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Decatur, Ala.

March 4, 2019

Testimony for SCR 11 - Recognizes and honors Staff Sergeant Don Anderson for his service to his country

Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

80th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2019 Regular Session

March 6, 2019, 8:00 a.m.

Chair Olsen, Vice Chair Monnes-Anderson, Senator Boquist, and Senator Courtney;

I am Douglas Anderson, son of Donald Anderson. I am writing to express my support for passage of SCR 11, which is currently before the Committee.

The information concerning my father's military service is contained in the bill and the Staff Measure Summary prepared by Ms. Ross, LPRO Analyst.

A point in clarification: in addition to being a Director of the 401st Bombardment Group Association, Don was also a Director for many years of the Oregon Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

The service given by my father and his comrades in the 8th Air Forces has always been a source of inspiration and admiration to me. The courage of those young men can hardly be understated. The U.S. Air Forces in Europe suffered more casualties than any of the U.S. uniformed services, and were exceeded only by the Merchant Marines. By the end of the war, 8th Air Force suffered 26,000 deaths out of the 350,000 officers and men, a 7.4% loss, half of the U.S. Army Air Force's casualties in World War II. In the first six months of its operation, the 91st Bombardment Group experienced a 48% loss of bomber crews, 22 of the 46 listed crews; my father's 401st Bombardment Group was a member of the 91st.

On the topic of Bravery, two days before his 90th birthday in 2015, Don wrote “We couldn’t help but react with horror when we watched a bomber going down during a mission, but we continued with what we were supposed to do.” In his autobiographical “Donald,” he mentions the mission over Berlin on February 3, 1945:

I knew as a certainty that I was going to be killed in the next few moments. But strangely, I felt no fear. Later, I read of others who had a similar experience. Apparently, we reach a point of resignation and simply wait for it to happen. Amazingly, the moment our bombs dropped, the flak stopped and we banked as planned and returned to our base. After every mission, we

underwent interrogation as to what we observed, and each of us received a shot of whiskey. I needed two. This had been a pretty intense day.

All three of his children served either in the United States Army, or the Oregon National Guard, or both, from 1970 to 2010. All three married veterans. Together, his children and their spouses served their country in uniform for over 75 years. All three of his children were “ground pounders.”

An important aspect of my childhood was my father's dedication to education (both formal and life-long continuing education), to diligence, and to hard work. In addition, in every accomplishment that I can cite, he has always emphasized that he was just one member of a group, and that it is the group, not himself, who deserves any credit for accomplishment.

Don was a member of the Redmond Volunteer Fire Department for several years during the 1960s. During that time, he was also a first responder in the city's ambulance. One day, he and his partner responded to a factory where a man's leg was mangled in a grain auger. In his autobiography, he wrote

The only way to save his life was to sever the tendon. We didn't have a razor or anything like that, but someone must have handed me a knife. I cut the tendon, applied a sterile dressing and we transported him to the hospital.

As a result this and other experiences, Don became concerned about both the level of training that was required for ambulance personnel and the lack of adequate equipment in the ambulance.

Don, as President of the Volunteer Ambulance Association of Oregon, together with other individuals and organizations – notably Clarence Cook who headed the group of commercial ambulance operators – pushed for the first legislation requiring personnel to have at least certification as Emergency Medical Technician with 40 hours training. In his autobiography, Don wrote:

This was met with resentment in some areas, but eventually became a matter of pride to offer effective life-saving medical service. This was a very small step, but at least a beginning.

Don was hired as the Public Education Officer of the then Tualatin Rural Fire Protection District in 1972.

The following year, he was a founding member of the Oregon Fire Education Association, a group of fire education professionals whose mission was to reduce residential fire deaths in Oregon through increased awareness of fire prevention and how to react if a fire does occur in a home.

During National Fire Prevention Week from 1973 through 1989, the 18 elementary school gyms in the Tualatin Fire Protection District were packed with children K-6 who received fire prevention education from "Fireman Don," assisted by the Fire Prevention Singers, a chorus of 6th graders – with great help from teachers Linda Laine and the late Joy Linder – together with "Fireman Don's El Cheapo Magic Act," resulting in a reduction of fire deaths in homes throughout the District during that period. In 1982, Don was honored with the “Golden Sparky” award presented by the Oregon State Fire Marshal for his work in fire prevention. He was also honored with the award of “Lay Educator of the Year” by the Tigard-Tualatin School District. Decades after these presentations, Don is still being recognized by former students, now middle-aged adults, who remember the Fire Prevention Programs that he created.

In closing, I'd like to share a quotation from an email that he sent last year:

WWII understandably made a tremendous impact on Americans and our allies. I am proud to be a veteran of this one, but we do not deserve more appreciation than veterans of other wars.

Email "On Hero Recognition," September 12, 2018

I request that the Committee pass this Concurrent Resolution to the Senate floor with a favorable recommendation for adoption.

Very truly yours,
Douglas D. Anderson
Master Sgt. (Ret.)
Oregon National Guard