

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 620

By Stewart

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Donald Lee Lance on receiving his replacement Purple Heart Medal, which he most deservedly earned during the Korean War.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by people who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans have continued this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Donald Lee Lance, a member of a venerable Warren County family and veteran of the Korean War, recently learned that he will receive a replacement for the Purple Heart Medal he earned fifty-eight years ago while fighting in defense of his country; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lance was born April 25, 1928, to Amos and Opal Lance; a number of his ancestors had migrated to Warren County shortly after the county was established in 1807, and at the time of Mr. Lance's birth, his family continued its long-established tradition of farming Warren County land; and

WHEREAS, in November 1949, Donald Lance joined the United States Army, and traveled to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, to receive his basic training; he was soon assigned overseas, arriving in Japan in April 1950; and

WHEREAS, on July 3, 1951, while fighting on the Korean Peninsula, Mr. Lance sustained extensive injuries to an arm and one of his hips; he spent time recovering in Korea before he was transferred to a Tokyo hospital, where his condition continued to improve; and

WHEREAS, Donald Lance was awarded a Purple Heart for his bravery and sacrifice in Korea, and he was sent home to Tennessee; during the course of his trip across the country, however, a fellow serviceman apparently stole the award Mr. Lance had earned; and

WHEREAS, when he arrived home, he carried his scars as well as some fragments of shrapnel in his hip, but Mr. Lance did not have the Purple Heart to show his family, who welcomed him with open arms nonetheless; and

WHEREAS, Donald Lance occasionally thought of seeking a replacement Purple Heart; the discomfort his wounds continued to cause would never let him push the thought of the stolen award very far from his mind; and

WHEREAS, once his grandchildren were born, Mr. Lance decided to pursue the medal in earnest so that he would have a token of his sacrifice, and an artifact of his country's history, to pass down to posterity; and

WHEREAS, taking up his father's cause in April 2000, Donald Lynn Lance worked assiduously to secure another Purple Heart for Mr. Lance; thanks to Congressman Bart Gordon, three of his father's medals were replaced, but the Purple Heart was not; and

WHEREAS, pertinent Army records had been destroyed in a St. Louis fire in the 1970s, and the Army insisted that clear proof be provided before a replacement medal would be issued to Mr. Lance; newspaper clippings and letters to relatives contemporaneous with his Korean War service were deemed insufficient to prove that Mr. Lance had indeed received the Purple Heart in the early 1950s; and

WHEREAS, in late 2008, family friend Bob Davenport was able to help locate a military record in Nashville that provided the incontrovertible proof the Army demanded; after fifty-eight years, Donald Lance will receive his replacement Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, this medal will no doubt be a source of pride not only for Mr. Lance but for his wife of forty-six years, Mae Belle Snipes Lance, his son, Donald Lynn Lance, his daughter and son-in-law, Donya Michelle and Mickie Lance, and his four grandchildren, Krissy, Hayley, Hannah, and Noah; and

WHEREAS, Donald Lee Lance performed his duties with the utmost bravery, skill, dedication, and professionalism, and the accolades he received for his military service and personal sacrifice were most assuredly deserved; and

WHEREAS, the conferral of such awards reminds the citizens of this nation that their freedoms must not be taken for granted, and it is fitting that Donald Lee Lance be duly recognized for his courageous service during the Korean War; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Donald Lee Lance on receiving his replacement Purple Heart Medal, which he most deservedly earned for injuries sustained in combat during the Korean War, extend to Mr. Lance our most heartfelt appreciation for his sacrifice, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

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