

SCR 28 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Leslie Porter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 4/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure honors the life and service of Chuck Mawhinney, who lived from 1949 to 2024.

Fiscal impact: No impact

Revenue impact: No impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Charles Benjamin “Chuck” Mawhinney was born on February 23, 1949, in Lakeview, Oregon. He was the son of a United States Marine Corps (USMC) veteran, who served in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He grew up in rural eastern Oregon and became an avid outdoorsman and deer hunter, having learned to shoot and hunt from his father and grandfather. He graduated from high school in June 1967 and joined the USMC later that year—after deer season ended.

The USMC had not had dedicated snipers since World War II. By 1967, it changed its mind, and Chuck Mawhinney was among the first to complete the new USMC Scout Sniper School at Camp Pendleton. He graduated at the top of his class in April 1968. He received orders to South Vietnam, where upon arrival, he was assigned as a rifleman to Lima Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division, and then was reassigned to the 5th Marine Regiment HQ Scout Sniper Platoon. He spent 16 months in Vietnam and, during his combat tour, he was credited with 103 confirmed North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong kills and 216 probable kills. He had confirmed kills over 1,000 yards when the typical kill shot for snipers during the Vietnam War was taken at a distance of 300 to 800 yards.

Chuck Mawhinney is the deadliest sniper in the history of the USMC, and he is widely considered to be the fourth deadliest sniper in American military history. He was neither boastful nor bashful about his task, and he said that he did not relish killing, but accepted it as an important part of keeping his fellow Marines safe. He believed that snipers saved lives by sapping the enemy’s will to fight.

Chuck Mawhinney earned numerous medals and commendations for his Vietnam War service, including a Bronze Star with “V” device for combat valor, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with “V” device and two Purple Hearts. He returned to the United States in the spring of 1970, and he was honorably discharged from the USMC with the rank of sergeant.

Chuck Mawhinney had a long career with the United States Forest Service until his retirement in 1997. He married Robin Hood in 1977, and they settled in Baker City, Oregon, in 1981.

Chuck Mawhinney never sought attention, and he was quiet about his years as a sniper, so that his extraordinary accomplishments remained largely unknown to the general public, and even to many close friends and family members. In 1991, a friend and fellow former sniper, Joseph T. Ward, published "Dear Mom: A Sniper’s Vietnam" in which he made public the details of Chuck Mawhinney’s war service, including his kill count. After the

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revelation of his feats as a sniper, Chuck Mawhinney slowly increased his public profile, and he began speaking at conventions and public events and attending national sniper shooting competitions. In 2023, "The Sniper: The Untold Story of the Marine Corps' Greatest Marksman of All Time," which is a biography of Chuck Mawhinney by Jim Lindsay, was published, and an M40 sniper rifle Chuck Mawhinney used in combat is displayed in the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Chuck Mawhinney died on February 12, 2024, and was survived by his wife, Robin; his three sons, Cody, Dennis and Don; and his daughter, Lisa. He was a proud Marine who served his country with honor and great distinction.