



Representative Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

District 1 Fairbanks

House Concurrent Resolution 15 Sponsor Statement

"Relating to awarding the Alaska Decoration of Honor to certain members of the military"

Under AS 26.05.342, it is our duty to honor the brave Alaskan men and women in uniform who paid the ultimate sacrifice serving their country.

Established in 2007, the Alaska Decoration of Honor is posthumously presented to Alaskan military service members, or those service members deployed while stationed in Alaska, who were either killed in action or were killed while performing combat supportive roles.

The Alaska Legislature must authorize the Decoration of Honor by resolution in order to be presented to surviving family members. In 2008, the Legislature presented the medal to 171 service members dating back to statehood. In 2009 through 2013, it authorized the award for another 70 service members. Since then, no service members were eligible for the Decoration of Honor, until three were killed in 2017.

The 2018 Decoration of Honor recipients are Staff Sergeant David T. Brabander, Private First-Class Hansen B. Kirkpatrick and U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Jacob M. Sims.

An airborne infantryman from Wasilla, Staff Sgt. Brabander was a squad leader at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. At the age of 24, he died when his vehicle overturned in a combat zone while deployed in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, on December 11, 2017.

Pfc. Kirkpatrick grew up in the Anchorage-Matsu area, served as a mortarman in the 1-36 Infantry and was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas. At the age of 19, he died from wounds sustained during an indirect fire attack in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, on July 3, 2017.

Chief Warrant Officer Jacob M. Sims, who grew up in Skagway, was a combat engineer turned UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot and served for nearly two decades. At the age of 36, he died in a helicopter crash in Logar Province, Afghanistan, on October 27, 2017.

While we hope and pray those serving in our armed forces will make it home safely, the fact is in the nature of combat that not everyone will. Passage of HCR 15 provides the opportunity for the Alaska State Legislature and the People of Alaska to honor these three brave young men's service and sacrifice.

As Co-Chair of the Joint Armed Services Committee, I was requested to carry this resolution and respectfully ask for your support.

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