

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 135

BY SENATORS JOHNS, MORRISH AND JOHN SMITH AND REPRESENTATIVES  
DANAHAY, FRANKLIN, GEYMAN, GUINN, HENSGENS, HILL  
AND KLECKLEY

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend and recognize the distinguished military history of the USS Orleck, docked in Lake Charles, and to designate the USS Orleck as the Official Vietnam Memorial Museum Ship for the State of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the USS ORLECK DD 886 is a Gearing Class Destroyer commissioned as a United States warship on September 15, 1945, and decommissioned on October 1, 1982, when she was transferred to the Turkish Navy where she operated as TCG YUCETEPE D 345 for sixteen additional years, after providing thirty seven years of meritorious service in the United States Navy serving gallantly in Korea and in Vietnam, and being preserved as a Historic Museum Ship in Lake Charles, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the USS Orleck was named for Lieutenant Joseph Orleck, a Columbus, Ohio, native who enlisted in the Navy in 1924; assumed command of the USS Nauset (AT-89) and went down with his ship after a Luftwaffe bomber attack in the Gulf of Salerno on September 9, 1943; was the recipient of the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for rescue work during the Casablanca invasion in 1942; and was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his courageous firefighting and flood control efforts to prevent total loss of his ship during the Salerno assault; and

WHEREAS, the USS Orleck joined the Seventh Fleet and served in the Pacific participating in Atomic Energy Commission experiments at Eniwetok in 1948 and 1958; and

WHEREAS, in February 1951, the USS Orleck sailed for her first of many combat operations, joining United Nations forces off the east coast of Korea, providing carrier escort duties and shore bombardment missions as well as performing blockade and logistics interdiction missions and patrolling, becoming a charter member of the "Train Busters Club" as the first Destroyer to destroy a North Korean supply train; and

WHEREAS, the USS Orleck earned four battle stars for action in the Korean Conflict as well as the United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, and China Service Medal from engagements in the First United Nations Counter Offensive in 1951, the

Communist China Spring Offensive in 1951, the Korean Defense Summer to Fall in 1952, and the Third Korean Winter in 1952-1953; and

WHEREAS, after Korea, the Orleck operated primarily with fast carrier forces in the Pacific and in June 1964 moved to the South China Sea as American commitments to the Republic of South Vietnam escalated; escorting carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin and patrolling Taiwan Strait, and, while detached, joined in the recovery of the Gemini IV space capsule; and

WHEREAS, in July 1965, she returned to Vietnam to provide escort and plane guard services to carrier USS Oriskany, where shore bombardment and gunfire support activities followed as the destroyer participated in operations "Starlight", a regimental attack involving amphibious, helo-borne and ground operations in the Chu Lai area, and "Pirania", a similar assault at Van Tuong; and

WHEREAS, she provided support in the last "Dagger Thrust" operations at Lang Ke Ga and Phu Thun, before being engaged in January 1966 with surveillance operations followed by thirty days bombardment duty in the Chu Lai-Tam Ky area during operation "Double Eagle"; and

WHEREAS, in September 1967, she was assigned first to Yankee Station in the Tonkin Gulf, during which she alternated plane guard duties with surveillance of a Russian electronic intelligence "trawler", and at the end of January 1968, as the Tet offensive reached a climax, she shifted to gunfire support duty off Vung Tau and supported the 9th R.O.K. Infantry in the Cam Ranh Bay-Nha Trang area; and

WHEREAS, the USS Orleck spent much of 1968 in roles which ranged from blockade and interdiction of Viet Cong logistic vessels to gunfire support south of Saigon and into the next decade of the 1970s she continued to conduct similar missions in support of Allied operations in and around Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, she served throughout the entire Vietnam conflict and fought in fourteen of the seventeen official Vietnam campaigns, was present in enemy waters twenty-nine times over those years, fired more rounds of 5" ammunition in support of ground troops than any other such ship, and in one campaign she fired over 11,000 rounds creating such intense heat that her gun mounts had to be replaced; and

WHEREAS, known by those who witnessed her presence in Vietnamese waters as "The Grey Ghost of the Vietnam Coast" and recognized as "Top Gun" of the Seventh Fleet in Vietnam, the USS Orleck is the most decorated ship afloat in the United States Navy that served in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, her presence in Lake Charles is a real monument to those who went, served, and gave such sacrifice for our country; is the last of her kind; and her epic service should be recognized by making her the Official Vietnam Memorial Museum Ship for the State of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and recognize the distinguished military history of the USS Orleck, docked in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate the USS Orleck as the Official Vietnam Memorial Museum Ship for the State of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ron Williams, executive director for the USS Orleck Naval Museum, Inc.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES