

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Family and friends will forever treasure their  
2 memories of decorated World War II veteran Ervin Martin Koerth, who  
3 died on October 8, 2013, at the age of 91; and

4           WHEREAS, Born on July 16, 1922, to Gus and Cora Koerth in  
5 Nolan County, Texas, Ervin Koerth enlisted in the U.S. Army on his  
6 20th birthday; after attending parachute jump school at Fort  
7 Benning, Georgia, he became a member of the elite 551st Parachute  
8 Infantry Battalion, an unattached unit of 800 men that was assigned  
9 wherever it was most needed; and

10          WHEREAS, In mid-August 1944, Paratrooper Koerth and the 551st  
11 took part in the Allied invasion of southern France; the unit  
12 liberated Draguignan against heavy resistance, capturing a German  
13 major general, and then took Nice on August 29; ordered next to the  
14 French-Italian Alps for several months and subsequently to northern  
15 France, the 551st was attached to the 82nd Infantry Division late in  
16 the year, when it joined the Allied counteroffensive in the Battle  
17 of the Bulge; Mr. Koerth, by then a staff sergeant and platoon  
18 leader, helped drive the Germans back at Noirefontaine, Herispehe,  
19 Dairomont, and Quartiers, enduring bitter cold and engaging in  
20 brutal hand-to-hand combat; on January 7, 1945, the 551st took  
21 Rochelival, but at a terrible cost, with casualties amounting to  
22 more than 85 percent of its strength; by the end of its assault on  
23 the superior German force, the 551st numbered only 14 officers and  
24 96 troops; and

1           WHEREAS, The battalion was relieved on January 9, and  
2 Sergeant Koerth, suffering from burst eardrums from the sheer noise  
3 of the bombs, mortars, and artillery, was sent to an army hospital  
4 for a month; while he was receiving treatment, the 551st was  
5 deactivated and all its remaining personnel were absorbed into the  
6 82nd Airborne Division; Mr. Koerth was assigned to the 504th  
7 Parachute Infantry Battalion of the 82nd and fought with that unit  
8 as far as the Elbe River; on May 2, 1945, the 82nd accepted the  
9 surrender of the German 21st Army; some four and a half months  
10 later, Mr. Koerth returned to the United States, and on September  
11 25, 1945, he received an honorable discharge; and

12           WHEREAS, This intrepid Texan was awarded the Purple Heart,  
13 the Good Conduct Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the  
14 European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and the Combat  
15 Infantryman Badge; the 551st was recognized with a Presidential  
16 Unit Citation for its actions during the Battle of the Bulge, as  
17 well as with the Croix de Guerre from the French government for its  
18 valor at Draguignan; and

19           WHEREAS, After the war, Mr. Koerth lived for many years in  
20 Grand Prairie, where from 1968 until his retirement in 1978 he  
21 operated his own company, LESKO, which made parts for the aircraft  
22 industry; he shared a rewarding, seven-decade-long marriage with  
23 his wife, Lois, whom he married while on furlough in 1943, and he  
24 was the proud father of a daughter, Sandra; later in life, he was  
25 blessed with three grandsons, Brian, Bart, and Harlan Kickhoefer;  
26 Mr. Koerth passed away in 2013; and

27           WHEREAS, During the greatest conflict of the 20th century,

1 Ervin Koerth exemplified the highest ideals of the U.S. armed  
2 forces, conducting himself with fortitude, tenacity, and courage,  
3 and he has left behind a record of service to his country that will  
4 continue to inspire all those who knew and loved him; now,  
5 therefore, be it

6         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas  
7 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Ervin Martin Koerth  
8 for his heroic efforts in behalf of this nation during World War II;  
9 and, be it further

10         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
11 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
12 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Ervin  
13 Martin Koerth.

Burns

H.R. No. 1542

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 1542 was unanimously adopted by a rising vote of the House on May 4, 2017.

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Chief Clerk of the House