

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 11

BY SENATOR CATHEY

COMMENDATIONS. Commends John Benjamin Humphrey on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend John Benjamin "JB" Humphrey on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday
3 on October 7, 2020.

4 WHEREAS, John Benjamin Humphrey, known as "JB", while born on October 7,
5 1920, in Beekman, Louisiana, he lived most of his life in Delhi, Louisiana; and

6 WHEREAS, "JB" Humphrey enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in
7 October, 1942, and was assigned to Selman Field, a short distance east of Monroe,
8 Louisiana, which served as a training base during World War II; and

9 WHEREAS, Airman Humphrey was trained as a flight engineer and after training,
10 his unit was attached to the Ninth Air Force, European Theater of Operations, and stationed
11 in England and France; and

12 WHEREAS, "JB" Humphrey was assigned to the crew of a B-29 Superfortress, a
13 four-engine propeller-driven heavy bomber, designed and built by Boeing Corporation, one
14 of the largest aircraft used in World War II, and it excelled in low-altitude night incendiary
15 bombing; and

16 WHEREAS, "JB's" B-29 was sent to bomb enemy train tracks in Europe, but was
17 shot down and crashed in March 1944, in enemy territory; and

18 WHEREAS, Sergeant Humphrey assisted the entire flight crew out of the downed

1 plane and into the cover of nearby bushes, in hopes of avoiding enemy detection; and

2 WHEREAS, the French Resistance located the downed airmen and took them to the
3 nearest hospital in Allied hands, where it was discovered that Sgt. Humphrey had assisted
4 the others in his crew despite having suffered a broken back in the crash; and

5 WHEREAS, eventually, Sgt. Humphrey arrived in Ireland and boarded a hospital
6 ship returning to the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, because of significant German U-boat activity in the Northern Atlantic
8 Ocean, the hospital ship sailed southwest out of Ireland and crossed the equator before
9 heading north to safely deliver its precious cargo home for additional medical treatment; and

10 WHEREAS, Sgt. Humphrey returned to Louisiana where, once his injuries were
11 healed, he continued to serve his country as a flight engineer instructor at Selman Field,
12 Barksdale Air Force Base and at a third facility in Missouri until the end of the war in
13 Europe in May 1945, and in the Pacific in September 1945; and

14 WHEREAS, because of his heroism in evacuating the members of his flight crew to
15 safety, Sgt. Humphrey was awarded two silver stars for gallantry in action against an enemy
16 of the United States while engaged in military operations, two bronze stars awarded for
17 exemplary conduct in ground combat against an armed enemy, an air medal for those who
18 served in the air corps, and a purple heart for being wounded in combat; and

19 WHEREAS, before being discharged, Sgt. Humphrey and his crew were requested
20 by five-star General "Hap" Arnold, the commander in chief of the Army and commander in
21 chief of the Army Air Force, to fly him to Ireland; and

22 WHEREAS, General Arnold announced that if he was going to fly, it would have to
23 be the best pilot and crew; Humphrey's crew qualified for this exceptional honor and a
24 plaque in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum commemorates this flight and the crew
25 members involved; and

26 WHEREAS, upon his return to civilian life, "JB" Humphrey and his adored wife,
27 Bonnie, owned a gasoline service station in Delhi for a period of time; and

28 WHEREAS, Mr. Humphrey sold the station and became a rural route mail carrier for
29 the United States Postal Service, still serving his fellow Americans and he is believed to be
30 the oldest former rural route mail carrier alive; and

1 WHEREAS, "JB" and Bonnie Humphrey settled into life in Delhi, raising their two
2 sons, Johnny and Phillip, attending the First Baptist Church of Delhi, and living the life that
3 their sacrifices in the armed forces and on the homefront, secured for their generation and
4 those to come; and

5 WHEREAS, "JB" was a third degree Mason and a member of the Barak Shriners,
6 where he participated as a member of the "clown troop" known as "Becker the Clown"; and

7 WHEREAS, "JB" and Bonnie delighted in a marriage that lasted for fifty years and
8 particularly enjoyed dancing together, and reveled in spending time with their children,
9 grandchildren, and extended family who where always a top priority; and

10 WHEREAS, after the World War II memorial was completed in Washington, D.C.,
11 in 2004, flights were begun to take World War II veterans to see the memorial and in order
12 that they would know how grateful their country remains for the sacrifices made by them
13 and their comrades in arms; and

14 WHEREAS, as the country cherishes its ever dwindling remaining World War II
15 veterans, it is important to celebrate the invaluable contributions of men such as John
16 Benjamin Humphrey, who saw what needed to be done, put their lives on hold, and at great
17 personal peril, fought to retain the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Declaration of
18 Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights for all Americans and for that effort,
19 "JB" Humphrey is honored on his one hundredth birthday for being a true American hero in
20 every sense of the word and deserving of all honor.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
22 does hereby commend John Benjamin Humphrey on the occasion of his one hundredth
23 birthday on October 7, 2020.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
25 John Benjamin "JB" Humphrey.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.

DIGEST

SR 11 Original

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

Cathey

Commends John Benjamin Humphrey on his one hundredth birthday on October 7, 2020.