



HR0253

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate Dean Preston on being
4 awarded the French Legion d'honneur, France's highest
5 distinction awarded to those who have done great deeds for
6 France; and

7 WHEREAS, Dean Preston graduated from Pekin Community High
8 School in 1942, and along with his brother, Jim, voluntarily
9 entered the service ahead of the draft; after basic training,
10 he was sent to advanced radio repair school, where he was
11 trained to integrate wired telephones and field sets with a
12 wireless radio network; and

13 WHEREAS, Dean Preston was assigned as a corporal to U.S.
14 Army, 927th Signal Battalion, Separate, Tactical Air Command;
15 in August of 1944, he and his battalion were assigned to
16 support Operation Dragoon, the invasion force of Southern
17 France; in December of 1944, he found himself in "no-man's
18 land" when a German winter counter-attack through the Ardennes
19 Forest in concert with the Battle of the Bulge and a German
20 operation that headed south into Eastern France called
21 Operation Nordwind converged in the same area; miraculously,
22 he survived, and as the war was coming to an end in March of
23 1945, he joined with the 101st Airborne Division, whose task

1 was to hunt down any fanatical German resistance; and

2 WHEREAS, Dean Preston departed the European Theater of
3 Operations from Marseille on November 21, 1945 and arrived
4 back in the United States on December 4, 1945; following the
5 war, fellow 927th Signal Battalion Radioman Ted Richardson
6 credited Dean with saving his life; and

7 WHEREAS, During his time in the service, Dean Preston
8 earned the American Campaign Medal, the European African
9 Middle East Campaign Medal with five Campaign Stars for
10 Northern France, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland, and
11 Central Europe, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the World War II
12 Victory Medal, and the Meritorious Unit Commendation citation;
13 he also earned three Overseas Bars and qualified as an Expert
14 with the Carbine Rifle and Sub-Machine Gun; and

15 WHEREAS, Dean Preston graduated from the University of
16 Illinois with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
17 in 1949; and

18 WHEREAS, Dean Preston was employed by the American
19 Distilling Company in Pekin for 28 years, serving as a
20 bottling superintendent; he later continued in that capacity
21 for Midwest Grain for seven additional years, formally
22 retiring in 1987; since that time, he has and continues to work

1 part-time as a greeter and driver for the Preston-Hanley
2 Funeral Home in Pekin; and

3 WHEREAS, Dean Preston was a 12-year member of the Tazewell
4 County Sheriff's Auxiliary Patrol; he is a Life Member of
5 Empire Lodge 126, Ancient Free & Accepted Masons of Illinois
6 in Pekin and a member of William Schaefer American Legion Post
7 44; and

8 WHEREAS, Dean Preston is a former member of the Pekin
9 Barbershop Chorus, a youth counselor with Junior Achievement,
10 and the Drum Sergeant of the Shrine Kiltie Band in Peoria; and

11 WHEREAS, Dean Preston and his wife, Alberta, had 66
12 wonderful years together before her passing; and

13 WHEREAS, Dean Preston will turn 99 years of age in
14 November of 2023; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
16 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
17 we congratulate Dean Preston on being awarded the French
18 Legion d'honneur, and we wish him many more wonderful years;
19 and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be

1 presented to Dean Preston as a symbol of our respect and
2 esteem.