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Bend Heroes Foundation Testimony: SCR 11: Recognizes and Honors Lance Corporal
Don Edward Darnall (1946-1966) for his service to his country

Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs
March 21, 2023

Thank you, Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Thatcher and committee members, for this opportunity to testify to the Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs today in support of SCR 11. If adopted as law, the late United States Marine Corps Lance Corporal Don Edward Darnall would be honored with a roadside marker in Bend.

I am Dick Tobiason, Chairman, Bend Heroes Foundation. The Foundation is located in Bend, Oregon and designated by the IRS as a non-profit 501c3 entity. I served 20 years in the US Army retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, Master Army Aviator with 2 tours in Vietnam. I am a combat wounded veteran.

United States Marine Corps LCPL Don Edward Darnall is 1 of 13 Vietnam veterans from Bend who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. He was Killed in Action on October 22, 1966 – nearly 57 years ago.

I have met his widow Phyllis Darnall and with her help drafted SCR 11. We thank Senator Tim Knopp for sponsoring SCR 11.

The 13 Fallen Vietnam Veterans are honored in Bend with their names engraved on a granite monument at Bend Heroes Memorial in Brooks Park. The non-profit Bend Heroes Foundation managed the design, construction, and dedication of the memorial.

We hold ceremonies at the memorial on 8 patriotic days each year and often read the names of Oregon's 112 war dead. We also display 250 American flags embroidered with veterans names at the memorial, on Veterans Memorial Bridge, and downtown Bend. We will dedicate a flag flown over the United States Capitol to honor LCPL Darnall.

Mrs. Darnall dedicated an engraved brick honoring her late husband at the memorial.

LCPL Darnall and 709 other Oregon Vietnam veterans who also died and thousands of Oregonians who served during the Vietnam War are honored by the 377 mile Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway along I-84 thanks to the Oregon Legislature, Oregon State

Council of Vietnam Veterans of America, and Bend Heroes Foundation. That highway has since been extended across Idaho and Utah.

LCPL Darnall was Killed in Action in Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam an area my Army flight unit flew reconnaissance missions in support of Marine combat operations. He is the second Marine veteran from Bend to have been Killed in Action in that area.

As LCPL Darnall received the Purple Heart award, he is honored by the Purple Heart Trail across Oregon on I-5 thanks to the Legislature, Bend Heroes Foundation, and Oregon Department of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Soon the 710 Vietnam war dead and the tens of thousands of Oregonians who served and the 34 who still remain Missing in Action - including USAF Senior Master Sgt Bennie Lee Dexter from Bend will be honored by the Vietnam War Memorial on the Capitol grounds thanks to the Legislature and many supporting veterans groups and patriots.

There are over 50 Fallen Hero Memorial Highway roadside markers installed across Oregon honoring fallen veterans with only 10 dedicated to Vietnam Veterans.

With passage of SCR 11, LCPL Don Edward Darnall will be honored in Bend, his hometown almost 6 decades after his untimely death at 20 years of age.

I am sure a roadside sign in the Bend area honoring LCPL Darnall will be deeply appreciated by his family and friends.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify to this Committee today in support of SCR 11.

I urge the Committee to recommend a Do Pass vote as the Committee has done for more than 50 Oregon Fallen Heroes.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions the Committee may have.

Respectfully,

signed

3-17-23

Cc: Phyllis Darnall, OSC VV, OR MOPH