



Milwaukee County

Legislation Text

File #: RES 11-25, **Version:** 1

A Resolution requesting Wisconsin's State and Federal representatives to work to establish a "fast-track" exception process for determining and presenting military related honors for deserving World War II or other aging veterans and authorizing and directing the County Clerk to convey such message to the Wisconsin representative delegation.

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, as of September 2009 there were more than 2 million surviving veterans of World War II, and

WHEREAS, as WWII veterans advance to the later stages of life, the families of many veterans have come to realize that their loved ones may have an Armed Forces service history that warrants appropriate military awards, such as service medals or Purple Hearts - recognition that many men and women never sought during their armed forces service; and

WHEREAS, when veterans or their families seek information that could result in an appropriate military award or recognition, they are often confounded by an unimaginably complex bureaucracy that produces only dead ends and SNAFUs, resulting in delays of months or, often, years in simply retrieving service records; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veteran Affairs has estimated that the median age of World War II veterans is 86, and that nearly 900 veterans of World War II die each day, evidence that, simply put veterans cannot afford bureaucratic delays; and

WHEREAS, the need for expedited awards determinations was highlighted recently when the family of Orville Lemke - injured during service as a Communications Specialist in Germany during World War II and deserving of a Purple Heart - was effectively stymied for more than seven years while pursuing his deserved recognition; and

WHEREAS, despite pursuing the records that could lead to his Purple Heart since 2003 and receiving significant assistance in that regard from Milwaukee County's Office of Veteran's Services, Orville Lemke passed away on December 24, 2010 without receiving any final resolution to his family's request; and

WHEREAS, the Heroes of the Greatest Generation and all of our veterans deserve a better process and more timely determination of their US Military honors and awards; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby requests our state and federal representatives to work to establish a "fast-track" exception process to prevent the delays in determining military recognition for veterans of World War II and other veterans of advanced age or declining health, so that the awards may be presented directly to the Honored Recipient rather than posthumously; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Clerk shall forward a copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, and other State and Federal Legislative Representatives from Milwaukee County.