**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022 AS “NATIONAL GUARD DAY” IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE MANY SACRIFICES AND VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS THE SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD MAKES TO PROTECT THE FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, AND SECURITY OF OUR STATE AND NATION.

Whereas, the South Carolina National Guard is a community‑based military organization that primarily serves the Governor and citizens of South Carolina, but it also serves abroad in support of national defense. Currently, the South Carolina Army National Guard has more than nine thousand four hundred soldiers, and the South Carolina Air National Guard has more than one thousand three hundred airmen; and

Whereas, fulfilling its duty to protect the citizens of the Palmetto State, both at home and abroad, the South Carolina National Guard provided aid to the citizens of this great State during Hurricane Matthew. At the peak of operations, over two thousand nine hundred soldiers and airmen supported efforts to evacuate over three hundred and fifty thousand citizens near the coast. In addition to evacuation support, their mission included providing security, traffic control points, debris removal, route clearance, points of distribution, transportation of sandbags and supplies, damage assessments, engineer support and water purification; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Army National Guard also sent aid to quench fires in Pickens County in November 2016, by using UH‑60 Black Hawks and CH‑47 Chinook helicopters to drop nearly three million gallons of water; and

Whereas, the South Carolina National Guard has deployed more than nineteen thousand soldiers and airmen in support of overseas contingency operations since September 11, 2001, and currently there are more than five hundred guard members deployed to Europe, Kuwait, the Horn of Africa, Guantanamo, and southwest Asia, in support of maintaining American freedom; and

Whereas, amongst a group of dedicated patriots, a few are distinguished each year for their exemplary character and service. The 2022 award winners for the Air Guard are Airman of the Year, Senior Airman Julia Coleman; Non‑Commissioned Officer of the Year, Technical Sergeant Tiffanie Steward; Senior Non‑Commissioned Officer of the Year, Senior Master Sergeant Isamael Fierro; First Sergeant of the Year, Senior Master Sergeant Carl Clegg; Officer of the Year, Major Jonilynn Reyes; and Air Guard Family of the Year, Senior Master Sergeant Jason Horne and family; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Army National Guard hosts an annual contest, the Best Warrior Competition, where individuals are evaluated based upon their combat soldier skills including land navigation, physical fitness, marksmanship, a road march, and a series of knowledge‑based questions. This year’s winners are Soldier of the Year, Specialist Thomas Goff; Non‑Commissioned Officer of the Year, Staff Sergeant John Gower; and Warrant Officer of the Year, Warrant Officer Two Kristine German. Army Guard awards are also granted for meritorious service, and the 2022 award winners are Captain Joshua Blizzard, who was presented with the Major General Dozier Award; Sergeant First Class Otis Franklin, who was granted the Director’s Award; and Senior First Class Jeffry and Mandy Taylor, who were bestowed the Family/Volunteer of the Year Award; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is extremely grateful for the service of the members of the South Carolina National Guard to protect the citizens and traditional values of this nation and deeply honor the memory of the sixteen soldiers in the South Carolina National Guard who paid the ultimate price in support of combat operations since September 11, 2001. 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, declare Wednesday, March 30, 2022 as “National Guard Day” in South Carolina and recognize and honor the many sacrifices and valuable contributions that the South Carolina National Guard makes to protect the freedom, democracy, and security of our State and nation.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Major General Van McCarty.

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