

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 214

Celebrating the life of Colonel Wesley Lee Fox, USMC, Ret.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 9, 2018

Agreed to by the Senate, February 15, 2018

WHEREAS, Colonel Wesley Lee Fox, USMC, Ret., of Blacksburg, a decorated war hero who served the nation in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, died on November 24, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Lee Fox was born on September 30, 1931, in Herndon to John Wesley and Desola Lee Fox as the eldest of 10 children; he attended Warren County High School in Front Royal, then enlisted in the United States Marine Corps prior to his 19th birthday, during the beginning of the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Lee Fox completed recruit training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, before serving as a rifleman with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Lee Fox was wounded in action in Korea and sent to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V"; he was sent back to Korea after the war was over as a platoon sergeant with Company G, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines; and

WHEREAS, when he returned home from Korea, Wesley Lee Fox was assigned to duty as a drill instructor from 1955 to 1957 and as a recruiter from 1957 to 1960, before being promoted to first sergeant and, shortly thereafter, being commissioned as a Marine second lieutenant; and

WHEREAS, in September 1967, Wesley Lee Fox began service in the Vietnam War for 13 months as an executive officer of a South Vietnamese Marine Battalion before being reassigned in November 1968 as the company commander of Company A, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines until May 1969; and

WHEREAS, on February 22, 1969, during Operation Dewey Canyon in Quang Tri Province, Wesley Lee Fox was wounded twice; and

WHEREAS, as a first lieutenant, Wesley Lee Fox's company was attacked by a large enemy force, and he personally neutralized one enemy emplacement and directed his company to destroy the enemy; and

WHEREAS, after his company's executive officer was mortally wounded, Wesley Lee Fox continued to direct the company's actions, ordering air strikes and coordinating the advance until the enemy retreated; and

WHEREAS, as the only officer left in his company still capable of resisting the enemy, Wesley Lee Fox was wounded again in the final assault, but refused medical attention while he reorganized his troops and prepared the wounded for evacuation; for his heroic actions, President Richard M. Nixon presented Wesley Lee Fox with the Medal of Honor on March 2, 1971; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from the Marine Corps as a full colonel in September 1993 at the mandatory retirement age of 62, Wesley Lee Fox had held every enlisted rank except sergeant major and every officer rank except general; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Lee Fox continued to wear the uniform for eight more years as deputy commandant of cadets for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, during which time he spoke of his experiences to numerous students and other audiences; he wrote *Marine Rifleman: Forty-Three Years in the Corps*, a book that detailed his military experiences, and he was featured on the 2003 PBS program *American Valor*; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Lee Fox's military decorations and awards included the Medal of Honor, Legion of Merit with Gold Star, Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," Purple Heart with three Gold Stars, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat "V" and Gold Star, Combat Action Ribbon with one Gold Star, Navy Presidential Unit Citation, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation with four Bronze Stars, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal with four Bronze Stars, the Diver Insignia, the Navy and Marine Corps Parachutist Insignia, and the Republic of Vietnam Parachutist Badge; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Lee Fox also earned the National Defense Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, Korean Service Medal with three Bronze Stars, Vietnam Service Medal with one Silver Star and one Bronze Star, Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Navy Arctic Service Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with two Silver Stars, Vietnam Staff Service Medal, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross) with Palm and Frame, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Civil Actions) with Palm and Frame, United Nations Korea Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960-Device, Republic of Korea War

Service Medal, Marine Corps Rifle Expert Badge, and Marine Corps Pistol Expert Badge; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Lee Fox will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Dotti, their three daughters, and numerous other family members, friends, and fellow Marines; he was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Colonel Wesley Lee Fox, USMC, Ret.; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Colonel Wesley Lee Fox, USMC, Ret., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.