

By: Miller of Comal

H.R. No. 1513

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Jewel Preston Looney of New Braunfels is visiting
2 Washington, D.C., on April 26, 2013, as a guest of the San Antonio
3 Alamo Honor Flight, and this occasion represents a fitting
4 opportunity to honor this distinguished veteran for his service to
5 the nation during World War II; and

6 WHEREAS, Born in 1924 in Ravenden Springs, Arkansas,
7 J. P. Looney was eager to answer his country's call to duty, and he
8 enlisted in the U.S. Army as soon as he came of age; after training
9 in California, he was assigned to the 207th Engineer Combat
10 Battalion, 1110th Engineer Combat Group, of the First Army, and he
11 spent the months before D-day with his unit in southern England,
12 preparing for the invasion; and

13 WHEREAS, Subsequent to the Normandy landing in June 1944,
14 Mr. Looney and the other soldiers of the 207th Battalion took part
15 in the massive effort to rebuild, repair, and maintain roads and
16 bridges in support of the Allied advance; the battalion worked its
17 way through such famous battlegrounds as Saint-Lo and the Ardennes;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, During November and December 1944, Mr. Looney was
20 sent to Liege, Belgium, where members of the 207th were trained in
21 the construction of "Bailey bridges," portable, prefabricated
22 metal spans that rested on barges; Mr. Looney was taught how to
23 captain a tugboat, and he learned to maneuver barges in the rapid
24 currents of the Meuse River; while he and his fellow soldiers were

1 engaged in this training, the Germans often launched buzz bombs
2 into the city; and

3 WHEREAS, After the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 and
4 January 1945, the Wehrmacht destroyed most of the bridges across
5 the Rhine as they were driven back into Germany, and the 207th was
6 given the mission of building a Bailey bridge across the Rhine at
7 Bad Godesberg; designed by General Courtney H. Hodges, the span was
8 to be the first two-lane Bailey bridge across the river; it would
9 stretch for more than 1,174 feet and be capable of moving 1,000
10 vehicles a day; and

11 WHEREAS, The 207th Battalion worked to build the bridge out
12 from the west bank while another battalion worked from the east;
13 Mr. Looney used a tugboat to position the underlying barges,
14 working in powerful currents at a time when the water level in the
15 Rhine was at an all-time high; after his job was done, he joined the
16 forces on the eastern bank to help defend the bridge against German
17 attempts to destroy it; and

18 WHEREAS, The construction of the bridge began on March 26,
19 1945, and the bridge was opened for traffic on April 6; named the
20 Hodges Bridge, after its designer, this engineering marvel enabled
21 the First Army to move quickly into Germany and played a vital role
22 in hastening the end of the war in Europe; on May 8, 1945, just over
23 a month after the bridge was commissioned, the Germans surrendered;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, For his service during the war, Mr. Looney earned
26 the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with four
27 bronze service stars; and

1 WHEREAS, Following his discharge from the armed forces,
2 Mr. Looney worked in the oil and gas exploration business for a time
3 before joining Texas Instruments in Houston; he later helped found
4 the Mensor Corporation, which manufactures pressure measuring
5 devices; the enterprise has been located in San Marcos since 1978,
6 and three generations of Mr. Looney's family have worked for the
7 company; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Looney and his wife, the former Alma Elizabeth
9 Randall, exchanged their wedding vows in 1952, and over the years
10 they have been blessed with three daughters, seven grandchildren,
11 and two great-grandchildren; and

12 WHEREAS, During his visit to Washington, D.C., Mr. Looney
13 will visit the World War II Memorial in the company of other
14 veterans, and together they will honor the comrades they lost,
15 share their memories of hardship and triumph, and reflect with
16 pride on the role they played in one of our nation's finest hours;
17 now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
19 Legislature hereby honor Jewel Preston Looney for his outstanding
20 service during World War II and extend to him sincere best wishes
21 for a meaningful and memorable visit to our nation's capital; and,
22 be it further

23 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
24 prepared for Mr. Looney as an expression of high regard by the Texas
25 House of Representatives.