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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 487

Offered March 5, 2014

Commending Ernest Merle Hancock.

Patrons—Miller and Anderson

Unanimous consent to introduce

WHEREAS, Ernest Merle Hancock of Manassas, a proud, loyal, and courageous veteran, served the United States with distinction during World War II; and

WHEREAS, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, Ernest Hancock joined many of the other young men of his generation in service to his country during World War II; he was inducted into the United States Army Air Forces on February 6, 1943; and

WHEREAS, assigned to the 815th Bombardment Squadron, 483rd Bombardment Group, Ernest Hancock rose to the rank of technical sergeant and served as the turret gunner and flight engineer on a Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress; he participated in several dangerous missions over Occupied Europe; and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 1944, while flying on his 37th mission, Ernest Hancock's unit was attacked by a flight of 200 German fighter aircraft; he courageously manned the top turret during the engagement and shot down three enemy fighters; and

WHEREAS, Ernest Hancock's bomber sustained damage in the engagement, and he was forced to evacuate, parachuting from 23,000 feet over the vicinity of Ravensburg, Germany; and

WHEREAS, Ernest Hancock was captured and faced interrogation by the German Gestapo, before being transferred to the Stalag Luft IV Prisoner of War Camp; a strong and courageous soldier, he bravely faced harsh treatment and incredible hardships while being held at the camp; and

WHEREAS, with the Soviet army advancing on the camp in February 1945, Ernest Hancock and the other prisoners were forced to undertake a grueling foot march until they were liberated in April 1945; and

WHEREAS, Ernest Hancock was honorably discharged in October 1945, but returned to active duty service in 1952 as a member of the United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his valorous service, Ernest Hancock received the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, and many other decorations and citations; and

WHEREAS, after his retirement from a successful career in the aerospace industry, Ernest Hancock moved to Manassas; a devoted family man, he has two daughters, Cindy and Debby, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Ernest Merle Hancock, a decorated war hero and a great American; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Ernest Merle Hancock as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his sacrifices and respect for his honorable service.

INTRODUCED

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