

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 34

BY SENATOR PERRY

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Brigadier General Robert Joseph Leblanc on being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

WHEREAS, Robert Joseph Leblanc was born in Vermilion Parish on November 6, 1921, graduated from Abbeville High School in 1938 lettering in boxing, swimming, and football and being selected as Best All Round Boy in the Senior Class, and graduated from LSU in 1942 majoring in Geology and Mathematics; and

WHEREAS, he was called to active duty in 1942 and served as Platoon Leader and Company Commander in the Infantry Basic Training Center at Fort McClellan, Alabama; in 1943, he volunteered for duty with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS); he then served in the 3rd U.S. Army, Headquarters, SO, Special Forces Detachment #11 as a Special Operations liaison officer between Patton's Army and the French Underground; he also served with the VIII and XII Corps as well as with the Fourth Army Division attached to the United States Third Army in France; and in 1944, he was transferred to the China-Burma Theater where he served as a Special Operations Officer with the OSS Detachment, Kunning, China; and

WHEREAS, after WWII, Robert Leblanc joined the Louisiana National Guard and organized Company H, 156th Infantry in Abbeville; in 1959, he became Brigade Executive Officer; he was promoted to Colonel in 1960, at which time he became Deputy Brigade Commander of the 39th Infantry Division and in this position he was instrumental in the location of a Battle Group Headquarters which later became Battalion Headquarters in Abbeville and a Brigade Headquarters for Lafayette; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, upon reorganization of the Division, he assumed command of the 1st Brigade, 39th Infantry Division; in 1967, he assumed command of Emergency Operations headquarters, Louisiana Army National Guard and was promoted to Brigadier General of the Line; and in 1972, Leblanc was assigned as Director, Emergency Operations

and Commanding General, Louisiana Army National Guard Command, New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, upon military discharge, he trained in Dallas at the Southwest Photo Institute and opened Leblanc's Photo Studio in Abbeville; and

WHEREAS, also employed as a rural carrier for the United States Post Office, Leblanc was promoted to Postmaster of Abbeville; in 1972, he was promoted to Sectional Center Manager/Postmaster for Lafayette where he supervised ninety-three post offices in Southwest Louisiana and it was through his leadership that he planned the new postal facility on Moss Street; he then documented the need for post offices that became Energy Station in the Oil Center, the Postal Square Station downtown, and the new Ambassador Caffery Station; and while Sectional Center Manager/Postmaster, he swore in more postmasters than any other SCF Manager; and

WHEREAS, after Hurricane Audrey, General Leblanc was asked to take over the operations of the Civil Defense Office to restore damaged Vermilion Parish; he was instrumental in the reconstruction of Pecan Island, Forked Island, and the Henry-Boston area; six months later he returned to the post office and remained a Part Time Director of Office of Emergency Preparedness, handling a number of hurricanes and emergencies for the state and Vermilion Parish; and his Parish Emergency Operations Plan and Implementation was used as a model for the state; and

WHEREAS, in March 1969, General Leblanc successfully commanded troops of the 1st Brigade, 39th Division, LANG, in the Bogalusa Civil Disturbance, by protecting marchers from serious injury; and

WHEREAS, General Leblanc has received numerous distinctions and awards for his service, including his induction into the Louisiana National Guard Hall of Fame in 2006; and

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, March 21, 2018, members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) will be honored with a Congressional Gold Medal for their historic contributions during World War II and among the recipients is Brigadier General Robert Joseph Leblanc of Abbeville; and .

WHEREAS, the Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor the United States Congress can bestow; and

WHEREAS, the OSS, America's first strategic intelligence system implemented during World War II, is widely considered the foundation of modern-day intelligence operations and the group organized, trained, supplied, and fought in the war throughout Europe and Asia and played a decisive role in America's victory; and

WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities and nation, and the overall vitality of American society depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of people like Robert Joseph Leblanc who use their considerable talents and resources to serve others; and

WHEREAS, Brigadier General Robert Joseph Leblanc merits the highest commendation and sincere congratulations for his exemplary service and for his outstanding contributions to Vermilion Parish, the state of Louisiana, and the United States of America.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Brigadier General Robert Joseph Leblanc on the occasion of being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal; does hereby recognize and record for posterity the vital contributions of General Leblanc in his tireless dedication to excellence and service to the citizens of Vermilion Parish, the state of Louisiana, and the nation; and does extend to General Leblanc every good wish for success and happiness in all of his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Brigadier General Robert Joseph Leblanc.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE