

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 111
By Burks

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John George Painter, a veteran of World War I.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of John George Painter; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Painter was Tennessee's oldest surviving World War I veteran, and believed to have been the nation's oldest surviving veteran; and

WHEREAS, a native of Jackson County, he was the son of Patrick Henry and Susan Genetta McCauley Painter; and

WHEREAS, John Painter enlisted, with his older brother Lee Painter, in the United States Army at the age of 29 to fight in World War I; he trained at Camp Gordon in Georgia, where he served in the Depot Brigade; later, he was transferred to the 30th Division, Battery D, 115th Field Artillery at Camp Jackson in South Carolina; from June 4, 1918 to March 27, 1919, he served in France, with the Battery D in the Argonne Forest, where he bravely drove a horse team hauling ammunition and field guns to the front lines; and

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WHEREAS, honorably discharged April 12, 1919, John G. Painter returned home to Jackson County where he resumed his career as a farmer and blacksmith; he married his childhood sweetheart Gillie Watson in 1920; the couple was blessed with two daughters, and were together until Gillie Watson Painter's death in 1989; and

WHEREAS, after his wife's death, Mr. Painter lived alone until 1990, when at the age of 102, he went to live with his daughter in Mount Juliet; when his daughter became disabled in 1998, he moved to Hermitage, Tennessee to live with his grandson, Dannie Green; and

WHEREAS, he was a faithful member of the Hermitage Springs Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, John Painter's courage during the war earned him one of France's highest honors, the Order of the Legion of Honor; only five other Tennesseans have received this prestigious award; the Award was presented to him by Jean-Paul Monchau, Consul General De France, at a ceremony in the Old Supreme Court Chambers of the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs conducted a state wide search to determine the oldest living veteran in each county; as a result of this study, John George Painter was found to be the oldest living veteran in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, his war record and longevity brought him the admiration of his fellow countrymen; John Painter received numerous visits and notes from people thanking him for his service during World War I; at his last birthday, he received several hundred birthday cards from people all over the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, Mr. Painter was a co-grand marshal of the Nashville Veterans Parade; he also was one of the featured participants in the Macon County Veterans' Day Parade in 1999, and served as Lafayette's Grand Marshal at their 2000 Veterans' Day parade; and

WHEREAS, John George Painter was a valuable and active member of numerous organizations, including the VFW, the American Legion, Old Hickory Post 91; and he was an honorary member of The American Society of the French Legion of Honor; and

WHEREAS, this remarkable gentleman was duly recognized by the governing bodies of this state and nation; Governor Don Sundquist proclaimed Mr. Painter's 112th birthday, the 20th of September 2000, as "John Painter Day"; United States Representative Bart Gordon read into *The Congressional Record* a tribute to Mr. Painter; and

WHEREAS, John Painter leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, he lived to see 21 United States Presidents; he was born when Grover Cleveland was in his first term as President and lived to the first term of the current President, George W. Bush; he fought in World War I, the war that was said "to end all wars," and lived to see World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War; in France he witnessed fighting in the Argonne Forest in Northeast France, an area where one of the major U. S. offenses was fought; in his life he became an emblem of the veterans who have so bravely served this country and of their sacrifices and triumphs in the name of freedom; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of John George Painter, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to his family and community, and the courage and honor with which he served the United State of America.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and friends of John George Painter.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.