

From: District 17 Legislative Chairman Bill Aramony

Subject: American Legion Resolution No. 41: State Funeral for the last World War II Medal of Honor Recipient to have a state funeral for the last living Medal recipient.

I am asking that you contact your State delegate and State Senators to petition the Governor of Virginia to ask President Joseph Biden to designate a single state funeral for the final Medal of Honor recipient from World War II, and by doing so to honor all for served during WW II. We ask Legionnaires to contact their Virginia state legislative representative, as follows:

1. To identify your State representative -- Delegate and Senator -- see: <https://whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/> I double checked mine because of the recent elections so to know who the incumbent was.
2. See Exhibit 1 below for a background paper and an American Legion national resolution for such a state funeral.
3. See Exhibit 2 below for an example draft letter for the Governor to the President.
4. See Exhibit 3 below for a sample email or note (you can edit to say it your way):

Thank you! Bill Aramony is point of contact at Bill.Aramony@aol.com. This event hopefully will unite the Country while honoring each and all we knew or know who served in World War II.

EXHIBIT 1

Position Paper concerning a state funeral for the last living WW II Medal of Honor recipient to lay in state at the United States Capitol.

OBJECTIVE: A letter from the Governor of Virginia asking President Joseph Biden to designate a single state funeral for the final Medal of Honor recipient from World War II.

BACKGROUND:

- Only the President may authorize a state funeral because U.S. State Funerals are offered to all current or former Presidents of the United States, President-elect and other officials designated by the President.
- A state funeral is an elaborate and public event taking place over several days, laying the honoree in state in the rotunda of the United States Capitol. State funerals are steeped in protocol and have included funeral processions in Washington, D.C., and in other cities, where the honoree may lay in state, also, allowing the public to pay its respects not only to the honoree but also to the events that the honoree represents; this case honoring all United States veterans of WW II.
- Pending federal legislation asks the President to designate a state funeral for the last surviving WW II Medal of Honor recipient: S.Con.Res.3 is a concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for the lying-in state of the remains of the last Medal of Honor recipient of World War II, so to honor the Greatest Generation and the more than 16,000,000 men and women who served in the Armed Forces of the United States from 1941 to 1945.

H.Con.Res.7 is to authorize the use of the rotunda of the Capitol to honor the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient of the Second World War upon death.

- Multiple State Senates and General Assemblies have passed resolutions asking the President to designate a state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient of the Second World War upon death including, and not limited to West Virginia, Montana, Maine, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, and Louisiana See <https://www.worldwar2salute.org/State-Resolutions>.
- Veteran Service Organizations have asked for the state funeral, such as resolutions from the National American Legion, which resolution originated from the Legion's Department of Virginia, and from the Marine Corps League.
- The last non-Presidential State Funeral was General Douglas MacArthur in 1964.
- There is little time to act on this issue: Hershel "Woody" Williams, is the nation's last living Medal of Honor recipient and 98 years old, as of October 2, 2021.

DISCUSSION:

- o A letter from the Governor will show support for on-going efforts in Congress and within different states to designate a single state funeral for the final Medal of Honor recipient from World War II.
- o This event will also provide national recognition to honor all 16 million soldiers, sailors and airmen who served in our armed forces from 1941 to 1945.

- This event will entail the WW II medal of Honor recipient laying in-state in the rotunda for the Capital for all to pay their respects over several days and, thus, will serve as a unifying activity and event for this divided nation.

**ONE-HUNDREDTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF**

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 28, 29, 30, 2018

Resolution No. 41: State Funeral For The Last World War II Medal Of Honor Recipient

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The time has come to prepare for a final salute to our World War II servicemembers for which 472 Medals of Honor were awarded and only four of those recipients survive today; and

WHEREAS, The opportunity is slipping away for “A funeral not for one man, but to join the hearts and minds of 330 million Americans”; and

WHEREAS, Only three classes of citizens are entitled to a state funeral: a president-elect who dies before being sworn into office, a sitting president or former president of the United States, and any other person designated by the president; and

WHEREAS, In view of the foregoing, we the membership of The American Legion, respectfully petition the president of the United States to designate that the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient lie in state on behalf of the 16 million World War II veterans as a final tribute to their service and sacrifice to achieve world peace in troubled times; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion support a petition to the president of the United States, on behalf of more than 16 million veterans of World War II, to designate a state funeral for the last living Medal of Honor recipient – not for one man, but to join together the hearts of millions of Americans in a unifying event honoring the legacy of all World War II veterans.

EXHIBIT 2
SAMPLE DRAFT

2 November 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, District of Columbia 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to ask that you authorize a state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II, and to provide at this state funeral special recognition in honor of all Americans who served during WW II. Today, one World War II recipient of the Medal of Honor, Hershel “Woody” Williams, remains alive. On October 2, 2021, he was 99-years old. Both a United States Senator and Representative have proposed legislation asking for the use of the rotunda of the Capitol to honor the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient of the Second World War upon death. Multiple states have passed resolutions asking you to designate such a state funeral.

A state funeral honoring Mr. Williams also would honor the sixteen million women and men who wore our nation’s uniform during World War II so to serve as a unifying event—a final salute to the greatest generation. Today, our nation often seems divided in numerous ways, and each American who had a mother, father, aunt, uncle, or grandparents who served in World War II would feel immense pride seeing their loved ones honored in this very special way. This is especially true for the more than 400,000 Gold Star Families who suffered a terrible loss during the conflict.

Mr. President, you are the sole authority to designate a state funeral. We hope you will consider this special event and so designate.

Very truly yours,

Ralph Northam
Governor of Virginia

SAMPLE DRAFT

EXHIBIT 3

Dear Delegate (or Senator) [Your Delegate/Senator Name]:

I am a member of American Legion Post 176, Springfield, Virginia and a retiree from the military, U.S. Army.

I am writing to ask that you petition the Governor of Virginia to write President Joseph Biden asking him to designate a state funeral for the final Medal of Honor recipient from World War II, and to honor all for served during World War II. There is little time to act on this issue as Hershel "Woody" Williams, is the nation's last living Medal of Honor recipient and 98 years old, as of October 2, 2021.

Very Respectfully,

Your name