

2011 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 821

Commending the United States Army's First Infantry Division.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 11, 2011

Agreed to by the Senate, February 17, 2011

WHEREAS, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on August 2, 1990, precipitated the United States involvement, along with its coalition partners, in the 1991 Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, the 1st Infantry Division, the United States' legendary fighting unit, was sent under the command of Major General Thomas Rhame from Fort Riley to Saudi Arabia in November 1990; and

WHEREAS, once there, the 2nd Armored Division from northern Germany joined the 1st Infantry Division's two maneuver brigades, making the 1st Infantry Division, in effect, an armored division; and

WHEREAS, as the Iraqis refused to retreat from Kuwait, General Norman Schwarzkopf followed the orders of President George H.W. Bush to begin the ground offensive on February 25, 1991; however, the success of the air campaign moved up the date of the offensive to February 24, 1991; and

WHEREAS, the 1st Infantry Division, known as the Big Red One, was charged with leading part of the VII Corps along the Saudi-Iraqi border, cutting paths, bridging trenches dug by the Iraqis, and clearing land mines and barbed wire, creating a defensive position so that the British 1st Armored Division could move through; and

WHEREAS, the Big Red One penetrated the Iraqi border at 5:45 a.m. on February 24, 1991, and with machinelike precision under the stalwart leadership of Major General Thomas Rhame, went to work despite heavy rains and wind that reduced visibility to 200 meters, clearing the paths and filling the trenches while facing small arms fire from resisting Iraqis; and

WHEREAS, by 1:00 p.m. on February 24, 1991, the Big Red One had cleared the border barriers and by dark had filled the trenches and established a defensive arc five kilometers northeast of the border; the next morning, the Big Red One continued its advance, capturing two enemy brigade headquarters; and

WHEREAS, by 10:00 a.m. on February 25, 1991, the British 1st Armored Division began its passage through the Big Red One and by 2:00 p.m. on February 26, 1991, had moved all 7,000 of its vehicles through the 1st Infantry Division; and

WHEREAS, having fulfilled its preliminary mission with resounding success, the Big Red One next moved north to serve as the VII Corps reserve; the VII Corps was charged with destruction of the Republican Guard Divisions; and

WHEREAS, despite four days and nights of continuous action, the Big Red One, under the fearless leadership of Major General Thomas Rhame, moved through rain, thunder, lightning, and blowing sand during the night of February 26, facing the Tawakalna Division around midnight and by daybreak of February 27, destroying the Iraqi 18th Mechanized Brigade; and

WHEREAS, during the night, the Big Red One and the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment devastated the northern flank of the Republican Guard and by the end of the day on February 27, Iraqi Radio reported the withdrawal from Kuwait of Iraqi forces; and

WHEREAS, the tremendous stamina, courage, and devotion to duty evidenced by the soldiers of the Big Red One during Operation Desert Storm is a reminder of the valuable contributions of the Big Red One to the defense of the United States and the cause of freedom around the world; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the United States Army's First Infantry Division under the leadership of Major General Thomas Rhame for their extraordinary actions during Operation Desert Storm; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the First Infantry Division as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation of the bravery and sacrifice of the thousands of men and women who have served their nation as part of the Big Red One.

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