



HR0564

LRB101 14854 MST 63830 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate retired U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Edwin Eugene "Gene" Neeley on being awarded the French Legion of Honor, the highest award bestowed by the French government, on September 27, 2019 for his role in liberating France during World War II; and

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WHEREAS, Gene Neeley was raised in Mackinaw and pumped gas before being drafted into the United States Armed Forces after the bombing of Pearl Harbor; and

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WHEREAS, Gene Neeley began his service in 1943 as a member of the 5th Army, 2nd Replacement Depot; he took part in the Naples-Foggia, Rome-Amo, Southern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe Campaigns; and

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WHEREAS, In addition to the Legion of Honor, Gene Neeley has received the European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Ribbon with one Silver Battle Star, four Overseas Service Bars, the Good Conduct Medal, and the WWII Victory Medal; and

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WHEREAS, After ending his service in the Army Air Corps in late 1945, Gene Neeley returned to Mackinaw; in 1946, he helped found the Illinois Air National Guard's 169th Fighter Squadron,

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1 which was called up three times and is now known as the 182nd
2 Airlift Wing; and

3 WHEREAS, Gene Neeley rose to the rank of master sergeant in
4 the Air National Guard; he retired from the Air Force in 1962
5 with full benefits and remained in the reserve until 1984; and

6 WHEREAS, Since 2013, Gene Neeley has been actively involved
7 with the Greater Peoria Honor Flight, which seeks to honor all
8 United States veterans with a free flight to Washington, D.C.
9 to see war memorials and other attractions; and

10 WHEREAS, Gene Neeley was happily married for 66 years to
11 Mary Cooper of Tremont prior to her death in 2012, and they
12 raised one daughter together; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
14 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
15 we congratulate retired U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Edwin Eugene
16 "Gene" Neeley on being awarded the French Legion of Honor and
17 for his many years of service to both the United States and to
18 other veterans; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
20 presented to Gene Neeley and the Illinois Air National Guard.