

12105169D

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 174

Offered February 14, 2012

Commending Toby Owens.

Patrons—Reeves, Barker, Black, Blevins, Carrico, Colgan, Deeds, Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Garrett, Hanger, Herring, Howell, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, Marsh, Martin, McDougle, McEachin, McWaters, Miller, J.C., Miller, Y.B., Newman, Norment, Northam, Obenshain, Petersen, Puckett, Puller, Ruff, Saslaw, Smith, Stanley, Stosch, Stuart, Vogel, Wagner and Watkins

WHEREAS, Toby Owens of Spotsylvania County embodies the brave spirit, the strength of character, and the commitment to service that marks those who dedicate their lives to protecting and serving their communities and country; and

WHEREAS, as a young man, Toby Owens' love of country and sense of patriotism took him to the far side of the world as a member of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division of the United States Marine Corps stationed in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 1969, Toby Owens was on board a CH-46 helicopter alongside 17 members of his company while the rest of the company was on the ground laying down a base of fire; and

WHEREAS, as the helicopter started taking .50 caliber incoming fire, the pilot hovered the aircraft 150 feet over a river and instructed the men to jump from the aircraft; after hitting the water, Toby Owens was scrambling to join his fellow Marines when he was hit by mortar fire in his leg and back; and

WHEREAS, after undergoing extensive rehabilitation and numerous surgeries over the course of several years to remove shrapnel from his body, Toby Owens continued to face debilitating pain, eventually necessitating the implant of a small innovative computer system that sends electrical impulses to needles inserted along his spine to deaden the pain; and

WHEREAS, undeterred by these obstacles, Toby Owens continued to valiantly serve his country and community while undergoing these medical procedures, spending several years at embassy duty assignments and joining the security team at the United States Army Military Personnel Center in 1985; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, Toby Owens joined the United States Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID), serving as the security manager and an intelligence officer for the headquarters command and 138 CID offices worldwide; and

WHEREAS, that same year, Toby Owens joined the Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office as a part-time deputy; he designed and oversaw the expansion of the department's part-time deputy program, providing much-needed personnel as the county faced burgeoning growth; and

WHEREAS, a vital member of the Spotsylvania County community, Toby Owens spent countless hours ensuring public safety, building strong relationships with community members, and serving as a role model for other deputies; and

WHEREAS, a highly trained deputy, Toby Owens shared his extensive experience and expertise as he trained cadaver K-9 handlers and boat patrollers for the Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office in addition to spending considerable time and energy training his own dog, Travis; and

WHEREAS, on September 11, 2001, Toby Owens and Travis responded to a call for aid from the New York City Police Department, arriving at Ground Zero shortly after 11 p.m. and spending the next five grueling days searching through smoldering debris; and

WHEREAS, the recipient of numerous awards and medals for his distinguished service to his country, Toby Owens has earned the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation, and Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Commendation of Good Conduct with Palm; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary career, Toby Owens has been admired by colleagues, superiors, and community members for his resolute spirit, dedication to the community, and willingness to serve; and

WHEREAS, a man of extraordinary fortitude and strength, Toby Owens has remained true to his calling to serve and protect—from the battles of Vietnam, to military posts across the United States and around the world, to local sporting and community events, to the ruins of the World Trade Center towers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Toby Owens for his distinguished service to Spotsylvania County, the Commonwealth, and the nation; and, be it

56 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for
57 presentation to Toby Owens as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude and profound respect
58 for his lifetime of selfless service and sacrifices.