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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 861

Offered February 6, 2009

Celebrating the life of Master Sergeant, USA Ret., Robert Lee Smith.

Patrons—Johnson, Carrico, Amundson, Armstrong, Athey, Barlow, Bouchard, Bowling, Brink, Caputo, Cline, Cole, Cosgrove, Cox, Crockett-Stark, Dance, Ebbin, Eisenberg, Englin, Frederick, Gear, Gilbert, Griffith, Hall, Hargrove, Herring, Howell, A.T., Howell, W.J., Hull, Ingram, Janis, Joannou, Jones, Kilgore, Landes, Lewis, Lingamfelter, Lohr, Marsden, Marshall, R.G., Massie, Mathieson, McClellan, McQuinn, Melvin, Morgan, Morrissey, Orrock, Peace, Phillips, Plum, Pollard, Purkey, Putney, Scott, E.T., Scott, J.M., Shannon, Sherwood, Shuler, Sickles, Spruill, Tata, Toscano, Tyler, Valentine, Watts and Wright; Senators: Puckett and Wampler

WHEREAS, Master Sergeant Robert Lee Smith, United States Army retired, formerly of Saltville, died on November 15, 2008; and

WHEREAS, as a young man in the small town of Saltville, Robert Smith voraciously read articles about World War II and the heroics of the American soldiers; and

WHEREAS, in June 1948, three months after his 14th birthday, Robert Smith walked and hitchhiked 30 miles to Bristol, Virginia, to enlist in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith was sent to Camp Pickett, Virginia, for basic training with the 513th Airborne Infantry Regiment, where he learned to drive and became the commanding officer's driver; and

WHEREAS, after completing jump school, Master Sgt. Robert Smith was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division in Germany, where he flew as security on aircraft involved in the Berlin Airlift; and

WHEREAS, Master Sgt. Robert Smith then joined the 511th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; he volunteered to go to Korea and was assigned to the intelligence and reconnaissance platoon of the 7th Infantry Division and later the 2nd Ranger Company; and

WHEREAS, after Master Sgt. Robert Smith's service during the Korean Conflict, he was one of four men given the assignment of modeling the new Army dress uniform across the United States, Europe, and Japan; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated and brave soldier, Master Sgt. Robert Smith again volunteered to go into combat and he served two tours in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, after 21 years of devoted duty and selfless sacrifice, Master Sgt. Robert Smith retired from the United States Army in 1969 at the age of 35; and

WHEREAS, during his service in the military, Master Sgt. Robert Smith was wounded five times; while serving in Korea, he received the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Bronze Star for Valor, and a Purple Heart; in Vietnam, he received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Medal for Valor, two Purple Hearts, Combat Infantryman Badge, Army Commendation, Bronze Star for Valor, and the Air Medal; and

WHEREAS, Master Sgt. Robert Smith will be remembered for his love of family and country and will be greatly missed by his beloved family; 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 soldier, Master Sergeant, USA Ret., Robert Lee Smith; 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 Master Sergeant, USA Ret., Robert Lee Smith 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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