

By: Price

H.R. No. 2975

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, More than 44 years ago, U.S. Army Sergeant James
2 Warren Smith of Houston sacrificed his own life to save the life of
3 a brother soldier in Vietnam, and his heroism that day continues to
4 ring down the decades as an inspiration to those who hold his memory
5 dear; and

6 WHEREAS, In the summer of 1968, Sergeant Smith, a medic with
7 the Green Berets, was serving his second 12-month tour of duty in
8 Vietnam at a Special Forces airborne base in Dar Lac province; the
9 base was an outpost of makeshift barracks, bunkers, and tents,
10 encompassed by sandbags and barbed wire, overlooked by hills, and
11 surrounded by a jungle full of Viet Cong guerillas; and

12 WHEREAS, There, Sergeant Smith befriended a younger soldier
13 named Linwood Hughes, a 21-year-old North Carolinian serving with
14 the 4th Infantry Division; Sergeant Smith stood nearly six feet
15 tall, while Mr. Hughes stood only five-four, and the two friends
16 came to be known as "Mutt and Jeff"; as the more experienced
17 soldier, Sergeant Smith took Mr. Hughes under his wing and showed
18 him the ropes; and

19 WHEREAS, On the afternoon of August 23, 1968, the Viet Cong
20 began dropping mortar rounds onto the base, and Sergeant Smith and
21 Mr. Hughes raced to their mortar emplacement and began to return
22 fire; as Mr. Hughes handed the sergeant a mortar shell, an enemy
23 round exploded just in front of the men, wounding them both
24 severely; and

1 WHEREAS, Ignoring his own injuries, Sergeant Smith carried
2 his comrade into a bunker and then collapsed; as Mr. Hughes kept
3 pressure on his friend's wound, he promised him that he would find
4 the sergeant's family and tell them of the strength and courage that
5 he had shown that day; at the time of his death, Sergeant Smith was
6 only 26 years old; and

7 WHEREAS, Sergeant Smith was posthumously awarded the Silver
8 Star and a Bronze Star; Mr. Hughes went on to complete two tours of
9 duty in Vietnam and to earn a Silver Star and a Bronze Star as well;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Because Sergeant Smith's name was a common one, it
12 took many years for Mr. Hughes to find his family, but in 2000, he
13 was at last able to fulfill his promise in an emotional 90-minute
14 phone conversation with the sergeant's mother, Oleta Smith of
15 Dumas; subsequently, Mr. Hughes met with James Smith's family at
16 the sergeant's gravesite at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery;
17 extending a bond that had been forged some three decades earlier,
18 half a world away; and

19 WHEREAS, A true American hero, Sergeant James Smith not only
20 lived up to the highest ideals of the U.S. armed forces, he
21 exemplified the supreme act of selflessness that is extolled in
22 John 15:13 in the Holy Bible, "Greater love has no one than this,
23 that he lay down his life for his friends"; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
25 Legislature hereby commemorate the life and heroism of Sergeant
26 James Warren Smith; and, be it further

27 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be

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1 prepared for his family as an expression of high regard by the Texas
2 House of Representatives.