

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

H.R. 303
Mar 13, 2013
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE RESOLUTION DRHR30164-LG-1A (09/06)

Sponsors: Representatives Howard, Setzer, Cleveland, and L. Hall (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION HONORING THE MEMORY OF UNITED STATES MARINE
2 CORPS OFFICERS, COLONELS RICHARD B. NEWPORT AND DEAN WILKER;
3 LIEUTENANT COLONELS ERNEST J. ANDERSON, GEORGE J. ERTLMEIER,
4 HOWARD GRESS, JAMES E. MAY, DOUGLAS A. MCCAUGHEY, JAMES D.
5 ROBERTSON, AND CLARENCE E. SMITH; MAJORS THOMAS NALLE AND
6 KENNETH H. STOVER; CAPTAINS MARX H. BRANUM, STEPHEN J. PERLIN,
7 HERMAN SMITH, AND ROBERT F. WARREN; FIRST LIEUTENANTS ROBERT J.
8 LYONS AND ROBERT WILLIAMS; SECOND LIEUTENANT DONALD MARLOWE;
9 AND WARRANT OFFICER 4 BILLY E. PERRY; AND UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
10 COLONEL JAMES H. WESTBERRY FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THE UNITED
11 STATES MILITARY AND TO THE MARINE ALL-WEATHER FIGHTER SQUADRON
12 THREE ONE TWO.

13 Whereas, 50 years ago, the United States Marine Corps determined that Lieutenant
14 Colonel Dean Wilker, and later Lieutenant Colonel Richard B. Newport, would organize and
15 deploy Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron Three One Two (VMF (AW)-312) from Marine
16 Corps Air Station El Toro, California, to the Fleet Marine Forces Pacific; and

17 Whereas, Lieutenant Colonel Newport, a Korean War veteran, began an 18-month
18 process to prepare the VMF (AW)-312 "Checkerboards" for combat. Majors Ernest J.
19 Anderson, George J. Ertlmeier, Howard Gress, and James E. May were assigned as the
20 principal staff officers; and

21 Whereas, the first six months of preparation involved joining and detaching officers
22 and enlisted to reach organizational standards. The next year was devoted to training for
23 air-to-air combat operations in all-weather conditions both day and night, air-to-ground
24 weapons delivery in support of Marine ground troops, strafing and air-to-air gunnery, aerial
25 refueling, day and night carrier operations, and amphibious embarkation to enable the squadron
26 to deploy rapidly wherever it was needed; and

27 Whereas, as these Marines were deployed for a routine 13-month unaccompanied
28 combat tour, their families had to learn how to adjust to their absence; and

29 Whereas, on January 1, 1965, the Checkerboards began to deploy from Marine
30 Corps Air Station El Toro to Marine Corps Air Station Atsugi, Japan, and, upon arrival,
31 accepted 21 F8U-1E "Crusader" aircraft; and

32 Whereas, the Crusader was a single engine, single pilot, supersonic, all-weather
33 fighter plane. Every pilot in the squadron had flown the Crusader at 1,000 miles per hour in
34 level flight. The F8s and their pilots were called "The Last of the Gunfighters" because the
35 cockpit of their planes sat over four internal 20mm cannons; and

36 Whereas, halfway through its tour, on June 26, 1965, the squadron relocated to
37 Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, and joined two pilots; and



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1 Whereas, on December 19, 1965, the squadron was ordered to introduce the first
2 F8s into the First Corps Area of the Republic of Vietnam. The squadron joined Marine Aircraft
3 Group Eleven of the First Marine Aircraft Wing at Danang, Republic of Vietnam, with 21
4 officers, 175 enlisted, and 18 F8s. This was a milestone event as the Marine air-ground team
5 now had their best single engine fighter in the country supporting Marine ground troops while
6 another Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron, VMF (AW)-212, was flying sorties over North
7 Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Oriskany; and

8 Whereas, while at Danang, the Checkerboards flew 718 combat sorties. On January
9 31, 1966, the squadron completed its tour and was disbanded. The officers and men returned to
10 military and civilian lives and their aircrafts were reassigned to Marine Fighter Squadron Two
11 Three Five, VMF (AW)-235. The squadron color was delivered to Marine Corps Air Station
12 Beaufort, South Carolina, and the squadron was reactivated as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron
13 Three One Two (VMFA-312); Now, therefore,

14 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

15 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives expresses its appreciation to the
16 officers and enlisted of the Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron Three One Two for their
17 service during the Vietnam War.

18 **SECTION 2.** The House of Representatives honors the memory of the following
19 departed American warriors: United States Marine Corps officers, Colonels Richard B.
20 Newport and Dean Wilker; Lieutenant Colonels Ernest J. Anderson, George J. Ertlmeier,
21 Howard Gress, James E. May, Douglas A. McCaughey, James D. Robertson, and Clarence E.
22 Smith; Majors Thomas Nalle and Kenneth H. Stover; Captains Marx H. Branum, Stephen J.
23 Perlin, Herman Smith, and Robert F. Warren; First Lieutenants Robert J. Lyons and Robert
24 Williams; Second Lieutenant Donald Marlowe; and Warrant Officer 4 Billy E. Perry; and
25 United States Air Force Colonel James H. Westberry for their roles in helping the Marine
26 All-Weather Fighter Squadron Three One Two be successful.

27 **SECTION 3.** The Principal Clerk shall send a certified copy of this resolution to
28 the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

29 **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.