

Enrolled

Senate Concurrent Resolution 8

Sponsored by Senator SOLLMAN; Senators MANNING JR, SMITH DB, Representative SOSA (Pre-session filed.)

Whereas Private William Ezra Leon “Billy” Calkins was born to Joseph and Evalena (Eva) Calkins in August 1925, and he was raised in Washington County, Oregon; and

Whereas Private Calkins had a strong desire to serve his country, so he lied about his age to join the United States Army at the age of 16; and

Whereas Private Calkins was serving in the Philippines with Company B of the 31st Infantry Regiment in December 1941 when Japanese forces invaded the islands; and

Whereas Private Calkins was captured on the Bataan Peninsula, along with tens of thousands of other United States and Filipino troops; and

Whereas in April 1942, Private Calkins and an estimated 75,000 other prisoners of war were gathered together by Japanese forces and forced to march 65 miles to various prison camps in what came to be known as the Bataan Death March; and

Whereas the troops on the march were subjected to severe physical and psychological abuse, starvation and summary executions, leading to thousands of deaths; and

Whereas Private Calkins survived the march to reach Cabanatuan prisoner of war camp; and

Whereas prisoners at the camp endured horrific conditions and abuse, and death rates soared due to lack of medicine and food; and

Whereas Private Calkins died on November 1, 1942, and he was buried in a common grave numbered 704; and

Whereas after the war, the remains of Private Calkins and others in mass graves were exhumed; and

Whereas while some remains could be identified, the remains of Private Calkins and others were reinterred as unknown soldiers at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial; and

Whereas in 2018, as part of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency’s Cabanatuan Project, the unidentified remains associated with common grave 704 were again exhumed for forensic analysis; and

Whereas scientists at the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System were able to use DNA to identify the remains of Private Calkins; and

Whereas Private Calkins’ remains were returned to Oregon and he was finally laid to rest next to his mother’s grave on September 13, 2024, at Fir Lawn Memorial Park in Hillsboro, with full military honors; and

Whereas Private Calkins was just 17 years old when he died, and he will never be forgotten; and

Whereas Private Calkins was an outstanding soldier who served his country with honor and distinction; and

Whereas Private Calkins’ awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Purple Heart, the Prisoner of War Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the American Defense Service Medal with Foreign Service Clasp, the World War II Victory Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation with two bronze oak leaf clusters, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Philippine Defense Medal with bronze star and the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation; and

Whereas Private Calkins’ selfless devotion to duty exemplified the spirit and values of the United States Army; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Eighty-third Legislative Assembly, recognize and honor Private William Ezra Leon “Billy” Calkins for his service to his country.

Adopted by Senate February 27, 2025

Obadiah Rutledge, Secretary of Senate

Rob Wagner, President of Senate

Adopted by House June 10, 2025

Julie Fahey, Speaker of House