

No. R-334. House concurrent resolution honoring the brave Vermont Vietnam War veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and recognizing the important initiative of the Orange Heart Medal Foundation, Inc. to honor their military service.

(H.C.R.276)

Offered by Representatives Winter of Ludlow and Morgan, M. of Milton

Whereas, from 1961 to 1971, the United States military sprayed at least 11 million gallons of the defoliant and herbicide Agent Orange across much of Vietnam and parts of Laos and Cambodia, and

Whereas, the spraying of Agent Orange was part of Operation Ranch Hand, which was intended to defoliate areas that enemy forces used as cover and to destroy their subsistence crops, and

Whereas, troops who were exposed to Agent Orange have developed Hodgkin's lymphoma, Parkinson's disease, prostate cancer, respiratory cancer, and other potentially fatal conditions, and, according to the Cleveland Clinic, more than 300,000 Vietnam War veterans, including Vermonters, have died from their exposure to Agent Orange, and

Whereas, the federal Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Pub. L. No. 102-4) established a broad presumption in favor of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care coverage for Vietnam War veterans who were exposed to the chemical and subsequently incurred associated illnesses, but it did not provide any recognition of these veterans, whose life-threatening injuries do not qualify them as Purple Heart or Medal of Honor recipients, and

Whereas, Ken Gamble, a Tennessee-based U.S. Navy Vietnam War veteran who was exposed to Agent Orange and later diagnosed with cancer, and who listened to his VA hospital roommate relate his own Agent Orange experience, persuaded the Tennessee General Assembly, with unanimous votes, to establish the nonprofit Orange Heart Medal Foundation, Inc. (the Foundation), and, with an initial \$25,000 grant, the Foundation developed the Orange Heart Medal, 6,000 of which were initially distributed, and 10,000 of which have been awarded to qualifying Vietnam War veterans, and

Whereas, today, in addition to distributing medals, the Orange Heart Foundation has constructed the Orange Heart Memorial in Springfield, Tennessee, to honor these special Vietnam War veterans, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the brave Vermont Vietnam War veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and recognizes the important initiative of the Orange Heart Medal Foundation, Inc. to honor their military service, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Orange Heart Medal Foundation, Inc. and to Katie Kleczkowski.