

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 48th Legislature (2001)

SENATE
RESOLUTION 22

By: Easley

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution honoring R.E. "Bob" Rousselot for his war-time service to this nation; congratulating Bob Rousselot upon the occasion of his recognition at the forthcoming Air America reunion; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, Robert E. "Bob" Rousselot was born and grew up in Noel, Missouri. He served as a U.S. Marine Corps fighter pilot in the Pacific theater of operations during World War II; and

WHEREAS, discharged in Peking, China, in 1946, Bob Rousselot sought employment with General Claire Chennault, founder of the American Volunteer Group, better known as the Flying Tigers. General Chennault was organizing an airline and Bob Rousselot was hired as one of the original pilots, and eventually became Chief Pilot, then Vice President of Operations; and

WHEREAS, during that period the Chinese civil war was being fought and the airline, the Civil Air Transport or CAT, flew on the side of the Nationalists. When the Communists won the war, CAT and some of their personnel were able to escape to Formosa with their aircraft and equipment; and

WHEREAS, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) approached CAT and incorporated the airline into their plans. Bob Rousselot made their first flight over mainland China, deep into the interior, to drop radio teams. Bob would not assign a mission to a crew unless

he had already flown it himself, and he flew the most dangerous missions the CIA could offer; and

WHEREAS, when the CIA purchased the airline, they would not allow Bob to fly missions because of his extensive exposure to sensitive information. CAT flew for the CIA during the Korean War and afterwards. The CIA used CAT to deliver weapons to anti-Communist elements in Burma, to support guerrilla operations on the Chinese mainland and in Manchuria, and to assist the French during the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. CAT was also in Guatemala in 1954, Indonesia in 1958, and at the Bay of Pigs; and

WHEREAS, by this time the CIA had bought and totally controlled CAT, which evolved into Air America. It was in Laos that Air America became a legend. Under the most primitive and severe conditions, Air America flew into Laos, Thailand, Tibet, and Vietnam, where they rescued personnel during the last hours of the war; and

WHEREAS, renamed Air Asia, the airline operated on Taiwan, carrying military personnel and supplies throughout the Far East. When it reached its peak in the late 1960's, its headquarters in Taiwan employed more than 8,000 personnel; and

WHEREAS, Bob Rousselot flew extensively over mainland China and in Southeast Asia during the early portions of the Vietnam Conflict, before the United States was officially involved. His continued and tireless efforts on behalf of the forces of freedom throughout the world have not been adequately acknowledged nor acclaimed; and

WHEREAS, Okay, Oklahoma resident, Bob Rousselot, who has been ranching for the past 35 years, will receive a personal presentation recognizing his service on behalf of his country from the Central Intelligence Agency at the forthcoming Air America reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 48TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate honors R.E. "Bob" Rousselot for his wartime service to this nation in both World War II and the Cold War.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate congratulates R.E. "Bob" Rousselot upon the occasion of his recognition at the forthcoming Air America reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to R.E. "Bob" Rousselot.

48-1-1700

THC

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