

116<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 7347

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

---

## AN ACT

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as the “Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center”.

1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2        *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL**  
2 **CHARLES S. KETTLES DEPARTMENT OF VET-**  
3 **ERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER.**

4 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles was  
6 born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, on January 9, 1930.

7 (2) Lieutenant Colonel Kettles was drafted to  
8 the Army at age 21, and after attending Officer  
9 Candidate School, earned his commission as an  
10 armor officer in the United States Army Reserve on  
11 February 28, 1953.

12 (3) Lieutenant Colonel Kettles graduated from  
13 the Army Aviation School in 1953 before serving ac-  
14 tive duty tours in South Korea, Japan, and Thai-  
15 land.

16 (4) Lieutenant Colonel Kettles volunteered for  
17 active duty in 1963 when the United States was en-  
18 gaged in the Vietnam War.

19 (5) Some of the awards and decorations earned  
20 by Lieutenant Colonel Kettles include the following:

21 (A) The Medal of Honor.

22 (B) The Distinguished Service Cross.

23 (C) The Legion of Merit.

24 (D) The Distinguished Flying Cross.

25 (E) The Bronze Star Medal with one oak  
26 leaf cluster.

1 (F) The Air Medal with numeral 27.

2 (G) The Korean Service Medal.

3 (H) The Vietnam Service Medal with one  
4 silver service star and one bronze service star.

5 (I) The Master Aviator Badge.

6 (6) The Medal of Honor citation for Lieutenant  
7 Colonel Kettles states, “Major Charles S. Kettles  
8 distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and  
9 intrepidity while serving as Flight Commander,  
10 176th Aviation Company (Airmobile) (Light), 14th  
11 Combat Aviation Battalion, Americal Division near  
12 Duc Pho, Republic of Vietnam. On 15 May 1967,  
13 Major Kettles, upon learning that an airborne infantry  
14 unit had suffered casualties during an intense  
15 firefight with the enemy, immediately volunteered to  
16 lead a flight of six UH–1D helicopters to carry rein-  
17 forcements to the embattled force and to evacuate  
18 wounded personnel. Enemy small arms, automatic  
19 weapons, and mortar fire raked the landing zone, in-  
20 flicting heavy damage to the helicopters; however,  
21 Major Kettles refused to depart until all helicopters  
22 were loaded to capacity. He then returned to the  
23 battlefield, with full knowledge of the intense enemy  
24 fire awaiting his arrival, to bring more reinforce-  
25 ments, landing in the midst of enemy mortar and

1 automatic weapons fire that seriously wounded his  
2 gunner and severely damaged his aircraft. Upon de-  
3 parting, Major Kettles was advised by another heli-  
4 copter crew that he had fuel streaming out of his  
5 aircraft. Despite the risk posed by the leaking fuel,  
6 he nursed the damaged aircraft back to base. Later  
7 that day, the Infantry Battalion Commander re-  
8 quested immediate, emergency extraction of the re-  
9 maining 40 troops, including four members of Major  
10 Kettles' unit who were stranded when their heli-  
11 copter was destroyed by enemy fire. With only one  
12 flyable UH-1 helicopter remaining, Major Kettles  
13 volunteered to return to the deadly landing zone for  
14 a third time, leading a flight of six evacuation heli-  
15 copters, five of which were from the 161st Aviation  
16 Company. During the extraction, Major Kettles was  
17 informed by the last helicopter that all personnel  
18 were onboard, and departed the landing zone accord-  
19 ingly. Army gunships supporting the evacuation also  
20 departed the area. Once airborne, Major Kettles was  
21 advised that eight troops had been unable to reach  
22 the evacuation helicopters due to the intense enemy  
23 fire. With complete disregard for his own safety,  
24 Major Kettles passed the lead to another helicopter  
25 and returned to the landing zone to rescue the re-

1       maining troops. Without gunship, artillery, or tac-  
2       tical aircraft support, the enemy concentrated all  
3       firepower on his lone aircraft, which was imme-  
4       diately damaged by a mortar round that shattered  
5       both front windshields and the chin bubble and was  
6       further raked by small arms and machine gun fire.  
7       Despite the intense enemy fire, Major Kettles main-  
8       tained control of the aircraft and situation, allowing  
9       time for the remaining eight soldiers to board the  
10      aircraft. In spite of the severe damage to his heli-  
11      copter, Major Kettles once more skillfully guided his  
12      heavily damaged aircraft to safety. Without his cou-  
13      rageous actions and superior flying skills, the last  
14      group of soldiers and his crew would never have  
15      made it off the battlefield. Major Kettles' selfless  
16      acts of repeated valor and determination are in  
17      keeping with the highest traditions of military serv-  
18      ice and reflect great credit upon himself and the  
19      United States Army.”.

20      (b) DESIGNATION.—The medical center of the De-  
21      partment of Veterans Affairs in Ann Arbor, Michigan,  
22      shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known  
23      and designated as the “Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Ket-  
24      tles Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center” or

1 the “Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles VA Medical  
2 Center”.

3 (c) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regula-  
4 tion, map, document, paper, or other record of the United  
5 States to the medical center referred to in subsection (b)  
6 shall be considered to be a reference to the Lieutenant  
7 Colonel Charles S. Kettles Department of Veterans Affairs  
8 Medical Center.

Passed the House of Representatives September 23,  
2020.

Attest:

CHERYL L. JOHNSON,

*Clerk.*