

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 665

By Coleman

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Staff Sergeant Thomas Hoffelt on receiving his Purple Heart Medal, which he most deservedly earned while serving in Iraq.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by people who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans have continued this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the United States Military; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Thomas Hoffelt, a squad leader in the Tennessee National Guard's 269<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company from Murfreesboro, was awarded the Purple Heart Medal during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base in Mosul, Iraq, on May 28, 2009, for injuries he sustained while fighting in defense of his country; and

WHEREAS, one of the most recognized and respected medals one can receive, the Purple Heart Medal was established in 1782 by General George Washington at Newburgh, New York, during the Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, originally created as a Badge of Military Merit, the Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of the United States Armed Forces who has been wounded or killed in combat against a declared enemy; and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 2009, Sergeant Hoffelt and his squad were conducting an inspection visit to an Iraqi police station in Mosul when two men clad in Iraqi police uniforms opened fire on the team with AK 47 assault rifles; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Hoffelt sustained serious injuries in the crossfire; though he had been shot in the right side of his face and his upper left shoulder, he returned fire as the assailants fled; and

WHEREAS, a soldier wholly devoted to the welfare of others, Sergeant Hoffelt disregarded his own injuries and immediately administered first aid to wounded soldiers, coordinating with other units to secure the area and transport his soldiers to the hospital; and

WHEREAS, during the attack, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant William E. Emmert of Fayetteville lost his life in a valiant sacrifice for his country; three brave Tennessee Guardsmen, including Sergeant Hoffelt, were wounded; and

WHEREAS, while Thomas Hoffelt was able to remain in Iraq and return to duty, the other two wounded Guardsmen sought medical care in the United States, where they received their Purple Heart Medals at earlier ceremonies; and

WHEREAS, Brigadier General Max Haston, Assistant Adjutant General of the Tennessee Army National Guard, expressed his pride in the soldiers who are serving in Iraq, emphasizing that he is especially proud of Sergeant Thomas Hoffelt; and

WHEREAS, Brigadier General Haston said of Sergeant Hoffelt, "Without hesitation, Hoffelt placed himself in harm's way to help his fellow soldiers"; Max Haston was in Mosul visiting Tennessee Guardsmen and personally presented Sergeant Hoffelt with the venerated award; and

WHEREAS, the 269<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company is scheduled to return to Tennessee in November of 2009; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Thomas Hoffelt performed his duties with the utmost bravery, skill, dedication, and professionalism, and the accolades he received for his military service and personal sacrifice were most assuredly deserved; and

WHEREAS, the conferral of such awards reminds the citizens of this nation that their freedoms must not be taken for granted, and it is fitting that Thomas Hoffelt be duly recognized for his courageous service in Iraq; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Staff Sergeant Thomas Hosfelt on receiving the Purple Heart Medal, which he most deservedly earned for injuries sustained in combat in Iraq, extend to him our most heartfelt appreciation for his sacrifice, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors and a safe return to Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.