**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEND THE HONORABLE JAMES E. SMITH, JR. FOR HIS SEVENTEEN YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED MILITARY SERVICE IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND TO CONGRATULATE HIM UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS WELL‑DESERVED PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF MAJOR.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were pleased to learn of the recent promotion of The Honorable James E. Smith, Jr. to the rank of Major in the South Carolina Army National Guard (SCARNG); and

Whereas, following his family’s long history of dutiful military service during America’s conflicts, Major Smith began his military career as a Judge Advocate General’s Corps (JAG) Officer in the United States Army Reserve in 1996 where he served until transferring to the SCARNG in 1998; and

Whereas, no doubt foreshadowing his subsequent military career shift to the Infantry, Major Smith’s innate leadership and tactical abilities in a combat environment were first made evident during the 218th Heavy Separate Brigade’s 2000 National Training Center (NTC) rotation at Fort Irwin, California, where, while still a military attorney, then First Lieutenant Smith led a successful, spontaneous counterattack against the NTC Opposing Force (OPFOR) who were attempting to overrun the 218th Brigade Headquarters; and

Whereas, it was during a visit to Ground Zero in New York City shortly after 9/11 that then Captain Smith realized his calling to transfer from the JAG Corps to the Infantry, so he could lead combat troops on the battlefield as part of the Global War on Terrorism; and

Whereas, less than seventy‑two hours after learning that a transfer to the Infantry at the age of thirty‑seven would necessitate resigning his commission, enlisting in the United States Army, and completing Basic Training, Officer Candidacy School (OCS), and the Infantry Officer Basic Course (IOBC), Major Smith submitted his resignation from the JAG Corps and enlisted as a Private; and

Whereas, not content merely to complete the required courses, Major Smith excelled, competing against Soldiers nearly twenty years his junior and graduating as the Number One Graduate from his Basic Training class and in the top of his class at both OCS and IOBC; and

Whereas, Major Smith’s destiny to lead Infantry Soldiers on the battlefield was fulfilled in the spring of 2007 when the SCARNG’s, 218th Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan for a one-year tour as part of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

Whereas, in recognition of his superior leadership style, superb operational instincts, and unparalleled relationship‑building skills, Major Smith was selected to be one of the first Police Mentor Team Chiefs for an Afghan National Police (ANP) District Headquarters in one of Afghanistan’s most notoriously dangerous provinces; and

Whereas, Major Smith’s Regular Army Senior Rater evaluated him as the number two Captain of the seventy‑three under his command in Afghanistan, stating “Captain Smith is a warrior. He was wounded and led his team without complaint or hesitation. His vision, instincts, hard‑nosed execution and that of his great team made a real difference in the war here. He is an officer of unrivaled potential, uncommon judgment, and impeccable character.”; and

Whereas, Major Smith, his team, and their Afghan counterparts performed an exceedingly difficult mission in an exemplary manner, gaining the trust and confidence of the citizens they supported and demonstrating steadfast personal courage while conducting numerous successful combat operations throughout their grueling one‑year tour of duty; and

Whereas, Major James E. Smith, Jr. has deservedly received many of our country’s highest military awards and decorations, including the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, commend The Honorable James E. Smith, Jr. for his seventeen years of distinguished military service in the South Carolina Army National Guard and congratulate him upon the occasion of his well‑deserved promotion to the rank of Major.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to The Honorable James E. Smith, Jr.

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