

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 47th Legislature (1999)

SENATE
RESOLUTION 22

By: Dickerson

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution congratulating U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Connie Blair for her key role in the rescue of a downed pilot; commending her entire family for their patriotism; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, the first allied casualty of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) attack in Serbia was an F-117A stealth fighter plane. At that time a United States Air Force EC-130E control and command plane stationed at Aviano, Italy, was airborne when the downed pilot called for help; and

WHEREAS, the call was received by Staff Sergeant Connie Blair, a radio operator and one of approximately 16 crew members of the plane. The EC-130E acts as the eyes and ears for the NATO command, staying in contact with both the base and planes. Search-and-rescue are among its tasks; and

WHEREAS, in describing the incident, Staff Sergeant Connie Blair recalled, "We heard him; we heard his call sign. He said, 'So-and-so is going down. I'm going down'. When we heard him do a 'Mayday' and he was going down, we were all worried about him and then we went into our job mode. A few hours later, when he was rescued, our whole plane erupted. The excitement inside was deafening. It was nice to know that what we did counted"; and

WHEREAS, such military professionalism is not new to Staff Sergeant Blair. She was a crew member on the plane that communicated with F-16 pilot Scott O'Grady after he was shot down

over Bosnia in 1995. The twenty-seven year old mother has been in the United States Air Force for nine years; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Blair's father, Master Sergeant William Fleig of Heavener, Oklahoma, served in Air Force intelligence in both Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War. Staff Sergeant Blair has even served on the same plane that carried her father during the Vietnam Conflict. "She's been in the Air Force since she was born", according to her mother, Jane Fleig. She is the oldest of five children, four of whom are in the military. One brother is a Marine, one sister is in the Army while another sister also serves in the Air Force. Her youngest sister is a freshman at Heavener High School; and

WHEREAS, Connie Blair's mother said "She'll be over there until it's over because she's the best at what she does".

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 47TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate congratulates U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Connie Blair for her key role and involvement in the rescue of a downed American pilot in unfriendly territory.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate commends Connie Blair's entire family for their patriotism and record of service to this country.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Connie Blair, her parents, William and Jane Fleig, and daughter, Sarra.

47-1-1373

THC

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