

1 A RESOLUTION adjourning the House in honor and loving memory of Petty  
2 Officer Second Class Clayborn Willis Ashby, Jr.

3 WHEREAS, Clayborn Ashby, Jr., was born on November 16, 1946, and grew up in  
4 Louisville, Kentucky; and

5 WHEREAS, Clayborn Ashby, Jr., enlisted in the United States Navy during the  
6 Vietnam War and attained the rank of Petty Officer Second Class; and

7 WHEREAS, Petty Officer Ashby served as an Aviation Ordnanceman and flew  
8 with a large crew on an OP2E Neptune, a plane primarily used for patrolling the  
9 Vietnamese coast; and

10 WHEREAS, the OP2E Neptune on which Petty Officer Ashby served was assigned  
11 to Task Force Alpha, a special unit organized under United States Air Force command  
12 employed to deliver Air Delivered Seismic Detection Sensors along the Ho Chi Minh  
13 Trail in Laos and Cambodia; and

14 WHEREAS, the twin-engine Neptune dropped the sensors to aid in pinpointing the  
15 heaviest traffic for fighters and gunships assigned to attack enemy targets on the trail, but  
16 the plane itself did not carry any ammunition and was instead accompanied by a fighter  
17 escort; and

18 WHEREAS, on February 17, 1968, Petty Officer Ashby was on an OP2E Neptune  
19 crew delivering sensors along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos in an area heavily defended  
20 by enemy presence; and

21 WHEREAS, after completing their first pass, the commander reported to the  
22 accompanying fighter escort and the Forward Air Controller that the Neptune had  
23 sustained hits by small arms fire but would continue with a second target run; and

24 WHEREAS, during the second pass, the pilots of the fighter escort reported the  
25 starboard engine of the Neptune was on fire, and the Neptune's crew aborted the rest of its  
26 mission and began to climb into the overcast of clouds in an attempt to return to home  
27 base; and

1           WHEREAS, the fighter escort, having already climbed through the overcast cloud  
2 base, waited for the Neptune to appear but it never did, at which time the fighter escort  
3 dropped below the clouds to search for the Neptune; and

4           WHEREAS, the fighter escort found burning wreckage which was visually  
5 inspected by air, but no parachutes were located and no emergency radio beepers were  
6 activated; and

7           WHEREAS, no ground search of the crash site was possible due to the heavy  
8 enemy presence in the area, but because there was no direct witness to the crash, it was  
9 unknown whether any of the nine crew of the Neptune survived; and

10           WHEREAS, the Navy assumed that they did not survive and changed the fate of the  
11 crew's status from Missing in Action to Killed/Presumptive Finding of Death; and

12           WHEREAS, in 1993 the Joint Task Force Full Accounting actively investigated the  
13 crash site with a survey and four joint field excavations; and

14           WHEREAS, the remains of the crew of the OP2E Neptune were repatriated to the  
15 United States on March 30, 1993, and identified on December 1, 1993; and

16           WHEREAS, the remains of the nine crewmen, including Petty Officer Second Class  
17 Clayborn Willis Ashby, Jr., were subsequently buried in Arlington National Cemetery,  
18 providing some semblance of closure to the families of the crewmen;

19           NOW, THEREFORE,

20 ***Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the***  
21 ***Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

22           ➔Section 1. The members of the House of Representatives acknowledge the  
23 service and sacrifice of Petty Officer Second Class Clayborn Willis Ashby, Jr.

24           ➔Section 2. When the House of Representatives adjourns this day, it does so in  
25 honor and loving memory of Petty Officer Second Class Clayborn Willis Ashby, Jr.

26           ➔Section 3. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a  
27 copy of this Resolution to Representative Kevin Bratcher for delivery to the family.