**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE PARTICIPANTS FROM FORT MILL IN BUILDING THE SOPWITH CAMEL REPLICA AND TO CONGRATULATE THEIR EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THEIR PAST WITH A KEEN INTEREST IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THEIR COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives have learned with great pleasure that a full‑scale replica of a World War I Sopwith Biplane F.1, known as the Sopwith Camel, was built by high school students in Fort Mill; and

Whereas, deriving its nickname, Camel, from a very distinctive look given by the hump formed by cowling over the guns, the aircraft was the most successful and significant British fighter during the War to End All Wars; and

Whereas, manufactured by the Sopwith Aviation Company, the Sopwith Camel made its first flight in 1916 and was introduced to the war effort in 1917. Although the aircraft was awkward for new pilots, it could out‑turn any fighter aircraft in a right turn and was credited with 1,294 kills in only seventeen months during the Great War; and

Whereas, Fort Mill residents David Griffin and Ell Close proposed two years ago that the iconic plane steered by Colonel Elliott Springs as a British Royal Flying Corps fighter pilot in World War I be recreated in Fort Mill; and

Whereas, in honor of Mr. Close’s grandfather, the late Colonel Springs, the Close family funded the project through a gift to Foundation for Fort Mill Schools, specified for the building of the replica by Mr. Griffin and students; and

Whereas, in 2012, *Letters from a War Bird: The World War I Correspondence of Elliott White Springs* detailed the experiences of this top flying ace who enjoyed a prolific writing career, as well as a career in the textile industry, operating Springs Cotton Mills, a textile mill started by his father; and

Whereas, using school facilities for design, construction, and computer‑aided manufacturing techniques, more than eighty students in Fort Mill High’s engineering and Nation Ford High School’s auto tech programs participated in the construction of the replica over a two‑year period; and

Whereas, as a retired aeronautical engineer and licensed pilot, David Griffin wanted to expose students to opportunities that the Palmetto State offers, such as the Boeing plant in Charleston and jobs in maintenance, air traffic control, administration, and aviation support systems; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are grateful for all those who participated in the Sopwith Camel project which showcased the past, present, and future of Fort Mill: the historical context of those who participated in World War I, the flourishing aviation industry in the Palmetto State, and the ingenuity of students who will provide for South Carolina’s place in the world of tomorrow. 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 the participants from Fort Mill in building the Sopwith Camel replica and congratulate their extraordinary efforts to preserve their past with a keen interest in the present and future of their community.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑