

By: Senator(s) Younger, Moran, Michel,  
Parker, Jolly, Barnett, Blackwell, Burton,  
Caughman, Clarke, Frazier, Jackson (11th),  
Jackson (15th), McMahan, Seymour

To: Rules

## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 564

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION SALUTING THE GALLANT SERVICE OF WORLD  
2 WAR II VETERAN JOSEPH R. JOHNSON WHO SERVED WITH GENERAL GEORGE S.  
3 PATTON'S 3RD ARMY.

4 WHEREAS, the men and women who served in the military during  
5 the great conflict, World War II, are known as the "greatest  
6 generation" because of their monumental accomplishments for our  
7 country. We pause to pay tribute to a member of that generation,  
8 Joseph R. Johnson, who served with the famous General George S.  
9 Patton's 3rd Army at the Battle of the Bulge in Germany in  
10 December 1944; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was a Private First Class during the  
12 war. They tried to raise his rank, but he refused because he was  
13 so young, 17. He was born in Goodway, Alabama, but calls  
14 Columbus, Mississippi, home. He was a member of the American  
15 Legion; and

16 WHEREAS, until recently Mr. Johnson would not speak of his  
17 experience in the War. He now states that he was an eyewitness to



18 WWII history. His story is one of heroic self-sacrifice enlisting  
19 in the United States Army at the young age of 17:

20 At the age of 17, he was a small-town country boy from  
21 Alabama who had witnessed two of his older brothers drafted for  
22 WWII. Love of family and love of country led him to plead with  
23 his parents to sign for him to enlist. Joseph said he knew in his  
24 heart that God would protect him and began his journey on October  
25 14, 1943. After all his training was completed, he landed in  
26 Scotland and shipped out for South Hampton around June 3, 1944.  
27 Joseph said that while traveling through the English Channel and  
28 passing the White Cliffs of Dover, they were continually fired  
29 upon and that reality set in fast. They were loaded onto the  
30 boats all night and were too afraid to sleep. The next day they  
31 were to unload onto Omaha Beach, Normandy. In a few short months,  
32 he had gone from a small-town farm boy out into the world and it  
33 was a scary feeling. He was deployed onto the beaches of Normandy  
34 with the 5th Wave of troops under General George S. Patton's 3rd  
35 Army. Joseph wanted to make General Patton proud. He tells of so  
36 much death you could barely stand it. The single-most powerful  
37 thing he remembered was how many wounded and dying soldiers he  
38 heard asking for their mothers. He was present in four theaters.  
39 He went from Omaha Beach to Marcel, France, and then headed to  
40 Germany. His unit came to the Siegfried Line (East Germany, West  
41 France) June 30, 1944. He received an injury to his left leg from  
42 a German 88 shell. His unit then went into Germany crossing the



43 Rhine River. This is where he shot down an American plane, a P-51  
44 Mustang, sent in by the 8th Air Force. Americans were attempting  
45 to kill them because they did not know they were Americans.  
46 General Patton ordered the troops to Bastogne, Belgium, where he  
47 participated in the Battle of the Bulge on Christmas Day, 1944.  
48 General Patton told them that the Germans had thrown a counter  
49 attack. With the 82nd Airborne, they killed or captured 222,000  
50 German soldiers. His unit then headed to Berlin. After the war  
51 was over, he was assigned to the CIA to take Polish citizens back  
52 to their country. After hostilities were over, he was ordered  
53 home. He said the troop ship had bad weather all the way home but  
54 that when he passed the Statue of Liberty he was happy and proud  
55 to be home; and

56 WHEREAS, Private First Class Johnson is the recipient of four  
57 Bronze Stars and in 2013 was one of several veterans who was  
58 awarded France's Legion of Honor Medal in Jackson, Mississippi,  
59 for his bravery 69 years ago. It is France's highest decoration  
60 and is presented to Veterans of World War II who fought and risked  
61 their lives in major battles on French soil. The Legion of Honor  
62 is designated by the French President to those who have served  
63 their country above and beyond the call of duty. The French  
64 Legion of Honor Medal was created in 1802 by Emperor Napoleon  
65 Bonaparte to recognize those who have rendered eminent services to  
66 the Republic of France or who have demonstrated exceptional  
67 courage, bravery and a spirit of sacrifice beyond the ordinary,



68 particularly in the military domain. Recipients of this honor are  
69 designated by the President of the Republic of France; and

70 WHEREAS, we can never repay our debt to these veterans and  
71 their families, but we must do what we can, with all that we have,  
72 to live our lives in a way that pays tribute to their memory. We  
73 should not pause and remember to thank our veterans only on  
74 Veterans or Memorial Day, we should do it every day:

75 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
76 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
77 we do hereby salute the gallant service of World War II Veteran  
78 Joseph R. Johnson who served with General George S. Patton's 3rd  
79 Army, and extend our thanks for his historic service.

80 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
81 Joseph R. Johnson and his family, and made available to the  
82 Capitol Press Corps.

