

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 7

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

1
2 TO PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
3 THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DEL-
4 EGATION REPRESENTING THE STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED
5 STATES.

6 We, your Memorialists, the House of Representatives and the Senate of
7 the State of Idaho assembled in the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-first
8 Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

9 WHEREAS, on May 15, 2005, Idaho native Army Sergeant Chris Tschida and
10 the three crew members of his tank were patrolling route "Michigan" between
11 Ramadi and Fallujah in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq while conducting opera-
12 tions under Operation Iraqi Freedom; and

13 WHEREAS, Sgt. Tschida, along with his loader, were standing watch in
14 the gun turret, watching for enemy activity while the tank driver and a Lieu-
15 tenant were inside the tank preparing for a mission later that night. The
16 loader shifted his body and accidentally knocked his water bottle down in-
17 side the tank and while lowering himself inside the tank to pick up the water,
18 an insurgent used the opportunity to attack by throwing two enemy grenades
19 inside the tank; and

20 WHEREAS, Sgt. Tschida could hear the grenades fall in the tank and
21 instantly found one, yelling "grenade!" to his crew members while retriev-
22 ing one grenade to put into the tank's breach to absorb the blast. In this
23 process, the grenade exploded and amputated Sgt. Tschida's left hand. Mo-
24 ments later the second grenade exploded inside the tank, severely wounding
25 Sgt. Tschida and two of the other crew members; and

26 WHEREAS, still conscious, Sgt. Tschida began assessing the damage in-
27 side the tank, but was unable to see because of the smoke and fire caused by
28 the grenade. Sgt. Tschida attempted to key the microphone on his radio to
29 call for support and report the enemy attack when he noticed his left hand was
30 missing. Sgt. Tschida wrapped the stump of his hand into his shirt and be-
31 gan checking the status of his tank and fellow soldiers. At first glance Sgt.
32 Tschida saw his Lieutenant slumped over and unconscious with his head rest-
33 ing on the .50 caliber sight. The Lieutenant was bleeding heavily from his
34 eye socket and appeared to be dead; and

35 WHEREAS, Sgt. Tschida then noticed his loader, hanging half-way out of
36 the tank's turret, missing both legs from the knees down. Sgt. Tschida shook
37 his Lieutenant to see if he was alive, at which time the Lieutenant let out a
38 gasp of air that confirmed he was not dead; and

39 WHEREAS, an evaluation of the tank also confirmed the ammunition bay had
40 been busted open from the grenade blast and the tank ammunition was at risk
41 of catching fire and exploding. Knowing he and his fellow soldiers were not
42 safe inside the tank, Sgt. Tschida pulled himself out of the hatch and then
43 began pulling his loader out of the tank. Once his loader was safely out

1 of the tank, Sgt. Tschida began pulling his Lieutenant out of the comman-
2 der's hatch of the tank. Once both soldiers were safely out of the tank, Sgt.
3 Tschida began administering first aid by tying a tourniquet on both of the
4 loader's legs and by stuffing a field bandage inside of the eye socket of the
5 Lieutenant to stop the bleeding from his head; and

6 WHEREAS, while caring for both soldiers, Sgt. Tschida did a security
7 check of his area. At this time an enemy insurgent, believed to be the one who
8 attacked Sgt. Tschida's tank, engaged Sgt. Tschida while he was administer-
9 ing first aid to his fellow soldiers. Sgt. Tschida was able to repel the en-
10 emy assault with his M9 service pistol, killing the hostile force; and

11 WHEREAS, knowing they were in imminent danger, Sgt. Tschida attempted
12 to get the driver of the tank to respond to his commands, but the soldier was
13 in shock and unresponsive. After beating on the hatch and pleading with the
14 driver to respond, the driver opened the driver's hatch and began receiving
15 commands from Sgt. Tschida. At this time, Sgt. Tschida commanded the driver
16 to return them and the tank with its munitions back to the nearest security
17 gate to get help. Sgt. Tschida then shielded both soldiers with his body on
18 the surface of the tank until they arrived at a safe location; and

19 WHEREAS, all four crew members, including Sgt. Tschida, survived the
20 injuries they sustained on May 15, 2005, and the tank was returned and re-
21 paired for future use. To this day, Sgt. Chris Tschida has not received
22 recognition or accolades for his heroism and steadfast leadership on May 15,
23 2005.

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Ses-
25 sion of the Sixty-first Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and
26 the Senate concurring therein, that we urge President Barack Obama, in the
27 name of Congress, to award Retired Sergeant Chris Tschida the Medal of Honor
28 for distinguishing himself through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at
29 the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, or the highest appro-
30 priate recognition.

31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House of Represen-
32 tatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of
33 this Memorial to President Barack Obama, the President of the Senate and the
34 Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and the congressional
35 delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United
36 States.