

2020 First Extraordinary Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 39

BY REPRESENTATIVES STEFANSKI AND DEVILLIER

A RESOLUTION

To express the condolences of the House of Representatives upon the death, on June 1, 2020, of William Leo Spaetgens.

WHEREAS, Leo Spaetgens served in the United States Navy during World War II, joining after the attack on Pearl Harbor; he fought during the Battle of Okinawa and the Allied invasion of Sicily; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Spaetgens's first posting was as a gunner aboard the SS Leslie M. Shaw, a merchant ship that ferried infantry troops to battle sites during the invasion of Sicily; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Spaetgens was later reassigned to a fuel tanker, the USS Fort McHenry, on which he made several runs from the refineries on the Caribbean Island of Curaçao, through the Panama Canal, to various islands in the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS, after this stint, Mr. Spaetgens was assigned to the USS Leon troop carrier vessel, which was headed for Okinawa, Japan; after an intense battle with the Japanese soldiers on Okinawa, Mr. Spaetgens was given his final official duty, transporting American soldiers to the United States for discharge; and

WHEREAS, during his time with the Navy, Leo Spaetgens received five campaign medals, a unit commendation, and three battle stars; and

WHEREAS, after the war, Mr. Spaetgens joined the Merchant Marines and later worked at the Columbia Gulf Transmission Company plant between Rayne and Branch, Louisiana; during the late 1980s, he served on the Acadia Parish School Board; he was also a lifetime member of the American Legion Post 77 of Rayne and the VFW Post 6720 of Crowley; in 2017, he was honored as Acadia Parish's oldest surviving veteran, and he was presented with the Quilt of Valor, which stands for service, sacrifice, and valor in serving our nation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Spaetgens was also very involved in his faith community; he was a member of the Holy Name Society at St. Leo IV Catholic Church in Roberts Cove, Louisiana, and he served as the society's president for twelve years; he was also the VFW Chaplain for the 7th District of Louisiana and said the final prayer at more than five hundred military funerals; and

WHEREAS, Leo Spaetgens is survived by his wife of sixty-two years, Ruby Faulk Spaetgens; sons, Michael John Spaetgens, and his wife Charlotte, and Jackie Paul Spaetgens, and his wife Renee; his sister, Anna Maria Spaetgens; twelve grandchildren; and twenty-two great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, William Leo Spaetgens was a truly patriotic American and a man of great faith; he will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express condolences upon the death of William Leo Spaetgens; does hereby record Mr. Spaetgens's incredible service to our country; and does hereby extend sincere hopes and wishes that his family find peace and comfort during this somber time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Mr. William Leo Spaetgens.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES