**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR LIEUTENANT LEROY BOWMAN OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF OUTSTANDING MILITARY SERVICE, AND TO DECLARE MAY 16, 2009, AS “MILITARY WAR VETERANS DAY” IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate, 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, Lieutenant Leroy Bowman of the United States Army (Retired) stands high among those servicemen and women so honored by their country; and

Whereas, a native of Sumter, Leroy Bowman attended public schools in Sumter and graduated from high school in 1940. He entered the United States Army in 1941 just prior to the outbreak of World War II. From September 1941 to July 1942, he was stationed at three bases, including Fort Jackson, after which he was assigned to the 76th Coast Artillery in Philadelphia and sent from there to the South Pacific; and

Whereas, on his Pacific‑bound ship only a few days, he was reassigned to aviation cadet training at Tuskegee Army Air Field, Alabama. In 1943, he graduated with Class 43‑C as a second lieutenant and became a single‑engine fighter pilot in the Army Air Corps. He is one of the nine hundred ninety‑four black military aviators who trained at an isolated and segregated training complex near Tuskegee, Alabama, and at Tuskegee Institute; and

Whereas, after receiving additional flight training in Michigan, Lieutenant Bowman embarked on a tour with the United States Army 15th Air Force in Southern Italy during the Second World War. One of the four hundred fifty black fighter pilots who served with the 332nd Fighter Group under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., he flew thirty‑six combat missions against the German Luftwaffe. Pilots in the 332nd became known as the Red Tail Angels because of their fantastic record of safely escorting American bomber aircraft to and from targets in enemy territory; and

Whereas, when the war ended, Lieutenant Bowman returned to Sumter and completed his undergraduate degree at Morris College. Recalled to military service, he served at various military bases in New York for a number of years before being transferred to Alaska, where he began graduate studies. Ultimately, he earned a masters degree in elementary science and administration at Hofstra University in Hampstead, New York; and

Whereas, in 1968, Leroy Bowman began work as a teacher, principal, and administrator in Long Island, New York, retiring in 1986 and returning to his native Sumter. Since that time, he has continued to contribute to his community and State as a deacon in his church and as a member of the Spann Watson Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Incorporated. He keeps up a busy schedule of speaking engagements at schools, churches, and civic organizations, using these opportunities as avenues for encouraging young people to stay in school, study, and work hard toward achieving their goals; and

Whereas, in 2006, Tuskegee University recognized Mr. Bowman’s exceptional achievements by awarding him an honorary doctorate in public service, and in 2007, as one of the original Tuskegee airmen, he received a Congressional Gold Medal Award from President George Bush; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate counts it a great privilege to honor Lieutenant Leroy Bowman, 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 Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor Lieutenant Leroy Bowman of the United States Army for his many years of outstanding military service and to declare May 16, 2009, as “Military War Veterans Day” in the State of South Carolina.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Lieutenant Leroy Bowman.

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