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SENATE MEMORIAL 24

45TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2001

INTRODUCED BY

Pete Campos

A MEMORIAL

**HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE LATE JAMES A. LEGER FOR HIS
OUTSTANDING COMBAT SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II, HIS
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AS A TEACHER AND
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR, HIS INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY BETTERMENT
AND HIS SERVICE TO THE FARMING AND RANCHING COMMUNITIES OF NEW
MEXICO; ENCOURAGING THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SAN
MIGUEL COUNTY TO CONSIDER RENAMING MULLINS DRIVE IN THE CITY OF
LAS VEGAS IN HIS HONOR.**

**WHEREAS, James A. Leger was born and raised on a cattle
ranch in eastern San Miguel county and he attended a one-room
schoolhouse located on that ranch and graduated from Tucumcari
high school; and**

WHEREAS, during his formative years, the young James

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1 developed and perfected all of the skills associated with
2 living a productive ranch life; and

3 WHEREAS, James later attended New Mexico state university
4 where he studied vocational education and participated in the
5 reserve officers' training corps; and

6 WHEREAS, during his second year at the university, James
7 enlisted in the New Mexico national guard and was assigned to
8 company C of the one hundred fourth anti tank battalion, and as
9 a consequence of his reserve officers' training corps
10 background, James was immediately promoted to the rank of
11 sergeant; and

12 WHEREAS, his unit was later federalized and became part of
13 the United States army and was reorganized as the eight hundred
14 fourth tank destroyer battalion, which was attached to the
15 thirty-fourth division detailed to North Africa for action
16 against the Nazi invaders; and

17 WHEREAS, James fought with his unit through the North
18 African campaign, including the final push to Tunisia; and

19 WHEREAS, after the conclusion of the North African
20 campaign, James' unit was ordered into Italy where it fought up
21 the "boot" and engaged in direct combat against the enemy in
22 such places as Castellonarto, Teri, Priverno and Carpineto and,
23 after breaking the Gustav line, was among the first to enter
24 the "Eternal City"; and

25 WHEREAS, after taking Rome, his unit continued to push

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1 north as United States forces prepared to attack enemy
2 fortifications along the Gothic line and after clearing the
3 Gothic line, the push began to clear the Nazis from the Po
4 valley; and

5 WHEREAS, during one direct encounter with enemy forces,
6 James was one of only three survivors out of a unit of three
7 hundred men and, during a later battle, James was severely
8 wounded by shrapnel at which point he was evacuated from combat
9 and returned to the United States; and

10 WHEREAS, once recovered from his injuries, James returned
11 to New Mexico state university earning a bachelor of science
12 degree in agricultural education; and

13 WHEREAS, James continued his personal education by
14 completing his post-baccalaureate studies and earning a
15 master's degree in school administration from New Mexico
16 highlands university; and

17 WHEREAS, James began his career in education by teaching
18 high school vocational agriculture in Mora and then accepted a
19 teaching position moving him to the city of Las Vegas, where he
20 later became a school administrator and where he remained until
21 his retirement; and

22 WHEREAS, after retiring from his career in public
23 education, James served the farmers and ranchers of New Mexico
24 as the state director of the agriculture and conservation
25 services of the United States department of agriculture; and

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1 WHEREAS, he served the communities of Mora and Las Vegas
2 as a member of a number of fraternal and veteran organizations,
3 including the American legion, disabled American veterans,
4 veterans of foreign wars, the lions club and the elks club and
5 he made a personal contribution to law and order as a member
6 and commander of the New Mexico mounted patrol troop three; and

7 WHEREAS, James resided on Mullins drive in the city of Las
8 Vegas for thirty years and he was a dedicated and relentless
9 advocate for the improvement of that thoroughfare; and

10 WHEREAS, in the last years of his life, James lobbied his
11 local legislative delegation to provide the funding for the
12 pavement of Mullins drive, and although his efforts were
13 successful, the work was not completed until after his passing;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
15 OF NEW MEXICO that the memory of Mr. James A. Leger be honored
16 for his outstanding contribution to his country and to the
17 state of New Mexico as a selfless, dedicated and courageous
18 fighter during World War II; his contributions to children as a
19 long-time educator and school administrator; his service to
20 ranchers and farmers statewide through his work with the United
21 States department of agriculture; and his tireless involvement
22 and work toward the betterment of his community; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board of county
24 commissioners of San Miguel county be encouraged to consider
25 honoring the memory of Mr. James A. Leger by renaming Mullins

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1 drive in the city of Las Vegas after Mr. Leger; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
3 transmitted to the board of county commissioners of San Miguel
4 county and to the family of the late Mr. James A. Leger.

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