

## 2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

### HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 147

*Commending the Orange Heart Medal Foundation.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 2, 2026

WHEREAS, the nonprofit Orange Heart Medal Foundation works diligently to honor those who have served and sacrificed in defense of the nation by raising awareness of the millions of veterans who developed life-threatening health complications directly related to their exposure to the chemical defoliant Agent Orange during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, the Orange Heart Medal Foundation was founded by Ken Gamble, a veteran of the United States Navy who in the course of duties during the Vietnam War was exposed to Agent Orange, a blend of herbicides that was widely deployed as part of Operation Ranch Hand from 1961 to 1971; and

WHEREAS, during Operation Ranch Hand, 20 million gallons of Agent Orange was sprayed over Vietnam from helicopters or low-flying aircraft to clear sensitive areas around United States military installations or destroy vegetation and crops to deprive enemy guerrillas of food and concealment; in the course of these operations, 2.6 million American service members were directly exposed to Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, after years of suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, Ken Gamble also developed prostate cancer as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange and learned that thousands of other fellow veterans had developed cancers and other life-altering conditions; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange is a dioxin that enters the body through physical contact or ingestion and moves into the human cell nucleus, where it attacks the genes and causes a number of serious illnesses, including leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, ischemic heart disease, soft tissue sarcoma, amyloidosis, diabetes, and cancers of the throat, prostate, lungs, and colon; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange causes genetic damage, and in some cases, the children and grandchildren of veterans exposed to Agent Orange have been born with spina bifida and other abnormalities; an ongoing study at Vanderbilt University has indicated that effects from exposure to Agent Orange can be detected in the fifth generation of some families; and

WHEREAS, Ken Gamble took it upon himself to serve as a voice for these veterans and their families by establishing the Orange Heart Medal Foundation in January 2018, using his own funds to design, patent, and create the Orange Heart Medal, which recognizes the injuries suffered by Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, the Orange Heart Medal Foundation has provided approximately 4,000 Orange Heart Medals to veterans and surviving family members in the United States, Puerto Rico, Australia, and Thailand; and

WHEREAS, while there are hundreds of thousands of surviving Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, it is estimated that approximately 300 of them die every day, and the Orange Heart Medal Foundation advocates tirelessly for medical care, treatment, and recognition befitting these heroic Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Orange Heart Medal Foundation maintains a website that shares the stories of Vietnam veterans and provides resources for veterans and their families struggling with the long-term effects of Agent Orange exposure; and

WHEREAS, the Orange Heart Medal Foundation is also working toward the creation of a permanent monument for Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, scholarship programs for descendants of these veterans, and other programs to ensure that Americans never forget the sacrifices made by these veterans in defense of the nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Orange Heart Medal Foundation hereby be commended for its work to honor and support veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Orange Heart Medal Foundation as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the courageous service of Vietnam veterans and appreciation for the importance of supporting those who were exposed to Agent Orange during their deployments.

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