

HCR 7 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Leslie Porter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Recognizes and honors Oregon State Police Lieutenant Harold R. Berg (1937-1975) for his service to this state.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon State Police Lieutenant Harold R. Berg was born on February 26, 1937, to Harold and Ethyl Berg in Pawnee, Oklahoma. Lieutenant Berg grew up in Pawnee with his sisters, Willa Mae and Carol LaVern, and he graduated from Pawnee High School in 1955. Lieutenant Berg married Sara Jane Smith and in 1956 they moved to Prairie City, Oregon.

Lieutenant Berg worked for the United States Forest Service and the State Forestry Department and became a member of the Oregon State Police (OSP) in 1960. Lieutenant Berg was promoted to corporal in 1968, and in 1970 he was promoted to sergeant and became District Criminal Investigator for eastern Oregon.

Lieutenant Berg's leadership and ability were again recognized in July 1971, when he was transferred to Salem and became the first commander of the OSP narcotics unit. Lieutenant Berg then became assistant commander of the OSP Criminal Division and was promoted to lieutenant in August 1973. During his police career, Lieutenant Berg worked on many major criminal cases and he showed exceptional skill and dedication in his work.

When not in uniform, Lieutenant Berg enjoyed building and flying gas-powered model airplanes, participating in soap box derbys with his son, spending time with friends and family, hunting, beachcombing, sightseeing, and woodworking.

On May 10, 1975, while he was off duty and enjoying a family picnic at Cape Lookout State Park, Lieutenant Berg volunteered in a search and rescue operation for two missing Boy Scouts. While attempting to search a cave near the water's edge, Lieutenant Berg was washed out to sea by a sneaker wave and he died at the age of 38. The scouts were later found safe away from the shore.

Two days after Lieutenant Berg's death, OSP Superintendent Holly V. Holcomb wrote a letter to his family stating: "I have known of no finer person or a more respected police officer within our department. His children can be very proud of their father for even in his last act he was unselfishly attempting to assist others." The OSP established the Harold R. Berg Lifesaving Award in his memory. Lieutenant Berg was survived by four children, who have since added 12 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren to his legacy.

Lieutenant Berg's selfless and heroic actions exemplified the spirit and commitment of the OSP and its credo that an officer is "never off duty." Lieutenant Berg was a dedicated law enforcement officer who served the people of the State of Oregon with honor and distinction. House Concurrent Resolution 7 A recognizes and honors Lieutenant Harold R. Berg for his service to this state.