**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR FIRST LIEUTENANT LESTER E. PHILLIPS III OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY (RETIRED) FOR HIS MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS OF OUTSTANDING MILITARY SERVICE.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, on behalf of all South Carolinians, acknowledge with deep appreciation the great sacrifice that the men and women of the United States Armed Forces make for the ideals of freedom and justice, which are so richly enjoyed in this nation; and

Whereas, First Lieutenant Lester E. Phillips III of the United States Army (Retired) stands high among those servicemen and women so honored by their country; and

Whereas, a native of Hartsville, Lester Phillips early showed himself a leader in Boy Scouts, earning distinction as the first black Eagle Scout in South Carolina; and

Whereas, after graduating from Butler High School, he entered the United States Army and attended basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in 1945, where he trained as a construction engineer and was assigned to Germany. In that country, he participated in the rebuilding of the German infrastructure, constructing buildings, roads, and bridges; and

Whereas, upon his return to the United States, the young Phillips earned a degree at South Carolina State College in industrial arts while also participating in the college’s Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC). At graduation, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army; and

Whereas, in 1951, he was assigned to Fort Benning, Georgia, for basic officer training, after which he was deployed to Korea to serve as an infantry platoon leader. There, he distinguished himself as one of the first African‑American officers to go into the 45th Infantry Division; and

Whereas, next followed service in Okinawa, Japan, where he protected aircraft and trained troops; a brief stint at Fort Jackson; and a five‑year assignment at the then‑Tuskegee Institute, where he was a professor of military science and tactics for five years before returning to Fort Jackson; and

Whereas, after further service in Germany and again at Fort Jackson, Lieutenant Phillips was deployed to Vietnam to serve on General William Westmoreland’s staff in Saigon. Having completed an eighteen‑month tour, he then served in Charlotte as the first African‑American recruiter in the Southeast before returning to Vietnam for a second eighteen‑month tour of duty. Reassigned to the United States, he again served as an Army recruiter in North Carolina; and

Whereas, in 1974, Lieutenant Phillips, by this time possessing a military career spanning more than thirty years, retired from active duty at Fort Jackson with seventeen awards to his credit, including two Bronze Stars and a Combat Infantry Badge with Stars. After his military retirement, he continued to contribute to his community and State as a small businessman for thirty‑three years; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives counts it a great privilege to honor First Lieutenant Lester E. Phillips III (Retired), one of the Palmetto State’s finest, and the members with one voice commend the dedicated, sacrificial labors of this worthy son of South Carolina in the military of our great country. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor First Lieutenant Lester E. Phillips III of the United States Army (Retired) for his more than thirty years of outstanding military service.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to First Lieutenant Lester E. Phillips III (Retired).

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