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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 334

Offered February 22, 2016

Celebrating the life of Morgan Anthony Ayres.

Patrons—Hope, Levine, Lopez and Sullivan; Senators: Ebbin, Favola and Howell

WHEREAS, Morgan Anthony Ayres of Arlington, a decorated veteran of World War II, a valued employee of Otis Elevator Company, and a devoted husband and father, died on April 30, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Ayres was born on May 31, 1918, in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C., and was one of 10 children; he started working when he was nine years old and was employed by the United States Navy Yard when he was drafted; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 1942, Morgan Ayres joined the United States Army Air Corps and became a flight maintenance gunner and a tunnel gunner for the 645th Bomb Squadron, 410th Bombardment Group and eventually was named crew chief; his responsibilities included watching for enemy aircraft and keeping track of the number of bombs that were dropped; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Ayres was part of a Douglas A-20 aircraft crew; he participated in many combat missions—including 35 sorties with the same pilot—from bases in England and France; and

WHEREAS, during his wartime service, Morgan Ayres and pilot Harry Brown volunteered to test fly every plane that had an aborted mission to determine the reason for the aircraft's failed mission; and

WHEREAS, one of Morgan Ayres' most memorable wartime missions was an emergency landing in Belgium; the crew was assisted by members of the "Free French" resistance and stayed with an elderly couple for two nights before being flown back to their bomb group; and

WHEREAS, after three and one-half years on active duty, Morgan Ayres, who had attained the rank of staff sergeant, was honorably discharged on October 6, 1945; he returned to private life and followed in the footsteps of his father and brother, working in public safety for Otis Elevator Company; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Ayres enjoyed a 40-year career with Otis Elevator Company as an elevator mechanic and examiner; he serviced equipment at many of our country's national landmarks, including the White House and the Washington Monument; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, Morgan Ayres was honored by the government of France for his military service; he received the Legion of Honor with the rank of "Chevalier" for his distinguished service that helped liberate France at the close of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Ayres will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by his wife, Barbara; his children, Barbara, Patricia, and Nancy, and their families; and many other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Morgan Anthony Ayres of Arlington, a proud veteran of the United States Army Air Corps who was awarded the French Legion of Honor, a skilled elevator mechanic and examiner, and a devoted husband and father; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Morgan Anthony Ayres as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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