

2015 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 579

Offered January 14, 2015

Prefiled January 9, 2015

Commemorating the lives and legacies of the Four Chaplains.

Patrons—Anderson, Cole, Cox, Helsel, Lingamfelter and Torian; Senator: Reeves

WHEREAS, February 3, 2015, marks the 72nd anniversary of the sinking of the troopship USAT *Dorchester*, which carried to their deaths four United States Army chaplains of three faiths, who stood united in prayer as the ship went down; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant George L. Fox, Lieutenant Alexander D. Goode, Lieutenant John P. Washington, and Lieutenant Clark V. Poling were bound for the European Theater of World War II by way of Greenland; and

WHEREAS, in the early morning of February 3, 1943, the USAT *Dorchester* was torpedoed by a Nazi submarine, knocking out the ship's electrical system; the Four Chaplains helped calm the men and organize an orderly evacuation; and

WHEREAS, the Four Chaplains, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant, gave their own life jackets to four soldiers after supplies ran out, sacrificing their own safety to ensure the well-being of others; and

WHEREAS, after helping as many men as possible into the life boats, the Four Chaplains linked arms and began to sing hymns and pray for the safety of their fellow soldiers on the bow of the sinking ship; and

WHEREAS, the Four Chaplains were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart, as well as the Four Chaplains' Medal, a special award designed to hold the same significance as the Congressional Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, through their combined act of supreme devotion and sacrifice for American liberty and human freedom, the Four Chaplains are an inspiring example of true brotherhood for all people of the world; and

WHEREAS, the noble and selfless deeds of the Four Chaplains have been celebrated in movies, books, songs, and art; in 1988, the United States Congress designated February 3 as Four Chaplains Day; and

WHEREAS, all Virginians are encouraged to commemorate the Four Chaplains' supreme sacrifice for the cause of human freedom and justice with appropriate observances; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the lives and legacies of the Four Chaplains on the 72nd anniversary of their deaths; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to American Legion Post 176 as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the service and sacrifices of the Four Chaplains.

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