

By: Senator(s) McMahan, Bryan, Barnett,
Branning, Butler (38th), DeBar, England,
Jackson (11th), McLendon, Michel, Seymour,
Simmons (12th), Simmons (13th), Sparks,
Thompson, McDaniel

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 512

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF
2 FORMER POW AND RETIRED AIR FORCE COLONEL CARLYLE "SMITTY" HARRIS
3 AND EXTENDING THE CONGRATULATIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE TO SMITTY AND
4 HIS FAMILY ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEDICATION OF THE UNITED STATES
5 POST OFFICE IN TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI, TO BE NAMED IN HIS HONOR.

6 WHEREAS, legislation that would name a post office after this
7 well-known Tupelo veteran has passed in the United States House of
8 Representatives. U.S. Representative Trent Kelly announced the
9 passage of H.R. 208, which will designate the United States Postal
10 Service facility located at 500 West Main Street as the "Colonel
11 Carlyle 'Smitty' Harris Post Office." The bill passed by a
12 two-thirds recorded vote in the House; and

13 WHEREAS, we join the citizens of Tupelo, Mississippi, and all
14 veterans in remembering the legacy of former POW and Retired Air
15 Force Colonel Carlyle "Smitty" Harris who has written a book about
16 his experiences at the Hanoi Hilton Prison Camp where his "TAP"
17 code helped him and his fellow prisoners survive; and

18 WHEREAS, at the age of 36, Colonel Harris' F-105
19 fighter-bomber plane was shot down over North Vietnam on April 4,



20 1965. He was the sixth American to become a Prisoner of War at
21 the Hoa Lo Prison, also known as the "Hanoi Hilton," where he
22 taught his fellow prisoners a secret code they could use to
23 communicate. Harris' tale of survival was detailed in his 2019
24 autobiography, "Tap Code"; and

25 WHEREAS, on December 5, 2021, Smitty and his wife, Louise,
26 celebrated 60 years of marriage. The Harris family - Smitty,
27 Louise, four-year-old Robin and three-year-old Carolyn, relocated
28 to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, where Smitty Harris would
29 fly the F-105 fighter-bomber plane. After he was shot down and
30 taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese, Louise chose to move the
31 family, which by then included baby son Lyle, to Tupelo because
32 her sister lived there. "It was a wonderful, wonderful choice,"
33 81-year-old Louise Harris said of making Tupelo their new home;
34 and

35 WHEREAS, after a long and distinguished career in the United
36 States Air Force, Harris completed law school and joined The
37 Mississippi Bar in 1981; and

38 WHEREAS, "The closest to me in North Vietnam were my
39 cellmates, but I've come to know others well in reunions," Smitty
40 Harris said, "Most I didn't get to see face to face until we came
41 home." Now their travels include a nationwide book tour which
42 commenced November 9th in Tupelo, the place the Harrises call
43 home; and



44 WHEREAS, Colonel Harris is a hero and role model in the
45 Tupelo community. He has forgiven his captors and shown love to
46 all human beings. His humility and courtesy are something to
47 emulate. "Colonel Harris is a true war hero," Representative
48 Kelly said in an official statement. "During the Vietnam War, he
49 was held captive at the famous Hanoi Hilton for eight years, where
50 he employed the "Tap Code" to communicate with his fellow
51 prisoners. Despite the constant threat of torture, Colonel Harris
52 taught other prisoners how to use the secret code"; and

53 WHEREAS, Colonel Harris' legacy is a strong and free America,
54 and for this and for a lifetime of selfless service, a grateful
55 state thanks him:

56 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
57 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
58 we do hereby pay tribute to the legacy of former POW and retired
59 Air Force Colonel Carlyle "Smitty" Harris and extend the
60 congratulations of the Legislature to Smitty and his family on the
61 occasion of the dedication of the United States Post Office in
62 Tupelo, Mississippi, to be named in his honor.

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
64 Smitty Harris and his wife Louise, forwarded to the Tupelo City
65 Council and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

