

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9595

To authorize the President to posthumously award the Medal of Honor to Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto for acts of valor as a member of the Army during the Vietnam War.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 6, 2026

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ (for himself and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To authorize the President to posthumously award the Medal of Honor to Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto for acts of valor as a member of the Army during the Vietnam War.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Sergeant First Class
5 Jorge Otero Barreto Medal of Honor Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto
2 of the United States Army, born in Vega Baja,
3 Puerto Rico, served the United States with extraor-
4 dinary distinction, unwavering courage, and unparal-
5 leled dedication throughout his military career from
6 1959 to 1970.

7 (2) Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto
8 distinguished himself as the first Puerto Rican grad-
9 uate of the Army Air Assault School and went on
10 to serve five consecutive voluntary tours of duty in
11 the Republic of Vietnam, reflecting exceptional cour-
12 age, sacrifice, and devotion to the United States.

13 (3) Throughout his five combat tours, Sergeant
14 First Class Jorge Otero Barreto participated in
15 more than 200 combat and aerial missions, dem-
16 onstrating extraordinary courage and resilience
17 under fire while protecting his fellow soldiers and
18 carrying out missions with distinction as a member
19 of the 101st Airborne Division and the 82nd Air-
20 borne Division.

21 (4) Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto
22 earned 38 military decorations in recognition of his
23 extraordinary valor, service, and sacrifice during the
24 Vietnam War, including two Silver Stars, five
25 Bronze Star Medals with “V” Device for valor, five

1 Purple Hearts awarded for wounds sustained in
2 combat, and seven Air Medals.

3 (5) On May 1, 1968, during Operation
4 Carentan II near Hué, Sergeant First Class Jorge
5 Otero Barreto's platoon was subjected to a fierce,
6 multi-wave assault by an overwhelming North Viet-
7 namese Army force. Sergeant First Class Otero
8 Barreto single-handedly neutralized a fortified
9 enemy machine gun emplacement and its three-man
10 crew, then led his squad in clearing three additional
11 enemy bunkers, saving the lives of his fellow sol-
12 diers.

13 (6) Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto
14 passed away on October 14, 2024, at the age of 87,
15 leaving behind an enduring legacy of service that ex-
16 tended far beyond the battlefield, including decades
17 of work as a veterans' counselor helping fellow vet-
18 erans overcome post-traumatic stress and substance
19 abuse.

20 (7) The extraordinary heroism, gallantry, and
21 selflessness demonstrated by Sergeant First Class
22 Jorge Otero Barreto merit the highest honor that
23 the United States can bestow upon a member of the
24 Armed Forces.

1 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION FOR POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF**
2 **MEDAL OF HONOR TO SERGEANT FIRST**
3 **CLASS JORGE OTERO BARRETO FOR ACTS OF**
4 **VALOR AS A MEMBER OF THE ARMY DURING**
5 **THE VIETNAM WAR.**

6 Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in sec-
7 tion 7274 of title 10, United States Code, or any other
8 time limitation with respect to the awarding of certain
9 medals to persons who served in the Armed Forces, the
10 President is authorized to posthumously award the Medal
11 of Honor, under section 7271 of such title, to Sergeant
12 First Class Jorge Otero Barreto for acts of valor as a
13 member of the Army during the Vietnam War.

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