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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 318

Offered January 31, 2008

Celebrating the life of Staff Sergeant Jonathan M. Forde.

Patrons—Shannon; Senator: Petersen

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Jonathan M. Forde of Vienna, a dedicated combat engineer with the Virginia Army National Guard, died on August 13, 2007; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan Michael Jex-Blake Forde was born in Fairfax County, the first American-born son of his loving parents, who are British naturalized citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan Forde grew up in Vienna, played on the varsity lacrosse team, graduated from Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C., and attended James Madison University and Virginia Commonwealth University; and

WHEREAS, greatly affected by the loss of a family friend in the September 11th terrorist attack on the Pentagon, Jonathan Forde decided to join the Virginia Army National Guard in 2002; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan Forde trained as a 12B combat engineer at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and attained the rank of specialist, after exhibiting his superior technical expertise and leadership skills; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Forde served a tour of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom; returned home in 2005, having served in extended combat missions; and in 2006 attended the Warrior Leader Course at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, graduating as a member of the Commandant's List, in the top five percent of his class; and

WHEREAS, on July 19, 2007, Staff Sergeant Forde traveled to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, as a team leader in his unit of the 1st squad, 2nd platoon, 237th Engineer Company based in West Point, Virginia, where he was preparing for his second overseas deployment in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Forde suddenly became seriously ill on August 13, 2007, with what was found to be meningococcal meningitis, and he died while on route to a hospital; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Forde was posthumously promoted to the rank of staff sergeant and his many decorations included the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, and Global War on Terror Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan Forde was a brave and disciplined soldier and kind person, who was loved and respected by his comrades-in-arms, and he was notably fond of animals and was the self-appointed caretaker of stray cats; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan Forde was devoted to his mother and stepfather, Kathryn and Taylor Cosby; his father and stepmother, Michael and Deborah Forde; his fiancée Brandy Carter; his five sisters, Susannah, Annabel, Allie, Carrington, and Erin and their families; and numerous other loving family members and friends; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Forde's death is a reminder of the perils faced daily by the thousands of Americans who serve in our armed forces at home and overseas and whose devotion to duty places them in harm's way; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of a courageous and patriotic Virginian, Staff Sergeant Jonathan M. Forde; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Staff Sergeant Jonathan M. Forde as an expression of the high regard in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly and the citizens of Virginia.

INTRODUCED

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