

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to designate Sunday, February 2, 2025, and the first Sunday in February thereafter as "Four Chaplains Day" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to commemorate an extraordinary act of heroism and sacrifice by noncombatants during World War II that endures as an exemplar of faith, courage, and selflessness in the face of tragedy; and

WHEREAS, on February 3, 1943, the U.S. Army transport ship *Dorchester* was torpedoed by a German U-boat off the coast of Newfoundland; the ship sank in less than twenty minutes and only 230 of the 902 men aboard survived; and

WHEREAS, the nation was shocked by the magnitude of this wartime tragedy but inspired by the heroism of the four U.S. Army chaplains who served on the *Dorchester*; and

WHEREAS, graduates of the U.S. Army Chaplain School at Harvard, these four brave men were Lt. George L. Fox, a minister of the Methodist Church; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, a rabbi of the Jewish faith; Lt. John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic priest; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, a pastor with the Dutch Reformed Church; and

WHEREAS, when the *Dorchester* was torpedoed, the vessel began to sink rapidly, and the captain ordered his crew to abandon ship; and

WHEREAS, as pandemonium ensued onboard, The Four Chaplains spread out among the soldiers, calming the frightened, tending to the wounded, guiding the disoriented toward safety, offering prayers for the dying, and encouraging those who would live; and

WHEREAS, when the majority of the crew had reached the deck, the chaplains began distributing lifejackets to the men; the supply was soon depleted, and the chaplains removed

their own lifejackets and gave them to four frightened young soldiers, thus sacrificing their own lives to save the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, as the *Dorchester* went down, The Four Chaplains linked arms, braced themselves against the deck, and prayed to God for the souls of their shipmates; and

WHEREAS, Lt. Fox, Lt. Goode, Lt. Poling, and Lt. Washington were posthumously awarded the Army Distinguished Service Medal and the Purple Heart for their heroic actions on that fateful day; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, the U.S. Congress authorized The Four Chaplains Medal for Fox, Goode, Poling, and Washington; and

WHEREAS, more than eighty years later, the State of Tennessee seeks to memorialize The Four Chaplains for their courage and selflessness aboard the *Dorchester* on February 3, 1943; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that Sunday, February 2, 2025, and the first Sunday in February thereafter are designated as "Four Chaplains Day" in Tennessee to honor the memory of Lt. George L. Fox, a minister of the Methodist Church; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, a rabbi of the Jewish faith; Lt. John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic priest; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, a pastor with the Dutch Reformed Church, as they continue to inspire us through their spirituality and altruism during World War II.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.