

Substitute for House Resolution No. 126.

A resolution to declare August 16, 2015, as Airborne Day in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, The airborne forces of the Armed Forces have a long and honorable history as units of adventuresome, hardy, and fierce warriors who for the national security of the United States and the defense of freedom and peace, project the effective ground combat power of the United States by Air Force air transport to the far reaches of the battle area and, indeed, to the far corners of the world; and

Whereas, August 16 marks the anniversary of the first official Army parachute jump on August 16, 1940, an event that validated the innovative concept of inserting United State combat forces behind battle line by means of a parachute; and

Whereas, The United States experiment with airborne infantry attack began on June 25, 1940, when the Army Parachute Test Platoon was first authorized by the Department of War and was launched when 48 volunteers began training in July 1940; and

Whereas, The success of the Army Parachute Test Platoon in the days immediately before the entry of the United States into World War II led to the formation of a formidable force of airborne units that have served with distinction and have had repeated success in armed hostilities; and

Whereas, Among those airborne units are the former 11th, 13th, and 17th Airborne Divisions, the venerable 82nd Airborne Division, the versatile 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and the airborne regiments and battalions (some as components of those divisions, some as separate units) that achieved distinction as the elite 75th Ranger Regiment, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the 187th Infantry (Airborne) Regiment, the 503rd, 507th, 508th, 517th, 541st, and 542nd Parachute Infantry Regiments, the 88th Glider Infantry Regiment, the 509th, 551st, and 555th Parachute Infantry Battalions, the 325th and 327th Glider Infantry, and the 550th Airborne Infantry Battalion; and

Whereas, The achievements of the airborne forces during World War II prompted the evolution of those forces into a diversified force of parachute and air-assault units that, over the years, have fought in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf region, and Somalia, and have engaged in peacekeeping operations in Lebanon, the Sinai Peninsula, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo; and

Whereas, The modern-day airborne force that has evolved from those World War II beginnings is an agile, powerful force that, in large part, is composed of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and the 75th Ranger Regiment; and

Whereas, The modern-day airborne force also includes other elite forces composed entirely of airborne trained and qualified special operations warriors, including Army Special Forces, Marine Corps Reconnaissance units, Navy SEALs, and Air Force combat control teams each of which is part of the United States Special Operations Command; and

Whereas, In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the 75th Ranger Regiment, special forces units, and units of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), together with other units of the Armed Forces, have been prosecuting the war against terrorism by carrying out combat operations in Afghanistan, training operations in the Philippines, and other operations elsewhere; and

Whereas, In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, airborne units played a pivotal role in the war in Afghanistan, including the unflinching pursuit of the enemies of the United States during the battles of Mazar-i-Sharif, Kabul, Qala-i-Jangi, Tora Bora, and Operation Anaconda; and

Whereas, United States paratroopers, which include the 82nd Airborne Division, 75th Ranger Regiment, Special Operations Forces, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat team, and elements of the 4th Brigade 25th Infantry Division, have demonstrated bravery and honor in an effort to pursue the enemies of the United States, to stabilize Afghanistan, and to strive for calm in a troubled region; and

Whereas, In the aftermath of the announcement of Operation Iraqi Freedom by President George W. Bush in March 2003, the 75th Ranger Regiment, special forces units, and units of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) of the 25th Infantry Division, together with other units of the Armed Forces, have been prosecuting the war against terrorism, carrying out combat operations, conducting civil affairs missions, and assisting in establishing democracy in Iraq; and

Whereas, The airborne forces are, and will continue to be, at the ready and the forefront until the Global War on Terrorism is concluded; and

Whereas, Of the members and former members of the United States airborne forces, all have achieved distinction by earning the right to wear the "Silver Wings of Courage" of the United States airborne forces, thousands have achieved the distinction of making combat jumps, dozens have earned the Medal of Honor, and hundreds have earned the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, or other decorations and awards for displays of such traits as heroism, gallantry, intrepidity, and valor; and

Whereas, The members and former members of the United States airborne forces are all members of a proud and honorable fraternity of the profession of arms that is made exclusive by those distinctions which, together with their special skills and achievements, distinguish them as intrepid combat parachutists, special operation forces, and, in former days, glider troops; and

Whereas, The history and achievements of the members and former members of the airborne forces of the United States Armed Forces warrant special expressions of the gratitude of the people of the United States; and

Whereas, Since the airborne community celebrates August 16 as the anniversary of the first official jump by the Army Parachute Test Platoon, August 16 would be an appropriate day to recognize as National Airborne Day; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare August 16, 2015, as Airborne Day in the state of Michigan. We call upon the people of the Michigan to observe this occasion with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.