

By: Senator(s) Carmichael, King, Mettetal,  
White, Kirby

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 3

1 A RESOLUTION REMEMBERING THE GALLANT SERVICE AND COMMENDING  
2 THE CIVIC AND CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JAMES FRANCIS RISHER OF  
3 MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, A VETERAN OF THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR AND  
4 THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY.

5 WHEREAS, James Francis Risher of Meridian, Mississippi, was  
6 an American hero who witnessed and took part in the most important  
7 operations of the War in the Pacific during World War II; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Risher was born in Meridian, Mississippi, on  
9 March 2, 1920, and died on November 23, 2002. He was the grandson  
10 of an Irish immigrant who farmed in Laurel, Mississippi, before  
11 the War Between the States, and the grandson of a Spanish  
12 sugarcane grower in Cuba in the late 1800s; and

13 WHEREAS, he grew up in Meridian, Mississippi, during the  
14 Depression, graduated from St. Aloysius, enlisted at the Meridian  
15 Naval Air Station in 1939, and was trained as an electrical  
16 technician; and

17 WHEREAS, James Francis' historic war record began in 1941  
18 when he was assigned to the USS California and was a survivor of  
19 the December 7th Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor, where he  
20 swam to shore after the battleship was hit. He was transferred to  
21 the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown, and was present at the Battle  
22 of Coral Sea on May 7, 1942, the incredible victory at the Battle  
23 of Midway, June 6, 1942, which was the turning point in the War in  
24 the Pacific. The Yorktown was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine  
25 in the final hours of the Battle of Midway, and James Francis was  
26 the last man rescued from the sea that day, after he had stayed in  
27 the water to help his fellow shipmates. He had a reputation as a

28 boxer on the ship and continued in the Navy in the Pacific  
29 throughout World War II; and

30 WHEREAS, as a young man, after World War II he was active as  
31 a Scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts of America in Meridian,  
32 Mississippi; began work with South Central Bell and retired from  
33 South Central Bell in 1981 after 40 years of service; founding  
34 member of the Telephone Pioneers of America; served as Council  
35 Committee Service Chairman of Telephone Pioneers; prepared talking  
36 books for the blind; Club President of Retired Members Club;  
37 President of Life Members Club; and received the Civic  
38 Appreciation Award from the Salvation Army in 1981. James Francis  
39 was widely known and highly regarded at Bell South throughout  
40 Mississippi, and continued to work after retirement doing utility  
41 inventory for the telephone and utility companies in Greenwood,  
42 Mississippi; and

43 WHEREAS, James Francis was always active in community and  
44 church service. He was a member of the VFW and served regularly  
45 as a lifeguard at the VFW in Greenwood, Mississippi, in the 1970s.  
46 He did volunteer work in the Delta area for retirement homes and  
47 veteran groups regularly, gave lectures regarding World War II  
48 events, was active in special senior events, Christmas caroling  
49 and playing Santa Claus, and was an active member of the Catholic  
50 Church in Greenwood, including singing in the choir at the  
51 Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. He volunteered his mechanical  
52 and handyman skills assisting elderly and others in need and would  
53 regularly shuttle people to the doctor or the airport in Memphis,  
54 Tennessee, or Jackson, Mississippi; and

55 WHEREAS, James Francis was married to Alfreda Simmons, who  
56 passed away on November 13, 2005; one sister, Renee Lowenberg of  
57 St. Charles, Missouri; three children, Stephen Risher, Memphis,  
58 Stephenie Risher, Houston, Texas, and James Al Risher, Houston,  
59 Texas; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren; and

60           WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we remember the gallant  
61 war record and community service of this American Hero, who loved  
62 his country, his family, his church and his state:

63           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
64 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby remember the gallant service and  
65 commend the civic and charitable service of the late James Francis  
66 Risher of Meridian, Mississippi, a veteran of the Attack on Pearl  
67 Harbor and the Battle of Midway, and extend to his family the best  
68 wishes of the Mississippi Senate in his memory.

69           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
70 the family of James Francis Risher and be made available to the  
71 Capitol Press Corps.