

HCR 204 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 2/24

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Recognizes and honors Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant John Noble Holcomb (1946-1968) for his service to his country.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Sergeant John Noble Holcomb was born on June 11, 1946, in Baker City, Oregon, the seat of Baker County. He attended elementary schools in Baker County and was a 1964 graduate of Eagle Valley High School in Richland, Oregon.

In 1966, Sergeant Holcomb enlisted in the United States Army in Corvallis, Oregon. Sergeant Holcomb began his tour of duty in Vietnam on March 23, 1968, and was assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

During an enemy attack on December 3, 1968, near Quan Loi Base Camp, Binh Long Province, Republic of Vietnam, during Operation Sheridan Sabre, Sergeant Holcomb led his squad in the defense of their position. Sergeant Holcomb, with complete disregard for heavy enemy fire, moved among his men giving encouragement and directing fire on the assaulting enemy. When their machine gunner was wounded, Sergeant Holcomb seized the weapon and ran to a forward edge of their position and placed withering fire on the enemy. Sergeant Holcomb's gallant actions caused the enemy to withdraw.

Sergeant Holcomb treated the wounded and carried them to a position of safety before reorganizing his defensive sector and despite a raging grass fire ignited by incoming mortar and rocket rounds. The enemy assaulted the position a second time and Sergeant Holcomb again manned the forward machine gun, devastating the enemy attack and forcing the enemy to again break contact and withdraw.

Sergeant Holcomb's position was hit by an enemy rocket, destroying his machine gun and severely wounding him. Despite his painful wounds, Sergeant Holcomb crawled through the grass fire and exploding mortar and rocket rounds to move the members of his squad, each of whom had been wounded, to more secure positions.

Sergeant Holcomb was the last surviving leader of his platoon, and he organized his men to repel the enemy. He crawled to the platoon radio and reported the third enemy assault on his position, which brought friendly supporting fire to bear on the charging enemy and broke up the enemy attack.

Sergeant Holcomb perished from his wounds later that day. He was buried at Eagle Valley Cemetery in Richland and is honored on the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In 1971, Sergeant Holcomb was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest decoration for valor in combat. He was also awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device and oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal with "V" device, Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Vietnam Service Medal.

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Sergeant Holcomb was an outstanding leader who served his country with honor, distinction, and selfless devotion to duty.

House Concurrent Resolution 204 recognizes and honors Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant John Noble Holcomb for his heroism and service to his country.