

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 530

In Memory
of
Lucy Coffey

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas remembers and pays tribute to Lucy Coffey, one of the oldest female World War II veterans, who passed away in San Antonio on March 19, 2015, at the age of 108; and

WHEREAS, Originally from Mahalasville, Indiana, Lucy Coffey moved to Dallas and was working for an A&P grocery store when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941; she quit her job and joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps at the age of 37, one of only 150,000 women to join the corps who were not nurses; Lucy's intense desire to serve is evident in the multiple attempts she made to enlist; due to her small stature, she had to apply a number of times to the corps, but her tenacity paid off when she was finally accepted into the military in 1943; and

WHEREAS, Lucy served honorably in the Pacific, earning the rank of staff sergeant, and was awarded the Philippine Liberation Medal with a bronze star in the Battle of Luzon; in addition, she earned an Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with one bronze star, a World War II Victory Medal, the Women's Army Corps Service Medal, and a Good Conduct Medal; she served in Australia, New Guinea, the Philippines, and eventually Japan, where she worked as an account-statistician; and

WHEREAS, Lucy Coffey braved the horrors of combat when her unit moved closer to the front lines, where the unit faced food and water shortages and sometimes depended on Navy sailors to share their rations; two of Staff Sergeant Coffey's brothers served in the Pacific as well, testifying to the Coffey family's commitment to the nation; in an era when many thought that women did not have a place in the military, Staff Sergeant Coffey led by example and volunteered to defend the nation during a time of dire need; and

WHEREAS, After her discharge in 1945, Lucy Coffey spent 13 years working as an Army civilian in Okinawa, Japan, before settling in San Antonio, where she would spend the rest of her life; she worked in the procurement office at Kelly Air Force Base until her retirement in 1971; Lucy Coffey maintained a strong spirit of service to her country during her lifetime, continuing to serve the greater good well beyond her military enlistment; and

WHEREAS, Lucy Coffey was one of 400,000 women who served their country during World War II; many things have changed in the military since Staff Sergeant Coffey joined, but it was women like her who blazed a trail for modern female soldiers and helped expand female service from one small unit to the force of more than two million American women it is today; the San Antonio Veterans Service Office stated that Lucy Coffey "was an incredible lady who will be missed dearly" and that "her contributions to our country and community will not be forgotten"; and

WHEREAS, Despite over 70 years of continuous service, women in the military still face challenges on a daily basis, but Lucy Coffey's legacy continues to inspire them; she opened avenues for women to serve this country by answering the nation's first call for service for women, and her memory lives on as a testament to the resilience and determination of all veterans in the face of danger; her valor and conviction impart confidence to younger generations' future leaders, both military and civilian; and

WHEREAS, Lucy Coffey was honored at the White House in 2014 by the president and vice president during her visit to the memorials dedicated to veterans; she was a humble pioneer of military equality and esprit de corps; she suffered a stroke in 2013 and used an oxygen system during her last years, yet she remained energetic and enthusiastic, speaking to reporters and audiences about her incomparable experiences; when asked about her service just before her death, Staff Sergeant Coffey replied, "I'd love to serve my country forever"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 84th Legislature, hereby extend sincere condolences to the family and friends of Lucy Coffey; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for her family as an expression of deepest sympathy from the Texas Senate and that when the Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Lucy Coffey.

Menéndez, Campbell

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 13, 2015, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate