



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 225
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

Chris Koster
31st Senate District

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Contact: Chastity Young
(573) 751-1430

Sen. Chris Koster Welcomes World War II POW

Nevada, Missouri Resident One of Oldest Living POW Survivors

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Chris Koster (D-Harrisonville) this week welcomed Floyd McComas, one of the country's oldest surviving POWs from World War II, to the Missouri Senate.

McComas, a resident of the 31st District, was born in 1909 and will celebrate his 99th birthday in July. He was drafted into the U.S. Army as a part of the infantry in August 1943 at the age of 34. The following year on June 16, he participated in the Allied landing on Omaha Beach.

On his first day with a new unit, McComas was captured and imprisoned by the Germans on Oct. 4, 1944, at Stalag 7A near Moosburg, Germany. The POW camp was comprised of American, Russian and French soldiers. McComas called the camp "better than he expected" for its above-average treatment of the prisoners, perhaps because at that point in the war the Germans "knew they were going to lose."

McComas recalled how his bunkmate in the camp understood and spoke a little German, a skill that came in handy when a young German guard thought McComas was making fun of him. He wasn't, and told his bunkmate to relay his message to the guard. The guard relented, but told McComas that if he did it again, he would shoot him. He and his bunkmate would also trade the other prisoners the cigarettes they would receive for bread — cigarettes that McComas estimated were 50 percent sawdust. Every other day, he would work in the town, helping to tear down buildings and working in railroad yards, just to get a hot meal.

"My prison life is up in my head," McComas said. "You can make it good or make it bad. I try to make it good."

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McComas was freed by General Patton's Third Army on April 29, 1945. He remembers General Patton driving up to the camp in a Jeep, then ordering his soldiers to pitch tents outside the camp where they would stay for a few days before traveling to France. About one month later, McComas was sent home and subsequently discharged from active duty service on Sept. 9, 1945, as a Private First Class.

McComas spent most of his life living in Kansas City with his wife, Ethel, who he married Nov. 23, 1935, and working as a retail furniture buyer. He still drives and reads the newspaper every day, enjoys woodworking and collecting state quarters.

"My goal is to live long enough to collect every state quarter," McComas said.

He was introduced by Sen. Koster to the Missouri Senate on Wednesday (4/16) when the senator presented a Senate Resolution honoring McComas' service. He was also introduced to the House by Rep. Barney Fisher (R-District 125), who sponsored a House Resolution recognizing McComas as an Outstanding Missourian.

"We are honored to have a true American hero visit the Missouri Senate," Sen. Koster said. "Floyd McComas, like all of our men and women in uniform, sacrificed so much to fight for his country. He deserves our utmost respect and heartfelt thanks."



Sen. Chris Koster with Floyd McComas of Nevada, Missouri. McComas is one of the oldest surviving World War II POWs in the country. He was honored by the Missouri Senate on Wednesday (4/16).

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