COMMITTEE REPORT

May 23, 2013

**S. 710**

Introduced by Senators Scott, Campsen, Grooms, Hayes, Reese, Courson, Nicholson and Alexander

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Read the first time May 22, 2013.

**THE COMMITTEE ON**

**INVITATIONS AND MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS**

To whom was referred a Concurrent Resolution (S. 710) to request that the Department of Motor Vehicles bestow special recognition upon Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, etc., respectfully

**REPORT:**

That they have duly and carefully considered the same and recommend that the same do pass:

LISTON D. BARFIELD for Committee.

**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES BESTOW SPECIAL RECOGNITION UPON CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS COLONEL CHARLES MURRAY, JR., CORPORAL FREDDIE STOWERS, MAJOR GENERAL JAMES E. LIVINGSTON, SERGEANT FIRST CLASS WEBSTER ANDERSON, MASTER SERGEANT JOHN BAKER, JR., AND SEAMAN ROBERT BLAKE, AND THE WIVES OF COLONEL CHARLES MURRAY, JR., MAJOR GENERAL JAMES E. LIVINGSTON AND MASTER SERGEANT JOHN BAKER, JR., BY NAMING DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES’ BUILDINGS IN THEIR HONOR.

Whereas, throughout our nation’s history, men and women in all eras from Concord and Lexington to Falleujah have gone in harm’s way to protect and secure our country’s freedom and way of life; and

Whereas, to recognize extraordinary heroism the Congress of the United States established the Medal of Honor which represents the highest award for valor that can be bestowed upon a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

Whereas, there have been more than three thousand four hundred recipients; and

Whereas, most recipients of the medal are ordinary Americans from ordinary backgrounds who, under extraordinary circumstances and at great risk to their own lives, performed an incredible act or a series of acts of conspicuous valor that clearly sets them apart from their comrades; and

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly would like to bestow special recognition upon six citizens with South Carolina roots who have received the Medal of Honor since its inception along with two of their wives by having Department of Motor Vehicles’ buildings named in their honor; and

Whereas, these citizens are Colonel and Mrs. Charles Murray, Jr., Corporal Freddie Stowers, Major General and Mrs. James E. Livingston, Sergeant First Class Webster Anderson, Master Sergeant and Mrs. John Baker, Jr., and Seaman Robert Blake; and

Whereas, after D‑Day as his division fought through the Vosges Mountains and reached the Rhine River at Strasbourg, Lieutenant Charles P. Murray, Jr., served as rifle platoon leader and company executive officer before he was put in command of his company; and

Whereas, early on the morning of December 16, 1944, Lieutenant Murray decided to accompany one of his platoons down a narrow winding mountain trail leading to the valley below in an attempt to deny that route to the enemy; and

Whereas, a large German force was partially hidden in a sunken road at the bottom of the hill and in a position to move against the Americans above. Lieutenant Murray crawled to a vantage point where he could see the exact location of the enemy and called in artillery. The first round was off target. He adjusted the range and was calling for another when his radio went dead. Using a borrowed rifle with a grenade launcher, he fired the platoon’s supply of grenades down on the enemy; and

Whereas, when a mortar arrived from his company, Lieutenant Murray took over as gunner, firing until all the rounds were gone. With the Germans at this point in full retreat, he stood up, drew his pistol, and led the charge down the trail. Near the bottom, he came upon a German soldier dug into a position above the road. The soldier put up his hands as if to surrender but then threw a grenade, which knocked Murray down. Although wounded by shrapnel, he got to his feet, took the German prisoner, and continued down the trail. All that was left of the fleeing German force was its wounded. Fifty Germans were dead and a truck Lt. Murray destroyed had been carrying three heavy mortars; and

Whereas, after seeing that his troops were properly deployed to hold the position, Murray went back up the hill, turned his command over to his executive officer, and walked to the battalion aid station. He was hospitalized until after Christmas. He then rejoined his men on the hill where he had left them. His uncommon valor and uniquely courageous actions earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor; and

Whereas, Corporal Freddie Stowers of Anderson County distinguished himself by exceptional gallantry and leadership in September of 1918 during the attack on Hill 188, Champagne Marne Sector of France during World War I, when his heroism and display of bravery inspired his squad to continue attacks against incredible odds and, ultimately, to capture the Hill and inflict heavy enemy casualties; and

Whereas, on May 2, 1968, while serving as commanding officer for Company E, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, Major General James E. Livingston distinguished himself beyond the call of duty in combat action against hostile forces in the Republic of Vietnam. His uncommon valor and uniquely courageous actions earning him the Congressional Medal of Honor; and

Whereas, in March 1975, General Livingston returned to Vietnam and served as operations officer for the Vietnam evacuation operations, which included Operation “Frequent Wind,” the famous evacuation of Saigon; and

Whereas, General Livingston is a graduate of the Amphibious Warfare School, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and Air War College. In addition to the Medal of Honor, his decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal; Silver Star Medal; Defense Superior Service Medal; Bronze Star Medal, with Combat “V”; Purple Heart, Third Award; Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal, Second Award; Navy Commendation Medal, with Combat “V”; Combat Action Ribbon, Second Award; and various other service and foreign decorations; and

Whereas, Sergeant First Class Webster Anderson distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as chief of section in Battery A, 2d Battalion, 320th Artillery, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), against a hostile force; and

Whereas, during the early morning hours Battery A’s defensive position was attacked by a North Vietnamese Army infantry unit supported by heavy mortar, recoilless rifle, rocket propelled grenade, and automatic weapon fire. The initial enemy onslaught breached the battery defensive perimeter; and

Whereas, Sergeant First Class Anderson, with complete disregard for his personal safety, mounted the exposed parapet of his howitzer position and became the mainstay of the defense of the battery position. Sergeant Anderson directed devastating direct howitzer fire on the assaulting enemy while providing rifle and grenade defensive fire against enemy soldiers attempting to overrun his gun section position; and

Whereas, while protecting his crew and directing their fire against the enemy force from his exposed position, two enemy grenades exploded at his feet knocking him down and severely wounding him in the legs. Despite the excruciating pain and though not able to stand, Sergeant Anderson propped himself on the parapet and continued to direct howitzer fire upon the closing enemy and encouraged his men to fight on; and

Whereas, seeing an enemy grenade land within the gun pit near a wounded member of his gun crew, Sergeant Anderson heedless of his own safety, seized the grenade and attempted to throw it over the parapet to save his men. As the grenade was thrown it exploded and Sergeant Anderson was again grievously wounded; and

Whereas, although only partially conscious and severely wounded, Sergeant Anderson refused medical evacuation and continued to encourage his men in defense of their positions; and

Whereas, Sergeant Anderson’s inspirational leadership, professionalism, devotion to duty, and complete disregard for his welfare was able to maintain the defense of his section position and to defeat a determined attack; and

Whereas, Sergeant Anderson’s gallantry and extraordinary heroism at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. His uncommon valor and uniquely courageous actions earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor; and

Whereas, on November 5, 1966, in Tay Ninh Province in Vietnam near the Cambodian border, part of Private First Class John F. Baker, Jr.’s company had been ordered to assist another company that was pinned down by the Vietcong, whose numbers had been growing throughout the battle; and

Whereas, by the time his company arrived late on November fourth and set up for the night, there were three thousand enemy soldiers in the area; and

Whereas, PFC Baker’s unit moved out at dawn to relieve its embattled sister company. As he entered the dense jungle, Baker could not see the enemy but knew they were near. Then machine gun and mortar fire broke out from Vietcong soldiers who had tied themselves onto the limbs of trees and hidden in a concrete bunker complex in the thick undergrowth. When Baker saw the lead man in his column go down, he immediately moved up and with another soldier charged two of the bunkers from where the heaviest fire was coming; and

Whereas, the man with him was shot, his arm hanging by a shred of flesh. In an effort to protect him, PFC Baker killed four enemy snipers, then dragged his mortally wounded comrade to safety; and

Whereas, after grabbing more ammunition, Baker then attacked another bunker, killing several more Vietcong with one of his men being wounded. As he was trying to evacuate the fallen soldier, they both came under fire from more snipers. Baker shot four of them. Finally out of ammunition, he dragged two more GIs off the battlefield; and

Whereas, at the end of the two-hour-long battle, he had killed ten Vietcong, destroyed six machine-gun bunkers, and saved eight of his comrades. Private First Class John F. Baker, Jr.’s uncommon valor and uniquely courageous actions earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor; and

Whereas, Robert Blake was born into slavery in Santee, South Carolina. In June, 1862, his owner’s plantation was burned during a Union naval expedition up the Santee River. About four hundred slaves from the plantation, including Blake, were taken as contraband onto Union ships and sent to North Island in Winyah Bay. While on North Island, Blake answered a call for twenty single men to serve on the USS Vermont and entered service in Virginia; and

Whereas, by December 25, 1863, Blake had been transferred to the gunboat USS Marblehead and was serving as a steward to Lieutenant Commander Richard Worsam Meade. Early that morning, in the Stono River, the Marblehead camp under fire from a Confederate howitzer at Legareville on Johns Island. As Lieutenant Commander Meade jumped from his bed and ran onto the quarter deck to give the order to return fire, Blake followed behind him, handed him his uniform, and urged him to change out of his night clothes; and

Whereas, Blake then went to the ship’s gun deck and was immediately knocked down by an exploding Confederate shell. The explosion had killed a powder boy manning one of the guns. Blake had no assigned combat role and could have retreated to relative safety below decks, but he instead chose to take over the powder boy’s duties. He stripped to the waist and began running powder boxes to the gun loaders. When Lieutenant Commander Mead asked him what he was doing, he replied “went down to the rocks to hide my face, but the rocks said there is no hiding place here. So here I am, Sir.” The Confederates eventually abandoned their position, leaving a gun behind. For his actions during the firefight, Blake was awarded the Medal of Honor four months later, on April 16, 1864; and

Whereas, Blake was later promoted to seaman and re-enlisted for another term in the Navy. During his second enlistment, he served again on the USS Vermont. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the General Assembly request that the Department of Motor Vehicles bestow special recognition upon Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients Colonel Charles Murray, Jr., Corporal Freddie Stowers, Major General James E. Livingston, Sergeant First Class Webster Anderson, Master Sergeant John Baker, Jr., and Seaman Robert Blake, and the wives of Colonel Charles Murray, Jr., Major General James E. Livingston, and Master Sergeant John Baker, Jr., by naming Department of Motor Vehicles’ buildings in their honor.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

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