



HR0487

LRB101 13587 MST 62440 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Lt. Col. Iceal "Gene" Hambleton, a Rossville native and 1936 graduate of Wenona High School, served his country in the U.S. Air Force for 30 years; and

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WHEREAS, Lt. Col. Hambleton served in both World War II and the Korean War but is best known for his 12-day struggle to avoid capture by the North Vietnamese in 1972 after his reconnaissance plane was shot down north of the DMZ; and

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WHEREAS, The effort to rescue Lt. Col. Hambleton, who had been injured during the bailout from his stricken plane, was chronicled in a book and later a movie, BAT 21, in which he was portrayed by Gene Hackman; and

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WHEREAS, Knowing his communications were being monitored by the North Vietnamese, Lt. Col. Hambleton, who was an avid golfer, used references to golf courses in the U.S. to communicate with those who were attempting to rescue him and to keep his pursuers confused; and

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WHEREAS, Lt. Col. Hambleton retired from the military in 1973 and spent his retirement in Tucson, Arizona, close to a golf course, a sport which literally saved his life; and

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1 WHEREAS, Lt. Col. Hambleton was awarded the Silver Star,
2 the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, the Meritorious
3 Service Medal, and the Purple Heart; he passed away on
4 September 19, 2004; and

5 WHEREAS, 1st South Street in the City of Wenona is named in
6 his honor as "I.E. 'Gene' Hambleton Street"; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
8 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
9 we recognize the life and service of Lt. Col. Iceal "Gene"
10 Hambleton; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to the family of Lt. Col. Hambleton as a symbol of
13 our respect and esteem.