**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE UNITED STATES ARMY’S 66TH INFANTRY DIVISION FOR THEIR DEDICATED SERVICE IN WORLD WAR II, AND TO WELCOME THEM TO CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THEIR ANNUAL REUNION.

Whereas, the 66th Infantry Division, nicknamed the “Black Panther Division”, was a unit of the United States Army in World War II. They division was activated in April 1943 at Camp Blanding, Florida. They were later transferred to Camp Robinson in Arkansas, Camp Rucker in Alabama, and then Camp Shanks in New Jersey before being sent overseas; and

Whereas, the 66th Division consisted of the following units: 262nd, 263rd, and 264th Infantry Regiments, Headquarters Battery, 721st, 870th, 871st, and 872nd, Field Artillery Battalions, 266th Engineer Combat Battalion, the 366th Medical Battalion, 66th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, 66th Quartermaster Company, 66th Cavalry Reconnaisance Troop, the 566th Signal Company, and Headquarters Special Troops, including a Headquarters Company and a Military Police Platoon; and

Whereas, on Christmas Eve in 1944, the group crossed the English Channel, with the majority of infantry troops on board the *SS Leopoldville* and the *HMS Cheshire*. Just off the shore of Cherbourg, the *SS Leopoldville* was torpedoed by a German U-boat, killing seven hundred forty-eight serviceman and fourteen officers; and

Whereas, after arriving at Cherbourg, the remaining troops in the 66th Division relieved the 94th Division in the L’Orient and St. Nazaire sectors in Brittany. While in Brittany, the 66th Division carried out daily reconnaissance patrols and conducted periodic artillery fire on pockets of resistance. Their artillery fire disabled many German guns and sank numerous re-supply boats. Upon the German surrender on May 8, 1945, the 66th Division moved to the area near Koblenz, Germany, for occupation duty and to guard the German POW camps; and

Whereas, the division moved again in 1945, to the Marseille area of France. They staffed the staging areas in Marseille, Arles, and St. Victoret where troops were being sent to the war in the Pacific. The division constructed eight outdoor motion picture amphitheaters and athletic fields for the GIs’ entertainment; and

Whereas, when the war in the Pacific ended, a small part of the 66th division sailed home in October 1945. The remainder of the division was either sent to the Delta Base in southern France or to Germany and Austria to serve as occupation forces; and

Whereas, the Division suffered 804 casualties, 268 wounded, seven missing, and nineteen captured; and

Whereas, the 66th Infantry Division celebrate their 2015 annual reunion in Charleston, South Carolina from June 23-25, 2015; and

Whereas, the members of the Senate find it fitting to honor this group of individuals who valiantly fought for the United States during World War II and would like to welcome them to Charleston as they meet at their annual reunion. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize the United States Army’s 66th Infantry Division for their dedicated service in World War II, and welcome them to Charleston, South Carolina, for their annual reunion.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the 66th Infantry Division.

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