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R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, On June 6, 2019, Americans and freedom-loving people from around the globe will pause to reflect, honor, and commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion by principally American, British, and Canadian military troops by amphibious assault from the English Channel on the beaches of Normandy, France, and via airborne assault in the French countryside by their fellow paratroopers, totaling nearly 160,000 men, this military campaign code-named "Operation Overlord" significantly led to the ultimate liberation of Europe and the end of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Though Germany's Third Reich was suffering heavy military losses on the Eastern Front, it still controlled much of Europe; after entering the war in December 1941, U.S. armed forces joined with other Allied forces to drive the German Africa Corps out of North Africa in May 1943, and in July of that year, the American and British forces began the liberation of Europe with the invasion of Sicily; by the summer of 1944, World War II had been raging for nearly five years; and

WHEREAS, Planning for an Allied invasion across the English Channel subsequently commenced, and in January 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed as commander of Operation Overlord; faced with a 2,400-mile German defensive line of bunkers, land mines, and beach obstacles known as the Atlantic Wall, the Allies began to train a force of American, British, and Canadian troops in Britain; and

WHEREAS, In the months leading up to the invasion, the British and American air forces flew 200,000 sorties and dropped 195,000 tons of bombs on German installations in France, attacking rail centers, airfields, military bases, radar stations, and coastal artillery batteries; the Allies also engaged in an extensive deception operation intended to fool the Germans into thinking the invasion would take place near Pas-de-Calais, instead of the real target, the coast of Normandy; and

WHEREAS, Late in the day of June 5, 1944, almost 6,000 ships and landing craft loaded with troops and supplies left Britain and started across the English Channel toward France; that night, approximately 800 aircraft carrying paratroopers and towing gliders dropped members of the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the British 6th Airborne Division behind enemy lines in Normandy; and

WHEREAS, At 6:30 a.m. on June 6, 1944, the first of 156,000 Allied troops landed on the shores of Normandy; the soldiers at the beachheads of Gold, Juno, Sword, and Utah met light German resistance, but at Omaha Beach, the U.S. 1st Division encountered strong Wehrmacht defenses; the Americans fought for every inch of ground, suffering more than 2,000 casualties before finally seizing control and taking the beach; and

WHEREAS, A week later, the coast was completely under Allied command, and over 326,000 troops, 50,000 vehicles, and 100,000 tons of equipment had been landed; by the end of August 1944, the Allies had liberated Paris and driven the Germans out of northwestern France; there was much hard fighting to come as the Allies advanced east into Germany, but less than a year after D-Day, on May 8, 1945, the Allies accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany; and

WHEREAS, One of the greatest military feats in history, the Normandy invasion is a testament to the bold leadership and logistical skill of General Eisenhower and the Allied command, but in the end, the success of the operation relied heavily on the determination and courage of the troops who waded through the surf into a hail of machine gun bullets, who rode gliders in the dark through bursts of antiaircraft fire, and who parachuted into the French countryside occupied by the enemy; and

WHEREAS, The heroism and sacrifice of these soldiers, airmen, and sailors were essential in liberating a continent and ending one of the most brutal dictatorships of the 20th century, and succeeding generations owe them a debt of gratitude that time can never erase; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion and pay tribute to the veterans who participated and to those who lost their lives.