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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Senate of the State of Illinois learned with regret of the death of Dalmain H. "Dal" Estes of Pontiac on Saturday, December 24, 2005; and

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WHEREAS, He was born December 21, 1917, in Herculaneum, Missouri, to Margaret "Peggy" (Craig) Estes and Howard Estes; he married Mildred Metzger on May 31, 1941, and together they had one child, David Estes; she preceded him in death; he married Elizabeth "Betty" Mertes on November 24, 1951, in Chicago; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Estes retired from his position as general manager of hotels, restaurants, and institutions at Swift and Company in Chicago in 1976 after 40 years; he then worked for the State of Illinois, the Livingston County Broadcasters, and Wal-Mart in Pontiac, finally retiring at the age of 77; and

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WHEREAS, He entered the U.S. Army from Lemay, Missouri, in December 1942 and served until March 1946; on D-Day, he was a sergeant with the 467th Antiaircraft Unit, Automatic Weapons Battalion, and landed in the second wave on Omaha Beach at Normandy, France, participating in the largest invasion in history; he and his squad took out a key German bunker that day, enabling American troops to begin the liberation of Europe; and

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WHEREAS, He received a Purple Heart at Bastogne, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge; during the course of his military career, he also earned the Combat Infantry Badge, the Silver Star, and five Bronze Stars; and

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WHEREAS, He participated in all five European campaigns during World War II; after the Battle of the Bulge, he was commissioned into the 80th Infantry Division and was a

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1 lieutenant in command of the Mine Platoon of the 318th  
2 Anti-Tank Co.; after the war, he commanded a German displaced  
3 persons camp in Tachau, Czechoslovakia; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1995, the 50th anniversary of D-Day, Mr. Estes  
5 was honored by the village of St. Laurent sur Mer, France, and  
6 subsequently a museum exhibit was dedicated to him and the men  
7 of the 467th at Musee' D-Day in France; the exhibit still  
8 stands today; and

9 WHEREAS, He has been featured in several books, including  
10 "Hometown Heroes", "Paroles du jour J (Words from D-Day)", and  
11 "La Traversee Des Etats Unis (Traversing the United States on  
12 Route 66)"; and

13 WHEREAS, He was an accomplished and popular speaker with  
14 the Illinois Humanities Council and gave talks to countless  
15 school groups with his program "Private Ryan's Sergeant"; he  
16 was the author of "Tracks Across Europe", a memoir of his  
17 wartime experiences; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2004, at the age of 86, Dal founded the  
19 Livingston County War Museum and Education Center in Pontiac to  
20 honor America's Veterans and to share their stories with future  
21 generations; he worked to make the museum a place where  
22 children could see and touch memorabilia such as uniforms and  
23 weapons and talk with veterans; and

24 WHEREAS, He was awarded the Studs Terkel Humanities Service  
25 Award from the Illinois Humanities Council in 2002, and is a  
26 past recipient of the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of  
27 the Year Award and Grand Marshall of the Threshermen Reunion  
28 Parade; and

29 WHEREAS, He was a member of the AmVets Post 116, American  
30 Legion Post 78, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 886, all

1 in Pontiac; and

2 WHEREAS, Of all the accolades and awards he received, he  
3 was most proud of his family; he considered them his greatest  
4 legacy, and he never missed an opportunity to tell them he  
5 loved them; he taught them to respect nature, to find the best  
6 in others, and to love and support each other no matter what;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The passing of Dalmain H. "Dal" Estes has been  
9 deeply felt by many, especially his wife of 54 years, Betty;  
10 his children, David Estes, Becky (Kenny) McComb, Cynthia  
11 (Simmie Baer), Melissa (Keith) Barnhart, Adam Estes, and  
12 Elizabeth "Ebus" Estes-Cooper; his grandchildren, Jason  
13 (Rhonda) McComb, Lizzie (Craig) Roscoe, and Claire Barnhart;  
14 his great-granddaughter, Grace Roscoe; his brothers-in-law,  
15 Don Mertes and Wilfred Mertes; and his euchre partner and  
16 special sister-in-law, Marie Mertes; his first wife, Mildred,  
17 and his parents preceded him in death; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
19 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
20 Dalmain H. "Dal" Estes, whose continuing example of selfless  
21 service will long be remembered; his life bears eloquent  
22 testimony to the courage and bravery of the soldiers that he  
23 served with along with the rest of the Greatest Generation, and  
24 we extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and  
25 all who knew and loved him; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
27 presented to his family as an expression of our deepest  
28 sympathy; his passing is truly a loss not only to his family,  
29 but to his community and to our great State.