

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6863

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Memphis, Tennessee, as the “Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical Center”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Mr. COHEN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Memphis, Tennessee, as the “Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical Center”.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., was born De-
6 cember 16, 1922, in Grenada, Mississippi, then
7 moved to Memphis, Tennessee, at age five.

1 (2) Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., graduated from
2 Booker T. Washington High School and is an alum-
3 nus of Xavier University in New Orleans.

4 (3) Upon his graduation, Luke Joseph Weath-
5 ers, Jr., enlisted in one of the first training pro-
6 grams for Black pilots, beginning his journey as a
7 Tuskegee Airman.

8 (4) Within his first few years active in the war,
9 Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., named his plane “Spirit
10 of Beale Street”, in honor of his hometown, Mem-
11 phis, Tennessee. He flew this plane with the “Red
12 Tails”.

13 (5) He was credited with shooting down Ger-
14 man planes while protecting United States Army Air
15 Corps bombers and shooting down two Messer-
16 schmitt 109s in Italy while escorting a damaged B-
17 24 Liberator bomber.

18 (6) During his military service, he rose to the
19 rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

20 (7) Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., received numer-
21 ous honors and awards throughout his long and dis-
22 tinguished career.

23 (8) Among them, he was presented with an Air
24 Medal with 7 clusters and an American Theater Rib-
25 bon Victory Medal during his military service.

1 (9) Following the war, Luke Joseph Weathers,
2 Jr., returned to Memphis, receiving a hero's welcome
3 and a key to the city.

4 (10) On July 13, 1947, he married LaVerne
5 Nailling at St. Therese-Little Flowers Catholic
6 Church in Memphis.

7 (11) In 1960, he accepted a job with the Fed-
8 eral Aviation Administration (hereinafter, the
9 “FAA”) as an air traffic control specialist in An-
10 chorage, Alaska.

11 (12) In 1965, Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr.,
12 moved back to Memphis, becoming the first Black
13 air traffic controller in Memphis.

14 (13) Weathers later held positions with the
15 FAA in Atlanta, Georgia, and the District of Colum-
16 bia, where he eventually retired in 1985, after serv-
17 ing as a reservist in the military for 23 years.

18 (14) During retirement, Luke Joseph Weathers,
19 Jr., remained active with the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.
20 and continued to support African Americans in the
21 military.

22 (15) In 1995, Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr.,
23 moved to Tucson, Arizona, shortly after marrying
24 Jacqueline Moore Weathers.

1 (16) In 2007, Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., and
2 the Tuskegee Airmen were honored with a Congres-
3 sional Gold Medal.

4 (17) On October 15, 2011, Luke Joseph
5 Weather, Jr., died in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of
6 90, leaving behind his wife, two sons and daughters,
7 12 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren as
8 well as a legacy of countless lives he touched.

9 (18) On January 20, 2012, Lieutenant Colonel
10 Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., was interred at Arling-
11 ton National Cemetery.

12 **SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF THE LT. COL. LUKE WEATHERS,**
13 **JR. VA MEDICAL CENTER.**

14 The medical center of the Department of Veterans
15 Affairs located in Memphis, Tennessee, shall, after the
16 date of the enactment of this Act, be known and des-
17 ignated as the “Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical
18 Center”. Any reference in any law, regulation, map, docu-
19 ment, paper, or other record of the United States to such
20 medical center shall be considered to be a reference to the
21 Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical Center.

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