

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 130

Celebrating the life of First Lieutenant Robert Joseph Hess.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 25, 2014

WHEREAS, First Lieutenant Robert Joseph Hess was killed in action on April 23, 2013, in Pul-E-Alam, Afghanistan; he was assigned to the 2nd Aviation Battalion, Task Force Knighthawk and was serving at Forward Operating Base Shank when he was killed; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. Robert "RJ" Hess was born on March 25, 1987, at Lyster Army Hospital in Fort Rucker, Alabama; he was the oldest son of Colonel Robert T. Hess (Ret.) and Laura M. Hess of Fairfax and the brother of J. Patrick Hess of Spotsylvania; and

WHEREAS, throughout his 26 years of life, 1st Lt. RJ Hess touched countless lives with his wisdom, witty personality, infectious smile, kindness, and courage; he was an amazing person and a wonderful, loving man, and he had a fantastic sense of humor that could make anyone laugh and brought a smile to everyone he met; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess put his heart and soul into everything he did; he was a kind, genuine, and compassionate human being and a natural leader; he loved the United States Army, and he worked hard to achieve his dream of becoming an army aviator; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess attended Robinson High School, where he played football and lacrosse and was the captain of the swim team, and he earned four Virginia state championship rings: one for football and three for swimming; he graduated from Robinson High School in 2005; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess attended Old Dominion University, where he was a member of the university's swim team; he joined the United States Army and enrolled in the Army ROTC program at the University of Virginia (UVA); and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess was selected by the UVA ROTC program faculty and fellow cadets to be awarded the 1st Lt. Norman Flecker Award during his senior year for "providing leadership and inspiration to others through his unmatched selflessness, work ethic, and integrity"; and

WHEREAS, as a cadet, 1st Lt. RJ Hess attended the Leadership Development Assessment Course and, due to his superior performance, was named the regimental commander for the course graduation ceremony; his score at the Leadership Development Assessment Course remains the highest ever achieved by a cadet from the UVA ROTC program; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess graduated from Old Dominion University with a degree in criminal justice and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army in 2010; after receiving his commission, 1st Lt. RJ Hess was selected to stay at UVA to become a Gold Bar Recruiter for the ROTC program while waiting to attend flight school; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess attended and was the class leader for his Basic Officer Leaders Course and completed flight school in 2011; after completing pilot training at Fort Rucker, Alabama, he was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum in November 2012, where he served as a UH-60M Blackhawk pilot and mission planner; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess was selected to be part of the Task Force Knighthawk advanced party and deployed to Afghanistan on April 11, 2013, to support special operations forces' missions in the vicinity of Forward Operating Base Shank; and

WHEREAS, following 1st Lt. RJ Hess' death, the commanders of Regional Command East, 10th Aviation Brigade and Task Force Knighthawk conducted a ceremony to rename the airfield at Forward Operating Base Shank to "Hess Airfield" in his honor; and

WHEREAS, the UVA ROTC program has established the 1st Lt. RJ Hess Leadership Award in honor of his memory, accomplishments, and ultimate sacrifice while serving his country; and

WHEREAS, 1st Lt. RJ Hess truly lived his life to the fullest for 26 years; he was one of a kind and will be missed by his family, friends, and comrades with whom he had served; this country has lost an outstanding leader, warrior, and humanitarian; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of an American hero and leader, First Lieutenant Robert Joseph Hess; 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 First Lieutenant Robert Joseph Hess as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his and his family's sacrifices in the defense and protection of this great nation.

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