**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE DONALD “DON” LEO RALPH OF CLARENDON COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS NINETY‑FIFTH BIRTHDAY AND TO WISH HIM A JOYOUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND CONTINUED HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly are delighted to learn that Don Ralph will celebrate his ninety‑fifth birthday on March 20, 2017; and

Whereas, born in the early part of the twentieth century, he has seen many remarkable social changes, technological advancements, and international developments that have spanned the globe from that time into the second decade of the twenty‑first century; and

Whereas, soon after he had turned eighteen, Don Ralph enlisted in the medical department of the United States Army Air Corps in July 1940, in the proud tradition of the sons of South Carolina, and was sworn in at Fort Knox on July 4, 1940; and

Whereas, when he enlisted he had been offered duty in either Hawaii or the Philippines. He chose Hawaii at the suggestion of a mentor who told him the girls there had those grass skirts; and

Whereas, even though there had been some talk about the war in Asia and Western Europe, few people thought the United States was vulnerable to invasion; and

Whereas, at Hickam Field in Pearl Harbor, he worked out of an old wooden building used as a dispensary until completion of the new hospital in November 1941, where the staff celebrated Thanksgiving dinner, his annual reminder of the gruesome event to follow; and

Whereas, he had been stationed at Pearl Harbor for a little more than a year at the time of the infamous attack, when three hundred Japanese airplanes and a naval fleet surprised the military base that tranquil morning; and

Whereas, only nineteen years old on the fateful Sunday, December 7, 1941, Don Ralph was working as an X‑ray technician at the hospital and was transporting equipment to and from the facility when at 7:55 in the morning, the Japanese destruction began; and

Whereas, his commanding officer ordered him and other medical personnel to secure their field packs, fill their canteens with water, and fall out in front of the dispensary. They began retrieving the wounded and the dead, giving first aid at the scene, and taking them five at a time to the hospital, only to repeat it again and again; and

Whereas, the mess hall where he had eaten that morning was destroyed, and able‑bodied soldiers who survived the attack spent several days removing their fallen brothers from the demolished building; and

Whereas, Don Ralph who as a teenager had been restless at home on the family farm served his country with distinction, for which he was issued a citation, a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star; and

Whereas, later when he was stationed on Okinawa, he made time to lead a Cub Scout troop and coach Little League baseball. When he returned to Clarendon, believing the Lord has him on the earth to help people, he drove a van from Sumter to the Dorn Veteran Affairs Medical Center twice a month for over a decade; and

Whereas, Don Ralph believes he may be the last Pearl Harbor survivor in Clarendon County and the surrounding areas; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is pleased to honor this noble son of South Carolina at the celebration of his ninety‑fifth birthday, and the members join his family and friends to commend him on reaching this extraordinary milestone. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, congratulate Donald “Don” Leo Ralph of Clarendon County on the occasion of his ninety‑fifth birthday and wish him a joyous birthday celebration and continued health and happiness.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Donald “Don” Leo Ralph.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑