

**AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1540, AS REPORTED
OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF NEW YORK**

Page 531, after line 2, insert the following:

1 **SEC. 1099C. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE RECOV-**
2 **ERY OF THE REMAINS OF CERTAIN MEMBERS**
3 **OF THE ARMED FORCES KILLED IN THUR-**
4 **STON ISLAND, ANTARCTICA.**

5 Congress makes the following findings:

6 (1) Commencing August 26, 1946, though late
7 February 1947 the United States Navy Antarctic
8 Developments Program Task Force 68, codenamed
9 “Operation Highjump” initiated and undertook the
10 largest ever-to-this-date exploration of the Antarctic
11 continent.

12 (2) The primary mission of the Task Force 68
13 organized by Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd Jr.
14 USN, (Ret) and led by Rear Admiral Richard H.
15 Cruzen, USN, was to do the following:

16 (A) Establish the Antarctic research base
17 Little America IV.

18 (B) In the defense of the United States of
19 America from possible hostile aggression from
20 abroad - to train personnel test equipment, de-

1 velop techniques for establishing, maintaining
2 and utilizing air bases on ice, with applicability
3 comparable to interior Greenland, where condi-
4 tions are similar to those of the Antarctic.

5 (C) Map and photograph a full two-thirds
6 of the Antarctic Continent during the classified,
7 hazardous duty/volunteer-only operation involv-
8 ing 4700 sailors, 23 aircraft and 13 ships in-
9 cluding the first submarine the U.S.S. Sennet,
10 and the aircraft carrier the U.S.S. Philippine
11 Sea, brought to the edge of the ice pack to
12 launch (6) Navy ski-equipped, rocket-assisted
13 R4Ds.

14 (D) Consolidate and extend United States
15 sovereignty over the largest practicable area of
16 the Antarctic continent.

17 (E) Determine the feasibility of estab-
18 lishing, maintaining and utilizing bases in the
19 Antarctic and investigating possible base sites.

20 (3) While on a hazardous duty/all volunteer
21 mission vital to the interests of National Security
22 and while over the eastern Antarctica coastline
23 known as the Phantom Coast, the PBM-5 Martin
24 Mariner "Flying Boat" "George 1" entered a
25 whiteout over Thurston Island. As the pilot at-

1 tempted to climb, the aircraft grazed the glacier's
2 ridgeline and exploded within 5 seconds instantly
3 killing Ensign Maxwell Lopez, Navigator and Wen-
4 dell "Bud" Hendersin, Aviation Machinists Mate 1st
5 Class while Frederick Williams, Aviation Radioman
6 1st Class died several hours later. Six other crewmen
7 survived including the Captain of the "George 1's"
8 seaplane tender U.S.S. Pine Island.

9 (4) The bodies of the dead were protected from
10 the desecration of Antarctic scavenging birds
11 (Skuas) by the surviving crew wrapping the bodies
12 and temporarily burying the men under the star-
13 board wing engine nacelle.

14 (5) Rescue requirements of the "George-1" sur-
15 vivors forced the abandonment of their crewmates'
16 bodies.

17 (6) Conditions prior to the departure of Task
18 Force 68 precluded a return to the area to the re-
19 cover the bodies.

20 (7) For nearly 60 years Navy promised the
21 families that they would recover the men: "If the
22 safety, logistical, and operational prerequisites allow
23 a mission in the future, every effort will be made to
24 bring our sailors home."

1 (8) The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command
2 twice offered to recover the bodies of this crew for
3 Navy.

4 (9) A 2004 NASA ground penetrating radar
5 overflight commissioned by Navy relocated the crash
6 site three miles from its crash position.

7 (10) The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Com-
8 mand offered to underwrite the cost of an aerial
9 ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey of the crash
10 site area by NASA.

11 (11) The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Com-
12 mand studied the recovery with the recognized recov-
13 ery authorities and national scientists and deter-
14 mined that the recovery is only “medium risk”.

15 (12) National Science Foundation and sci-
16 entists from the University of Texas, Austin, regu-
17 larly visit the island.

18 (13) The crash site is classified as a “perishable
19 site”, meaning a glacier that will calve into the
20 Bellingshausen Sea.

21 (14) The National Science Foundation main-
22 tains a presence in area - of the Pine Island Glacier.

23 (15) The National Science Foundation Director
24 of Polar Operations will assist and provide assets for
25 the recovery upon the request of Congress.

1 (16) The United States Coast Guard is pres-
2 ently pursuing the recovery of 3 WWII air crewmen
3 from similar circumstances in Greenland.

4 (17) On Memorial Day, May 25, 2009, Presi-
5 dent Barak Obama declared: “. . .the support of
6 our veterans is a sacred trust. . .we need to serve
7 them as they have served us. . .that means bringing
8 home all our POWs and MIAs. . .”.

9 (18) The policies and laws of the United States
10 of America require that our armed service personnel
11 be repatriated.

12 (19) The fullest possible accounting of United
13 States fallen military personnel means repatriating
14 living American POWs and MIAs, accounting for,
15 identifying, and recovering the remains of military
16 personnel who were killed in the line of duty, or pro-
17 viding convincing evidence as to why such a repatri-
18 ation, accounting, identification, or recovery is not
19 possible.

20 (20) It is the responsibility of the Federal Gov-
21 ernment to return to the United States for proper
22 burial and respect all members of the Armed Forces
23 killed in the line of duty who lie in lost graves.

24 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—In light of the findings
25 under subsection (a), Congress—

1 (1) reaffirms its support for the recovery and
2 return to the United States, the remains and bodies
3 of all members of the Armed Forces killed in the
4 line of duty, and for the efforts by the Joint POW-
5 MIA Accounting Command to recover the remains of
6 members of the Armed Forces from all wars, con-
7 flicts and missions;

8 (2) recognizes the courage and sacrifice of all
9 members of the Armed Forces who participated in
10 Operation Highjump and all missions vital to the
11 national security of the United States of America;

12 (3) acknowledges the dedicated research and ef-
13 forts by the US Geological Survey, the National
14 Science Foundation, the Joint POW/MIA Account-
15 ing Command, the Fallen American Veterans Foun-
16 dation and all persons and organizations to identify,
17 locate, and advocate for, from their temporary Ant-
18 arctic grave, the recovery of the well-preserved fro-
19 zen bodies of Ensign Maxwell Lopez, Naval Aviator,
20 Frederick Williams, Aviation Machinist's Mate 1ST
21 Class, Wendell Hendersin, Aviation Radioman 1ST
22 Class of the "George 1" explosion and crash; and

23 (4) encourages the Department of Defense to
24 review the facts, research and to pursue new efforts
25 to undertake all feasible efforts to recover, identify,

- 1 and return the well-preserved frozen bodies of the
- 2 “George 1” crew from Antarctica’s Thurston Island.

