

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 26

DIGEST OF INTRODUCED RESOLUTION

Introduced by Representative:
Lawrence L. Buell
Sponsored by Senator:
Thomas J. Wyss

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION memorializing the victims of the sinking of the S.S. Leopoldville.

Buell

_____, read first time and referred to Committee on

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION memorializing the victims of the sinking of the Leopoldville.

Whereas, On Christmas Eve, 1944, the Belgian troopship, the S.S. Leopoldville, was transporting 2,235 American soldiers from the 262nd and 264th Regiments, 66th Infantry Division across the English Channel;

Whereas, These troops were to be used as reinforcements in a fierce struggle that would become known as the Battle of the Bulge;

Whereas, The Leopoldville was protected by escort ships, including a British destroyer, the HMS Brilliant, but was not given air protection even though the threat of attack by German submarines was very high;

Whereas, Just five and one-half miles from its destination of Cherbourg, France, the vessel was torpedoed by the German submarine U-486;

Whereas, The ship sank two and one-half hours later;

Whereas, Circumstances seemed to foil all rescue attempts;

Whereas, According to many survivors, the crew of the Leopoldville abandoned the sinking ship, leaving the American soldiers to fend for themselves;

Whereas, The commander of the vessel ordered the anchor dropped to prevent the ship from drifting into a minefield outside the harbor. This also prevented a tug boat from towing the sinking ship and its occupants to shore;

Whereas, Delayed radio transmissions for help, the delayed response of rescue craft, heavy seas, and freezing temperatures, plus the fact that it was Christmas Eve and many soldiers were off duty, seemed to seal the fate of the American soldiers;

Whereas, By the end of that fateful night, 763 American soldiers had lost their lives;

Whereas, These soldiers represented men from 47 of the 48 states, including 28 young men from Indiana;

Whereas, The brave Hoosiers who lost their lives that fateful Christmas Eve were Pvt. Donald R. Alvarado, Pvt. Emil Bain, Sgt. Oren A. Bouse, Pfc. Edwin D. Buell, III, Sgt. Aaron W. Essex, Pfc. Cecil C. Harman, Pvt. Donald R. Houchen, Pfc. Anton Kocsis, Pfc. Emry L. Lewis, Pfc. Clarence E. Lottes, Pfc. Buford C. McDonald, Pfc. Robert F. McIntyre, Pfc. Harry W. McKain, Pfc. Furl C. McMillen, Pfc. Elmer D. Rowland, Pvt. James S. Scribner, T/5 Eugene R. Temple, Pfc. Ralph A. Truelock, Pvt. Leslie F. Verash, Sgt. Gerald E. Walters, Pvt. Harold R. Wambach, Pvt. Ulysses B. Weeks, T/5 Edward F. Weinand, Pfc. Vernon W. White, Pfc. Donald E. Williams, Pfc. Melvin E. Williamson, S/Sgt. Russell M. Wright, Pfc. George A. Yaeger;

Whereas, The families of these men were notified the men were missing in action rather than killed. Many of the bodies were never recovered; and

Whereas, The brave men who fight and sometimes die protecting the freedom we all enjoy deserve much more recognition than the valiant men of the 262nd and 264th Regiments, 66th Infantry Division received: Therefore,

*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives
of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana,
the Senate concurring:*

SECTION 1. That the Indiana General Assembly believes it is fitting and proper that these brave men and their families be accorded the recognition and homage due to fallen war heroes.

SECTION 2. That the Principal Clerk of the House of Representatives transmit a copy of this resolution to the families of each of the 28 Hoosiers killed on the Leopoldville.