



HR1166

LRB099 21379 GRL 47255 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are pleased to congratulate Norman Wilke on the occasion of being named 2016 Veteran of the Year by the Shiloh Spurs; and

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WHEREAS, Norman Wilke, a farm boy from the small town of St. Libory, joined the United States Army on November 4, 1952 at the age of 20 to serve his country during the Korean War; and

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WHEREAS, After four months of boot camp infantry training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, Norman Wilke was shipped out to Camp Omiya, where he had surgery on his shoulder after being knocked out of his bunk during a rough storm on the voyage; and

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WHEREAS, A chance meeting with a friend from home persuaded Norman Wilke to join the 4th Platoon, where his primary duty became Graves Registration, which was collecting the bodies of dead soldiers and civilian American citizens, embalming their bodies, and preparing them to ship home; and

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WHEREAS, Norman Wilke, along with five other platoon members, once had to climb Mount Fuji on foot to retrieve the bodies of American soldiers who died in a plane crash; after

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1 conditions were too foggy for the helicopter that would
2 retrieve them to land, he and his company had to stay on the
3 mountain overnight and sleep in the body bags they brought with
4 them; and

5 WHEREAS, Norman Wilke prepared an average of 20 to 30
6 bodies a day, with many more during certain battles; the
7 hardest part of his job was preparing the body of someone he
8 knew; and

9 WHEREAS, While Norman Wilke's job was sometimes
10 heart-wrenching, he felt proud to perform this important job
11 and felt he was honoring those who died for our country by
12 respectfully preparing them for their final journey home; and

13 WHEREAS, After serving two years in the 31st Infantry
14 Division, 4th Platoon as the 114th Graves Registration
15 Quartermaster, Norman Wilke left the Army in 1954 to return
16 home and marry his sweetheart, Dorothy; in 1960, he founded the
17 Wilke Window and Door Company, which has since become the
18 largest window and door showroom in the Metro St. Louis area,
19 as well as Norm's Bargain Bin and Lifestyle Kitchen and Baths;
20 therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
22 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we

1 congratulate Norman Wilke on the occasion of being named 2016
2 Veteran of the Year and thank him for his service; and be it
3 further

4 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
5 presented to Norman Wilke as an expression of our esteem and
6 respect.