

# 2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

26105768D

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 81

Offered February 6, 2026

3 Commending the United States Army dustoff crews of the Vietnam War.

4 Patron—Guzman

5 WHEREAS, the United States Army dustoff crews of the Vietnam War, elite aeromedical teams who  
6 revolutionized battlefield medicine through their refinement of helicopter evacuations, received a  
7 Congressional Gold Medal in 2024; and

8 WHEREAS, the history of battlefield medical evacuations (medevac) dates back to the Roman Empire,  
9 and modern medevac systems have their roots in the horse-drawn ambulances and triage units developed by  
10 the Great Army of Napoleon; and

11 WHEREAS, the United States effectively utilized motorized ambulances in World War I and World War  
12 II and pioneered the use of rotary-wing medevac aircraft during the Korean War, with distinctive bubble-  
13 canopied Bell helicopters transporting the wounded to Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals; and

14 WHEREAS, during the Vietnam War, the United States perfected helicopter evacuations through  
15 technological innovations, including the development of the venerable Bell UH-1 Iroquois, better known as  
16 the “Huey,” and the visionary contributions of exceptional leaders, such as United States Army Major  
17 Charles Livingston Kelley; and

18 WHEREAS, as commander of the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), Major Kelley  
19 instituted systems that replaced echeloned evacuation and triage procedures with near-immediate transport of  
20 wounded soldiers from the battlefield to appropriate medical care; these helicopter evacuation systems  
21 became a model for other such units in the United States Army and other branches of the United States  
22 Armed Forces; and

23 WHEREAS, known by their radio callsigns “medevac” or “dustoff,” these air ambulance units provided  
24 dedicated, rapid-reaction medevac services throughout Vietnam and were credited with evacuating more than  
25 900,000 soldiers, allies, and civilians between May 1962 and March 1973; and

26 WHEREAS, United States Army dustoff crews consisted of a pilot, crew chief, and medic, all of whom  
27 were intrepid, courageous, and highly skilled—able to operate their Hueys in extreme conditions, land them  
28 on almost any terrain to pick up the wounded, and provide emergency care en route to ready medical  
29 facilities; and

30 WHEREAS, the vital work of the United States Army dustoff crews often proved to be the difference  
31 between life and death for wounded personnel by ensuring care within the “golden hour,” the critical period  
32 of time immediately after receiving a traumatic injury; and

33 WHEREAS, during the Vietnam War, some United States Army dustoff crews operated so efficiently that  
34 they were able to deliver a patient to a waiting medical facility in an average of 50 minutes from the receipt  
35 of the mission, which saved the lives of countless personnel and remains a proud benchmark for helicopter  
36 medevac crews today; and

37 WHEREAS, United States Army dustoff crews were consistently exposed to combat situations in the  
38 course of their duties; many battles during the Vietnam War raged at night, and these crews often found  
39 themselves searching for a landing zone in complete darkness, in bad weather, or over mountainous terrain,  
40 all while being the target of intense enemy fire as they attempted to rescue the wounded; and

41 WHEREAS, consequently, United States Army dustoff crews suffered a rate of aircraft loss that was more  
42 than three times that of all other types of combat helicopter missions in Vietnam, and crewmembers had a one  
43 in three chance of being wounded or killed during their tours of duty; and

44 WHEREAS, United States Army dustoff crew members are also some of the most highly decorated  
45 soldiers in United States military history; and

46 WHEREAS, Major Kelley posthumously received the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star  
47 after he was killed in action while maneuvering his aircraft to save a wounded United States soldier and  
48 several Vietnamese soldiers; his bold final words after being warned to stay away from the landing zone due  
49 to the ferocity of enemy fire, “When I have your wounded,” have continued to inspire helicopter medevac  
50 crews to this day, representing their gallantry, indomitable spirit, and unique devotion to the well-being of  
51 their fellow soldiers; and

52 WHEREAS, members of the United States Armed Forces on the ground in Vietnam had their battlefield  
53 prowess reinforced knowing that there were heroic United States Army dustoff crews just a few minutes from  
54 the fight, which was instrumental to their confidence and morale; and

55 WHEREAS, on the home front, military families in the United States knew that their loved ones would  
56 receive the quickest and best possible care in the event of an injury, thanks to the United States Army dustoff  
57 crews; and

INTRODUCED

HR81

59 WHEREAS, the willingness of United States Army dustoff crews to also risk their lives to save civilians  
60 left an immeasurably positive impression on the people of Vietnam and exemplified the finest ideals of  
61 compassion and humanity; and

62 WHEREAS, members of United States Army dustoff crews of the Vietnam War hailed from communities  
63 across the United States and represented numerous ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds; now,  
64 therefore, be it

65 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the United States Army dustoff crews of the Vietnam War  
66 hereby be commended on receiving a Congressional Gold Medal for their extraordinary service and life-  
67 saving actions; and, be it

68 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for  
69 presentation to representatives of United States Army dustoff crews of the Vietnam War as an expression of  
70 the House of Delegates' admiration for their unique contributions to the development of battlefield medicine.