

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7037

By Hazlewood

A RESOLUTION to commend and congratulate Larry Taylor upon his receipt of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those esteemed military veterans who, through their extraordinary efforts, have brought great pride to their home State; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy individual is Larry Taylor of Signal Mountain, who is being honored by the White House with the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional Medal of Honor is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, this is not the first time that Mr. Taylor has been recognized for his service; he is also a recipient of the Silver Star, the third-highest military combat decoration, which is awarded to armed service members for gallantry in action; and

WHEREAS, Larry Taylor grew up in the St. Elmo neighborhood south of Chattanooga; after graduating from college, during the Vietnam War, he signed his commission as an armor officer in the United States Army, following in the steps of his grandfather, who fought in the Civil War; his great-uncle, who fought in World War I; and his father and uncles, who fought in World War II; and

WHEREAS, soon after arriving at armor school, however, he realized that he yearned for the clouds, having already obtained his fixed-wing pilot's license; his new orders were to obtain training as a helicopter pilot; and

WHEREAS, when Mr. Taylor arrived at his duty station with the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment in Bien Hoa, he was assigned a brand new Cobra attack helicopter, which he piloted in support of the 1st Infantry Division's Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRPs), the electromagnetic indicators in the Cobra alerting him to the location of the LRRP teams, who often found themselves surrounded by the Viet Cong shortly into their patrol. Equipped with a minigun, he would swoop in to save the teams, much to their relief and much to the dread of the enemy combatants; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 1968, four LRRP teams were ordered to reconnoiter a small village—a perilous mission from the start, as Larry Taylor noted to his commanding officer; soon after the mission commenced, he heard chatter over the net crackling and screeching and the words "We're surrounded!"; and

WHEREAS, although Mr. Taylor had flown more than 2,000 missions and saved LRRP teams on hundreds of occasions, he knew this time was different; he and his co-pilot found the distressed LRRP team in the middle of a rice paddy larger than a football stadium, surrounded by a reinforced company of North Vietnamese; and

WHEREAS, he flew around the rice paddy in an attempt to provide cover while the LRRP team repositioned for extraction; then, he heard the plink of enemy bullets as they found their mark on his Cobra, and he returned fire. Miniguns ripped the air with a stream of lead, and rockets smashed to the ground with explosive death, but the enemy refused to surrender with their prey so close; and

WHEREAS, the enemy retreated to a small village where they could suppress the LRRP team and give them cover from the Cobras; Larry Taylor called in illumination rounds that cast a portentous glow over the battleground and urgently summoned the extraction team; and

WHEREAS, his Cobra continued to take fire; the LRRP pleaded for rescue as Mr. Taylor began running out of ammunition; he then made the fateful decision to extract the team himself,

against the better judgment of others, drawing enemy fire and radioing to the LRRP team, asking if they had their claymores; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Taylor himself had only enough rounds for a quick pass, so he instructed the team to set up their claymores, saying, "[...] aim them toward the village, blow them after I make my pass, then sit tight. I'll come find you."; and

WHEREAS, as the village was engulfed in flames, Larry Taylor nearly landed on top of the LRRP team as two members jumped on the rocket pods while two others clung to the skids; he thus returned them safely back to base, saving four fellow soldiers from certain death; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Taylor epitomizes the volunteer spirit that is synonymous with this State; his incomparable bravery and aplomb in the face of great peril have earned him a rightful place in the annals of our country's military history; and

WHEREAS, we find it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud one of Tennessee's most noteworthy citizens on this momentous occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commend and congratulate Larry Taylor upon his receipt of the Congressional Medal of Honor, extending our sincere gratitude for his selfless valor in battle and our best wishes for every continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.