air
64 Medals; and

65 WHEREAS, word of the Mackay Trophy honor reached the crew
66 this past spring, almost a year after the mission; many of the
67 airman had left for new assignments. Past winners of the Mackay
68 Trophy include: Chuck Yeager, Eddie Rickenbacker and James
69 (Jimmie) Doolittle; and

70 WHEREAS, it is with great pride and humility that we
71 recognize the heroic action of these great Americans and this
72 Mississippian, who are the guardians of civilization as we know it
73 today:

74 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
75 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
76 we do hereby commend the gallant service of Captain Bryan Creel
77 from the Clarkdale, Mississippi, community (near Meridian), and
78 the Pave Hawk Helicopter crewmen who survived the elements and
79 enemy fire to save five fellow soldiers whose CH-47 Chinook
80 Helicopter had crashed in the Iraqi desert on April 16, 2004.

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we congratulate Captain Creel
82 and these crewmen for their receipt of the prestigious Mackay
83 Trophy for the Air Force's most meritorious flight, and extend the
84 thoughts and best wishes of the Legislature to these airmen and
85 their families.

86 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
87 Captain Creel and his family and be made available to members of
88 the Capitol Press Corps.