

By: Farabee

H.C.R. No. 149

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, The Purple Heart, the world's oldest military  
2 decoration in current use, is bestowed on only those members of the  
3 U.S. Armed Forces who are wounded or killed by an instrument of war  
4 in the hands of the enemy; this symbol of sacrifice in combat was  
5 recently awarded to a World War II veteran from Wichita Falls, James  
6 E. Virdell, nearly six decades after he was injured by German  
7 artillery during an attack on an Italian train depot; and

8           WHEREAS, This remarkable story of bravery and remembrance  
9 began at the dawn of World War II, when Mr. Virdell, a native of  
10 Crane, volunteered to serve with the United States Army; the young  
11 soldier was assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, known within  
12 military circles as the "Panther Division," a Texas-based outfit  
13 activated in 1940 that over the next five years would engage enemy  
14 troops throughout Italy, Southern France, and the Rhineland; and

15           WHEREAS, In December 1943, Private First Class Virdell  
16 participated in the Allied attack on a heavily fortified,  
17 German-held mountainside in Italy, an attack that was complicated  
18 greatly by the driving winter rains and slippery terrain; as a  
19 mortarman for the 142nd Infantry Regiment, he was charged with  
20 carrying a massive 89-pound mortar during this operation and, as a  
21 result of injuries suffered during the climb, he was reassigned to  
22 guard a train station; it was while serving at this facility that  
23 Private Virdell was wounded in action; and

24           WHEREAS, Sustaining extensive damage to his left knee from a

1 bomb dropped in a German air raid, he completed his five-year tour,  
2 having served his country with honor and distinction, and returned  
3 to the Lone Star State to marry, raise a family, and enjoy life as a  
4 civilian in the peacetime he had worked so very hard to secure; the  
5 extent of Mr. Virdell's personal sacrifice was not formally  
6 recognized for another 59 years, however, until December 19, 2002,  
7 when his family and friends would gather to watch him receive the  
8 Purple Heart award at an official ceremony held at Sheppard Air  
9 Force Base; and

10 WHEREAS, James Virdell embodies the qualities for which the  
11 "Greatest Generation" has become known, and it is a privilege to  
12 extend to him this tangible symbol of the respect and appreciation  
13 of a grateful state and nation; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas  
15 hereby congratulate James E. Virdell on his receipt of the Purple  
16 Heart decoration and commend him for his meritorious service to the  
17 State of Texas and the United States of America; and, be it further

18 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
19 prepared for Mr. Virdell as an expression of highest regard by the  
20 Texas Legislature.