

12th District Congressman will donate all his mileage from 2005 congressional travel to "Operation Hero Miles," which helps secure free airline tickets for wounded American soldiers and their families

Washington, DC - In 2005, Georgia Congressman John Barrow (12th District) accumulated over 45,000 frequent flyer miles traveling back and forth between Washington and the congressional district he represents in Georgia.

Today, Barrow announced that all of those miles logged during his first year in Congress will be donated to

Operation Hero Miles

- a program that helps provide free airline tickets for wounded U.S. soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan undergoing treatment at a military medical center or VA medical center.

Operation Hero Miles

also helps family members travel to visit wounded soldiers recovering in those military medical facilities.

"These frequent flyer miles don't belong to me," Barrow said, "because my flights between Washington and Georgia are paid for by the federal government and the American taxpayer. So I think these miles ought to go to wounded troops who've served our country in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that's exactly what *Operation Hero*

Miles

does."

In partnership with the Fisher House Foundation, *Operation Hero Miles* works to provide wounded U.S. servicemen and women from Iraq and Afghanistan with free round-trip tickets between their hometown and the military or Veterans Administration medical center where they're being treated.

Qualifying servicemen and women may also be given free round-trip tickets to help their family or close friends visit them while they're being treated at the medical center.

According to Fisher House Foundation, *Operation Hero Miles* has already provided 4,600 free airline tickets since its inception, saving service members and their families about \$6 million.

The program was created in 2004 with the help of Maryland Congressman "Dutch" Ruppberger and was signed into law as part of the 2005 Defense Appropriations Bill. Nine major airlines participate in the "Hero Miles" program, and five of these airlines permit their passengers to donate their frequent flyer miles.

"*Operation Hero Miles* is a great program that's helped thousands of military families," Barrow said. "I encourage all of my colleagues to donate their miles."

Barrow will donate a total of 45,356 frequent flyer miles to the program, which were amassed during the 60 flights he took on Delta Air Lines between Washington and Georgia in 2005.

For more information on *Operation Hero Miles*, or to find out how you can donate, visit: <http://www.fisherhouse.org>, and click on "Hero Miles," or call 888-294-8560.

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