**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE HEROIC SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF THE U.S. NAVY CREW OF THE USS COLUMBIA CL‑56 DURING THE PACIFIC CAMPAIGN OF WORLD WAR II, TO COMMEMORATE THE COLUMBIA’S HISTORIC ROLE IN WORLD WAR II, AND TO DECLARE OCTOBER 15, 2009, AS “USS COLUMBIA DAY”.

Whereas, the State of South Carolina cherishes its military heritage and its continued and proud support of our military community and the men and women who have served our country in the United States Armed Forces; and

Whereas, the State desires to recognize the historic role in World War II of the U.S. Navy Cleveland Class Light Cruiser, USS Columbia CL‑56, the namesake of our capital city; and

Whereas, the USS Columbia CL‑56, commissioned July 29, 1942, supported the first major Pacific Campaign of World War II, Guadalcanal, where during the Battle of Rennell Island in early 1943, aided in shooting down three enemy planes; and

Whereas, the USS Columbia CL‑56, in 1943, supported the Allied Forces New Georgia Campaign and the U.S. Marine Corps landing on Bougainville, assisting in sinking an enemy cruiser and destroyer; and

Whereas, on October 24, 1944, the USS Columbia CL‑56 played a crucial role in the largest naval battle in history, during the Philippine Campaign, the Battle of Leyte Gulf, where at Surigao Strait, the American 7th Fleet Support Force intercepted and ambushed the Japanese Imperial Southern Force, “crossing the T” of the Japanese fleet in the narrows of Surigao Strait, in the last battleship engagement in history. USS Columbia CL‑56 sank the destroyer, Asagumo, and assisted in the destruction of two Japanese battleships and accompanying cruisers and destroyers; and

Whereas, on January 6, 1945, in support of the major American landings at Lingayen Gulf, during the Philippine Campaign, leading to the retaking of Luzon and the capital of Manila, the USS Columbia CL‑56 was struck by two enemy planes, in the first Japanese kamikaze, or aerial suicide attacks, of World War II. The second plane penetrated two decks before exploding, killing thirteen and wounding forty‑four of Columbia’s crew, disabling her after gun turrets, and setting the ship afire, but impressive damage control enabled Columbia to continue her bombardment with her remaining guns; and

Whereas, on January 9, the morning of the U.S. Army landings, a third kamikaze struck the Columbia, killing twenty‑four men and wounding ninety‑seven. Columbia again put out fires, controlled the damage, and continued her mission providing bombardment and fire support, earning a Navy Unit Commendation for her action in this operation; and

Whereas, the remaining crew of the USS Columbia CL‑56 are visiting Columbia for most likely the last time in October 2009, with the USS Columbia CL‑56 Association, to mark the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October of 1945; and

Whereas, it is appropriate that South Carolina honors the crew of USS Columbia CL‑56 for their bravery, sacrifice, heroism, and the honor they reflect upon our capital city. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate recognize the heroic service and sacrifice of the U.S. Navy crew of the USS Columbia during the Pacific campaign of World War II, commemorate the Columbia’s historic role in World War II, and declare October 15, 2009, as “USS Columbia Day”.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the remaining crew of the USS Columbia CL‑56.

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