

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 7

BY SENATORS WARD, ALARIO, ALLAIN, APPEL, BARROW, BISHOP, BOUDREAUX, BROWN, CARTER, CHABERT, CLAITOR, COLOMB, CORTEZ, DONAHUE, ERDEY, FANNIN, GATTI, HEWITT, JOHNS, LAFLEUR, LAMBERT, LONG, LUNEAU, MARTINY, MILKOVICH, MILLS, MIZELL, MORRELL, MORRISH, PEACOCK, PERRY, PETERSON, RISER, GARY SMITH, JOHN SMITH, TARVER, THOMPSON, WALSWORTH AND WHITE AND REPRESENTATIVES ABRAHAM, ABRAMSON, ADAMS, AMEDEE, ANDERS, ARMES, BACALA, BAGLEY, BAGNERIS, BARRAS, BERTHELOT, BILLIOT, BISHOP, BOUIE, BROADWATER, CHAD BROWN, TERRY BROWN, CARMODY, CARPENTER, GARY CARTER, ROBBY CARTER, STEVE CARTER, CHANEY, CONNICK, COUSSAN, COX, CROMER, DANAHAY, DAVIS, DEVILLIER, DWIGHT, EDMONDS, EMERSON, FALCONER, FOIL, FRANKLIN, GAINES, GAROFALO, GISCLAIR, GLOVER, GUINN, HALL, JIMMY HARRIS, LANCE HARRIS, HAVARD, HAZEL, HENRY, HENSGENS, HILFERTY, HILL, HODGES, HOFFMANN, HOLLIS, HORTON, HOWARD, HUNTER, HUVAL, IVEY, JACKSON, JAMES, JEFFERSON, JENKINS, MIKE JOHNSON, ROBERT JOHNSON, JONES, JORDAN, NANCY LANDRY, TERRY LANDRY, LEBAS, LEGER, LEOPOLD, LOPINTO, LYONS, MACK, MAGEE, MARCELLE, MCFARLAND, MIGUEZ, DUSTIN MILLER, GREGORY MILLER, MONTOUCET, MORENO, JAY MORRIS, JIM MORRIS, NORTON, PEARSON, PIERRE, POPE, PRICE, PUGH, PYLANT, REYNOLDS, RICHARD, SCHEXNAYDER, SCHRODER, SEABAUGH, SHADOIN, SIMON, SMITH, STOKES, TALBOT, THIBAUT, WHITE, WILLMOTT AND ZERINGUE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of World War II veteran, Mr. Elward J. Stephens, and to remember his many contributions made on behalf of his community, state, and country.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret that the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the passing of an extraordinary member of the Greatest Generation; Elward Joseph Stephens passed peacefully from this life on June 2, 2016, at the age of ninety-one, surrounded by loved ones and at peace with his God; and

WHEREAS, during his nine decades on this earth, Elward Stephens was a productive citizen who reared a family, built a home, and made a life for himself filled with simple pleasures; however, as a veteran of the Allied Invasion of Italy, Mr. Stephens distinguished himself as one of the chosen few willing to stand in harm's way, again and again, in the name of freedom, duty, and honor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens was a nineteen-year-old infantryman in the United States Army who exhibited unmatched bravery and suffered untold hardship from the moment he waded ashore at Anzio Beach in Italy until he reached the border of the

Rhineland in Germany, he struggled in near-constant combat conditions for 230 days, which equals more than seven months; and

WHEREAS, Elward Stephens was made of "all the right stuff"; he was born on a camp boat in Belle River to Gilbert and Alvinia Chaisson Stephens on August 29, 1924, and was reared through the hard times of the Great Depression; his schooling was cut short when he went to work at a service station in Morgan City at the age of fifteen; and

WHEREAS, drafted in 1942, Mr. Stephens was an excellent soldier and marksman and his fluency in the French language made him a vital asset on the front lines; on June 5, 1944, he marched into Rome with the Allied Forces and, thankful to be alive, took time to celebrate mass in a nearby Catholic Church; early the following morning, June 6, 1944, the Normandy Invasion began, and after a brief respite, his combat service continued to Pisa, to Marseilles, France, and on to the borders of Germany; and

WHEREAS, after being honorably discharged, Elward Stephens returned to his home in South Louisiana; he continued his education and began a career in seismography and petroleum exploration in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico; he was employed by Humble Oil, now known as Exxon-Mobil, and later by Shell Oil where he retired after thirty years of service; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, at a dance in Morgan City, he met and fell in love with a lovely lass named Olive Boudreaux; they married and reared three sons in a home that Elward built himself; and

WHEREAS, Elward Stephens was not defined by the horrific circumstance of war; his character was strengthened by the experience; upon his return to Louisiana, the place that he loved, his resolve was to "get on with living", to grow, thrive, make a good life for himself, and to be blessed with a family; and

WHEREAS, Elward Stephens had that whimsical *joie de vivre*, the joy of life; he was the kind of individual who grasped all the happiness that he could find, he was a steward of the land he loved, and he was a gracious servant of his God; he never met a stranger and he gave generously of his time and talent to the community; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens began his military service in the midst of World War II in the United States Army with the Allied Invasion of Italy and encountered some of the

most savage fighting in military engagements throughout Europe; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Elward Stephens came through the trepidation of warfare to emerge from it a stronger, more determined human being; his was a charmed life and he lived to celebrate V-E Day, the surrender of Axis Forces in Europe, on the eighth of May each year for seven decades.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Mr. Elward J. Stephens from the community of Stephenville in St. Martin Parish.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby posthumously recognize the military service of Mr. Elward J. Stephens in the United States Army as a veteran of World War II in the European Theater and for his meritorious contributions to the freedom of all citizens of the United States, which shall not be forgotten, and that this acknowledgment reflects his unselfish sacrifice to duty, honor, and country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his widow, Mrs. Olive B. Stephens.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES