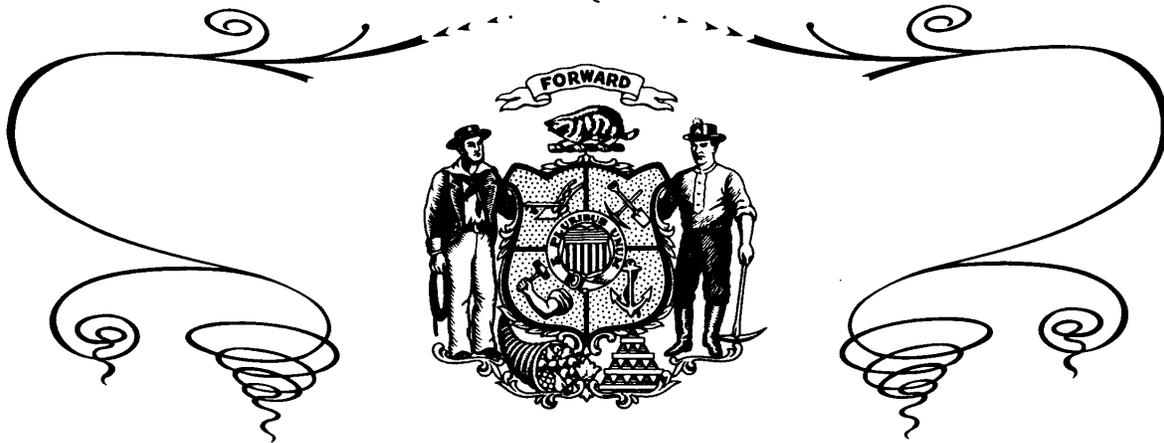


State of Wisconsin



1997 Assembly Joint Resolution 38

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: commending African–American veterans.

Whereas, former Lieutenant Vernon Baker, now a resident of northern Idaho, is the first and only living African–American veteran of World War II to receive our nation’s highest military award, the Medal of Honor; and

Whereas, 6 other African–American veterans of World War II have now also been awarded posthumous Medals of Honor; and

Whereas, although 1,700,000 African–Americans served in World War II, during that war none received one of the 432 Medals of Honor awarded for heroism in combat; and

Whereas, military historians have concluded that racist attitudes and the segregation of African–Americans during World War II were the reasons no Medals of Honor were given earlier to African–American heroes; and

Whereas, during World War II Lt. Vernon Baker was a member of the U.S. army’s renowned 92nd Infantry, called the Buffalo Division, which was composed entirely of African–Americans; and

Whereas, while stationed in Italy Lt. Vernon Baker and his platoon led the fight to capture Castle Aghinolfi, a German stronghold, on April 5, 1945; and

Whereas, during this battle Lt. Vernon Baker destroyed 5 German machine–gun nests and an entire German bunker, and shot several other German soldiers in the midst of battle; and

Whereas, Lt. Vernon Baker and his fallen comrades; Staff Sgt. Edward Carter, Jr., Lt. John Fox, Pfc. Willy James, Jr., Staff Sgt. Ruben Rivers, Lt. Charles Thomas and Pvt. George Watson; were awarded their Medals of Honor by President Clinton in a White House ceremony on Monday, January 10, 1997; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin legislature salute former Lieutenant Vernon Baker and his fellow African-American soldiers for their deeds of heroism over 50 years ago and offer them the greatest gratitude possible for giving years of their lives, and in many instances giving up their lives, in the service of their country, and do hold them up for all generations to revere as great patriots of the highest order, worthy of emulation by all; and, be it further

Resolved, That the assembly chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint resolution to former Lieutenant Vernon Baker.

Senator Fred Risser
President of the Senate

Representative Ben Brancel
Speaker of the Assembly

Date

Charles R. Sanders
Assembly Chief Clerk