

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 29

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 88

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 29—Relative to commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 13, 1995.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 29, Machado. 50th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II.

This measure would urge all citizens to join in the celebrations commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II, and in honoring those who have served and continue to serve their country in the United States Armed Forces.

WHEREAS, More than a half century has passed since the tragic events of World War II transpired leaving some 45 million people dead, including almost 300,000 United States service men and women who died in battle. Well before it ended, World War II (1939–45) was recognized as the single event that affected more people's lives than any other in human history. For millions of people, World War II was the greatest catastrophe in history; and

WHEREAS, Fifty years ago in 1945, World War II would finally draw to an end after six years and a day of heinous crimes and atrocities committed against mankind. The events of that war changed everyone's lives and ultimately changed the political order of the world; and

WHEREAS, At home in America, anxieties of fear and hunger that plagued much of the world were comparably absent. During the six years of the war, no elections were held in Europe, Asia, Africa, or the Middle East. In the United States, on the other hand, during the same six years, there were two presidential, three congressional, and hundreds of state elections, all of them hotly contested; and

WHEREAS, World War II transformed the world, and America, too. It was a unique time. The half decade of 1940–45 did more to shake America out of its past and to shape its future than any comparable period except the United States Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Within the United States during the period from 1941 to 1945, more than 15 million civilians moved, more than half of them to new states, a full 17 percent of the population despite the fact that America was at war, making this a mass migration that dwarfed even the westward movement of the 19th century; and

WHEREAS, Most of those who moved were between 18 and 35 years of age, which means that nearly everyone of that age group moved at least once; and

WHEREAS, This had a tremendous broadening effect on American politics and culture because the internal migration helped break down regional prejudices and provincialism; and

WHEREAS, The generation that fought the war reinvented America after it was won. Whether it was in the armed services, or in munitions plants, or other war-related industries, young Americans learned to work together as a team, and as college students on the G.I. Bill of Rights, young Americans learned important skills, and in the late 1940s and through the 1950s, they built a new America with—superhighways, suburbs, skyscrapers, station wagons, semiconductors, and a sky full of commercial airplanes; and

WHEREAS, The war dramatically changed political attitudes. Initially in the 1930s most Americans were isolationists, neutrality and disarmament were the dominant policies, and it was believed that those policies would keep America out of the next war; and

WHEREAS, The United States Selective Service Act, that had been law for one year in 1940, was continued in 1941 by a margin of one vote in the House of Representatives, less than four months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, In the 1940s, isolationism was proven wrong and it came to be recognized that the way to prevent future wars was through collective security and military preparedness; and

WHEREAS, The role of women, especially young women, changed just as dramatically, they entered the work force in record numbers, something that is so well-known that one need only mention “Rosie the Riveter” to make the point; and

WHEREAS, For African-Americans and Japanese-Americans, it was a terrible war; and

WHEREAS, The armed services, the National Capital, and the former Confederate States all maintained a strict segregation that was degrading to African-Americans and United States born Japanese-American citizens (Nisei); and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 9066 was issued on February 19, 1942, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, that had the effect of uprooting over 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from their homes and businesses to be held in detention camps, and approximately 80,000 of these persons were United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, While their parents, brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles, were denied their freedom, the most decorated unit ever in United States history was the 442nd Regimental Command Team, whose motto was “Go For Broke,” and consisted of all Japanese-American volunteers; and



WHEREAS, Some 46 years later, President Ronald Reagan signed into law H.R. 442, generally known as the Civil Liberties Act, that formally acknowledged the injustice of the relocation and interment of those persons of Japanese ancestry; and

WHEREAS, More than 7.5 million Europeans were pressed into forced labor for the German Third Reich and approximately 2 million prisoners of war were also forced to work in the Nazi war machine; and

WHEREAS, More than 50 years have passed since the tragic events that are now called the Holocaust, in which the dictatorship of Nazi Germany murdered 6 million Jews (two-thirds of the pre-World War II European Jewish population) as part of a systematic program known as “The Final Solution of the Jewish Question”; and

WHEREAS, “Holocaust” is the term describing the Nazi annihilation of the Jewish people, including 4.5 million from Russia, Poland, and the Baltic; 750,000 from Hungary and Romania; 290,000 from Germany and Austria; 105,000 from The Netherlands; 90,000 from France; 54,000 from Greece, among others; and

WHEREAS, Even with the passage of half a century, it is still hard to comprehend the magnitude of this crime against humanity. The Holocaust was a tragedy of proportions the world had never before witnessed and we must continue to be reminded of the reality of the Holocaust’s horrors so they will never again be repeated; and

WHEREAS, World War II lasted six years and a day and, in both human and material terms, its cost was appalling and in certain aspects beyond any estimation. Twenty-seven nations had taken an active part in the conflict as armed belligerents, and the combatants had mobilized approximately 100 million men and women in their armed services and lost in the vicinity of 16 million dead in addition to those permanently disabled; and

WHEREAS, Displaced persons to the number of some 20 million had been torn from their homes and whole areas had been reduced below the starvation level by the deliberate actions of the conquerors; and

WHEREAS, Over 16 million American men and women served in the armed services in World War II more than in any other war, and altogether, over 50 million people, both civilian and military, died; and

WHEREAS, Three times as many bombs were dropped on Germany during the last seven months of war (after D-Day landings) than in all the years before; and

WHEREAS, The total number of aircraft used by both sides during the war was approximately 675,000, of which 475,000 were employed by the Allies; and

WHEREAS, Of the 17 battleships in United States Naval service in 1941, only the U.S.S. Arizona (BB-39), and the U.S.S. Oklahoma (BB-37) were lost at Pearl Harbor. And, by the war’s conclusion four



years later, September 1945, 23 United States battleships were listed in service, all having been constructed and launched from America's great shipyards, many in California; and

WHEREAS, During what is known as the Battle of the Atlantic, over 2,600 ships were sunk totaling 15 million tons. Great Britain lost nearly 60,000 sailors and seamen. Germany lost 28,000 U-Boat submariners and 785 submarines. United States losses were only a fraction of these; and

WHEREAS, Japan lost a total of 12 aircraft carriers in four naval battles in the Battle for the Pacific: including the battles at Coral Sea on May 7 through 8, 1942; Midway on June 3 through 6, 1942; Marianas on June 18 through 20, 1944; and Leyte on October 23 through 26, 1944. At the outbreak of war, December 7, 1941, Japan had over 3,500 aircraft compared to fewer than 1,300 Allied aircraft in the war area. The United States lost four large aircraft carriers, the U.S.S. Lexington (CV-2); the U.S.S. Yorktown (CV-10); the U.S.S. Hornet (CV-12), and the U.S.S. Wasp (CV-18) in the same four battles; and

WHEREAS, In the Battle of Leyte Gulf, six of the seven ships in the Japanese Southern Force were sunk by the United States' 7th Fleet ships that had previously included five United States battleships that were sunk or damaged at Pearl Harbor, including: U.S.S. Pennsylvania (BB-38); U.S.S. Tennessee (BB-43); U.S.S. California (BB-44); U.S.S. Maryland (BB-46); and the U.S.S. West Virginia (BB-48); and

WHEREAS, The greatest damage to the United States Navy in the Pacific war was not caused by the Japanese fleet, but by a typhoon off the coast of the Philippines in December 1944; and

WHEREAS, In early 1945, the United States was in the process of recapturing the Philippine Islands from Japan and in a desperate act to prevent it, Japanese military leaders authorized the formation of a Special Attack Force, known as Kamikazes ("Divine Wind") whose mission was to destroy American aircraft carriers. Each member of this special unit volunteered to sacrifice his life by diving a bomb-laden plane into the deck of a United States carrier; and

WHEREAS, By the end of the war, over 1,200 Kamikaze pilots had sunk 34 United States ships, damaged 288 others, and caused over 15,000 casualties; and

WHEREAS, The United States Marine Corps strength when the country entered World War II in December 1941 was 65,000 officers and enlisted men. It hit its peak strength in August 1945, when the total had risen to 485,113, with six divisions and five aircraft wings, and in addition, 23,000 women served in the Corps; and

WHEREAS, The United States Merchant Marines distinguished themselves above the call of duty in numerous perilous situations to service the Armed Forces. Merchant marine veterans were awarded 145 Distinguished Service Medals and 425 Meritorious Service Medals for deeds of heroism throughout World War II; and



WHEREAS, Enemy action sank more than 700 United States flagged merchant ships and claimed the lives of over 6,000 civilian seafarers. Untold thousands of additional seamen were wounded or injured during these attacks, and nearly 600 were made prisoners of war; and

WHEREAS, Final recognition of the merchant marines was granted by the United States Secretary of Defense in 1988, conferring official veterans status upon those merchant mariners who served aboard ocean-going merchant ships in World War II, and whose officers and crews played a key role in transporting the troops and war materials that enabled the United States and its allies to defeat the Axis powers; and

WHEREAS, United States Army glider pilots, numbering only 6,500, made daring no-engine "forced landings" carrying 15 men, or a jeep, or 400 canisters of gasoline, in a canvas-covered pipe frame with 84-foot wings, and distinguished themselves in the invasions of Sicily in July 1943, Burma in March 1944, Normandy in June 1944, Southern France in August 1944, Holland in September 1944, and Bastogne in December and January 1944-45, when 52 glider pilots ferried gasoline for Patton's tanks and complete hospital units to relieve the United States troops surrounded by Nazi forces, and finally crossing the Rhine near Wesel in Operation Varsity when 906 CG-4As glider pilots of the United States Army Air Corps braved heavy small-arms fire to make low altitude landings in plowed fields and in small clearings in the wooded areas. Often called suicide squads, suffering up to 60 percent casualties in Sicily and 25 percent in the Normandy "Overlord" Invasion, America's glider pilots epitomized the spirit of the times in largely ignoring the unknown hazards connected with flying without an engine, landing without lights, and on rough ground in enemy territory; and

WHEREAS, The official estimates for all United States Armed Services during World War II are 1,076,245 total casualties of war from the 16,112,566 men and women in service, of these 291,557 were killed in action, 113,842 died from other unknown causes, with a total of 405,399 deaths, and another 670,846 were wounded; and

WHEREAS, The American Battle Monuments Commission in Washington D.C. administers United States Military cemeteries overseas. There are 14 cemeteries on foreign soil where United States armed forces personnel killed in World War II are buried. The largest is near Manila, the Philippines, which has 17,208 graves and commemorates an additional 36,279 persons missing in action. The smallest is at Rhone, France, which has 861 graves and commemorates 293 missing personnel; and

WHEREAS, Material losses were almost equally staggering. The direct cost of World War II lay in the vicinity of \$1,500 billion. American expenditures were over \$350 billion, the British spent \$300 billion, and Germany spent \$280 billion. The main production



facilities of the great industrial nations had been turned from the purposes of peace to those of destruction; and

WHEREAS, The magnitude of grief brought on by the conflict of war can be seen in other ways that affected millions of people and family members here at home in both large and small communities; and

WHEREAS, So incalculable is the personal loss and grief that only poetry provides an adequate description. Who among those living half a century ago does not remember such tragedies as the death of Swing Band leader Glen Miller, the story of all 11 starting members of the Montana State University's 1940-41 football team killed in action, or the explosion at Port Chicago Naval Magazine near Concord, California in July 1945 that was the single worst World War II-related disaster in the continental United States. In that case ammunition being loaded onto a United States naval vessel exploded with such terrific force it killed 320 sailors from an all-African-American Navy unit and leveled the town; and

WHEREAS, Nowhere is there a more poignant example of personal loss or grief, nor more gallant an example of distinguished service to this country, than the saga of the "Fighting Sullivan Brothers," five brothers who were killed in action on November 12 through 15, 1942 during the naval battle of Guadalcanal when their light cruiser, U.S.S. Juneau (CLAA-111) was torpedoed and sunk by a submarine; and

WHEREAS, Fifty years ago, the leaders of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met at the wartime conference site of Yalta, a port in the Black Sea in the Soviet Union, in February, 1945. President Franklin Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Premier Joseph Stalin conferred on the approaching end of World War II and the outlines for the postwar world, and reached agreement, including the Declaration of Liberated Europe, where all three governments agreed to the reconstruction of a democratic continent; and

WHEREAS, Long after the Yalta Conference, it remains clear that the most significant way of making all Europe more secure is to make it more free, and that our 50-year pledge is to the goal of a restored community of free European nations. To this work we recommit ourselves today; and

WHEREAS, May 7, 1945, is known as V-E Day, "Victory in Europe Day," when the armed forces of Germany surrendered to the Allies; and

WHEREAS, From April 25 through June 26, 1945, representatives from 50 nations hammered out the United Nations Charter in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, On August 6, 1945, a United States B-29 Superfortress flew over the Japanese city of Hiroshima and dropped the first of the war's two atomic bombs; and



WHEREAS, When Japan finally surrendered to the Allies in September 1945, it still had over 2 million combat-ready troops and 9,000 aircraft available to defend its homeland; and

WHEREAS, August 15, 1945, is the day the war with Japan ended, and V-J Day, “Victory over Japan” the actual date of surrender is celebrated on September 2; and

WHEREAS, The American flag that flew aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri during the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Harbor on September 2, 1945, was the same flag that had flown over the United States Capitol in Washington D.C. on December 7, 1941; and

WHEREAS, The first American flag to be flown over Berlin in July 1945 had also flown over the United States Capitol in Washington D.C. the day the United States declared war on Japan, December 8, 1941; and

WHEREAS, The V-J Day formal signing officially ended 1,364 days, five hours, and fourteen minutes of World War II in the Pacific; and

WHEREAS, June 14, 1995, will serve as the 220th birthday anniversary of the United States Army that was formed by the Continental Congress in 1775, and reinforced by volunteer militia. The United States Army is a vital force in the preservation of those ideals as embodied in the United States Constitution, and has often been called upon during the last 220 years to defend America’s freedom; and

WHEREAS, October 17, 1995, will serve as the 220th birthday anniversary of the United States Navy. The United States Navy is a vital force in the projection of power abroad and the preservation of those ideals as embodied in the United States Constitution, and has often been called upon during the last 220 years to defend America’s freedom; and

WHEREAS, November 10, 1995, will serve as the 220th birthday anniversary of the United States Marine Corps. From its inception, the Marine Corps has had an illustrious history which compares with the most famous military organizations in the world; and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate that California recognize the sacrifices of its citizens who distinguished themselves in combat and have been awarded many meritorious decorations for valor; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department of California, was founded on January 15, 1921, and the men and women members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and those many other veterans organizations deserve the respect and admiration of all who enjoy our precious and hard-won freedoms; and

WHEREAS, The Legion of Valor is made up of United States service veterans awarded the Medal of Honor, Army Distinguished Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross; and

WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is our country’s highest military award, given for “uncommon valor” by men and women in the



armed forces and is presented for actions that are above and beyond the call of duty in combat against an armed enemy; and

WHEREAS, The Order of the Purple Heart is our nation's oldest military decoration having been first bestowed by George Washington for military merit on August 7, 1782. It is now awarded to members of the armed forces who are wounded in action with the enemy or granted posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those killed in action or who die of wounds received in action; and

WHEREAS, California has 21 chapters of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and it is estimated there are approximately 75,867 Purple Heart veterans alive today; and

WHEREAS, Our fallen service veterans are to be commended, for they have rendered the greatest patriotic service and we can only hope that our appreciation of freedoms we all enjoy in America, your land, and mine will do justice to their sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, Freedom is not the natural state of man; it is an achievement. It came hard and was purchased by the free shedding of the blood of its champions on the hard fought battlefields of history. Only because our forebearers, forgetful of life and pain, bravely carried the banners of liberty against the minions of tyrants that we can today choose our own leaders and national destiny; and

WHEREAS, Grateful Americans have been saluting this country's military for more than 200 years. And, America's gratitude to its United States Armed Forces and Allies that fought and died during World War II extends beyond our obvious thanks and appreciation for keeping American citizens free. Liberty is never lost to a nation until it is lost in the souls of the men and women who compose that nation; and

WHEREAS, Today, 50 years after the conclusion of World War II, we are the beneficiaries of the courageous past achievements of our forefathers in political liberty, and our United States Armed Forces and merchant mariners in preserving peace and order around the world; and

WHEREAS, In the hands of the people of our state and nation is lodged the supreme power to preserve or to neglect our freedom. Along with power also goes the work and worry of responsibility. This responsibility must be borne by human shoulders whatever the cost in sacrifice and effort. It has been well said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and it might have been added that this price includes continual effort and service; and

WHEREAS, We must have citizens, officials, and popular leaders willing to make the sacrifices of both time and ease, and willing to give up their pleasures and comforts to continually defend our institutions and to aggressively champion in the market place of public opinion our American ideals; and



WHEREAS, There must be a continuous process of public education by public leaders, unselfishly given, to persuade each new generation of citizens to keep America free and strong; and

WHEREAS, If the time comes that American men and women will no longer willingly die to defend the Constitution, it will fall. It is equally true that if the time comes that American men and women will no longer give of their lives, their substance, and their time to defend and serve the Constitution in peace, it will be ignored and overthrown. This neglect of duty has led to the breakdown of government in many countries throughout the course of time; and

WHEREAS, The thing to be afraid of today in our state and nation is that we do not give an effective testimony to our youth of the value of American institutions and what they have cost in the history of our country; and

WHEREAS, Let us each here and now pledge ourselves to pass down to our sons and daughters, the great American birthright of freedom. For if there is anything we get out of being American that urges us in service of our country, it is the inheritance of that freedom we call our American privilege; and

WHEREAS, In the memory of all allied soldiers who fought and sacrificed their lives against the perils of fascism a half a century ago, it is altogether fitting that the people of the State of California should commemorate the 50th anniversary of the allied military operations bringing a successful conclusion to World War II; and

WHEREAS, Fifty years have passed since cessation of hostilities that concluded World War II, and it is appropriate that the people of the State of California acknowledge the significance of the United States armed services and its historic connections with the citizens of California, and in particular their contribution to keeping America free; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That in recognition of the 50th commemorative anniversary of the conclusion of World War II, the Legislature urges all citizens to join in the celebrations honoring those who have served and are serving their country in the United States Armed Forces; and be it further

Resolved, That the citizens of California freely show their patriotic support of this nation's veterans at appropriate public occasions and ceremonies commemorating 1995 as the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II, including the celebrations of Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day, as well as other United States Armed Forces celebrations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit a copy of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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