

State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Concurrent House Resolution

H.C.R. 167

House concurrent resolution commemorating the centennial of U.S. Navy Torpedoman 2nd Class Henry Breault's becoming the first submariner to receive the Medal of Honor

Offered by: Representatives Morgan of Milton, Bartley of Fairfax, Beck of St. Johnsbury, Birong of Vergennes, Boyden of Cambridge, Branagan of Georgia, Brennan of Colchester, Burditt of West Rutland, Canfield of Fair Haven, Clifford of Rutland City, Demar of Enosburgh, Donahue of Northfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Graham of Williamstown, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Higley of Lowell, Hooper of Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Leavitt of Grand Isle, Maguire of Rutland City, Mattos of Milton, McCarthy of St. Albans City, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Peterson of Clarendon, Sammis of Castleton, Shaw of Pittsford, Sabilia of Dover, Smith of Derby, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, and Walker of Swanton

Whereas, the Medal of Honor is the U.S. military's highest recognition and is awarded for acts of extraordinary valor while serving our nation, and

Whereas, Henry Breault had a long naval career, first, as a member of the Royal Navy Canadian Volunteer Reserve during World War I, and, subsequently, from 1920–1941, as a submariner in the U.S. Navy who enlisted in Grand Isle and is designated in U.S. Naval records as a Vermonter, and

Whereas, on October 28, 1923, Henry Breault was stationed on the USS O-5, which, while in transit through the Panama Canal, collided with the steamship Abangarez, a commercial vessel, causing the nearly immediate sinking of the submarine, and

Whereas, nearly all the personnel on board the submarine, including Henry Breault, were able to escape, but Breault, on the verge of jumping overboard to safety himself, returned to the torpedo room to rescue a trapped fellow submarine mate, closing the torpedo hatch after him, and

Whereas, 31 hours later, a salvage party was able to rescue both men, and Henry Breault's selfless bravery resulted in President Calvin Coolidge's awarding him the Medal of Honor on March 8, 1924, making him the first submariner—and, to this day, the only enlisted submariner—so recognized, and

Whereas, naval historian Ryan Walker has since written a book entitled, *The Silent Service's First Hero: The First Submariner to Receive the Medal of Honor*, and Henry Breault's story was also the subject of an exhibit at the Submarine Force Library and Museum in Groton, Connecticut, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the centennial of U.S. Navy Torpedoman 2nd Class Henry Breault's becoming the first submariner to receive the Medal of Honor, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Submarine Force Library and Museum and to Ryan Walker.