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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 508

Offered January 18, 2025

*Commemorating the life and legacy of Private Oscar Cleveland Hicks, USA.*Patron—Earley

WHEREAS, Oscar Cleveland Hicks was born in Henrico County on May 8, 1925, to Linwood F. and Nina E. Hicks; he was raised in Hanover County and Louisa County, where he attended the Hopeful School, and as a teenager, he worked on the family farm and as a delivery driver and mechanic for Virginia Dairy in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, along with his three older brothers, Marshall, Allan, and Marion, Oscar Hicks served the nation during World War II, enlisting in the United States Army in 1943, immediately after his 18th birthday; and

WHEREAS, prior to his deployment, Oscar Hicks was engaged to his sweetheart, Margaret L. Kersey of Bumpass; and

WHEREAS, after the passing of Oscar Hicks' parents and siblings, the next generation of his family knew virtually nothing about his life and military service, except that he was "killed in the war"; and

WHEREAS, years of ancestral research by Oscar Hicks' family and the extraordinarily good fortune of befriending Margaret Kersey Tiller in 2016 revealed much of Oscar Hicks' brief but meaningful life; Margaret Kersey Tiller graciously shared her remembrances of Oscar Hicks, as well as pictures and several cards and letters she had received from him during his military service; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Hicks was initially assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division, 232nd Regiment, Company G, and was later transferred to the 79th Infantry Division, 314th Regiment, Company A; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Hicks crossed the Atlantic Ocean aboard the USS *Cristobal*, landing in Liverpool, England, on April 17, 1944, as part of the final preparations for the D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Hicks came ashore at Utah Beach on June 14, 1944, with the 79th Infantry Division and fought gallantly during the Battle of Cherbourg, including house-to-house fighting, and eventually helped secure the port city of Cherbourg on June 26, 1944; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Hicks received the first of his two Purple Hearts when he was wounded on July 27, 1944, by a German land mine south of Cherbourg near the French village of La Banserie; after being hospitalized for his injuries, he returned to combat duty; and

WHEREAS, after Cherbourg, Oscar Hicks fought his way across France with the 79th Infantry Division, liberating numerous French towns, including Charmes, Fougères, Gerbéviller, Haguenau, Haudonville, Kaltenhouse, La Haye-du-Puits, Laval, Le Mans, Marainviller, and many others; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Hicks and his unit helped to close exit routes from the Falaise pocket, where the Allies had encircled between 80,000 and 100,000 Germans fleeing the Normandy coast; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Hicks fought in the bitterly cold winter of 1944 during the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign in Eastern France, where he was twice reported as missing in action; he wrote to his parents that he had spent Christmas Day in a foxhole with nothing but a frozen canteen of water; and

WHEREAS, after several weeks of combat in the Alsace region, 19-year-old Oscar Hicks was killed in action on January 23, 1945, in Kaltenhouse, France, near the German border, while seeking cover from aerial bombs dropped by Hitler's new jet-propelled airplane; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Hicks was buried in an American cemetery in Epinal, France, in the shadow of the Vosges Mountains; in 1948, his parents had his remains repatriated to Virginia for burial in a small family cemetery on a pastoral setting in rural Hanover County now known as Lloyd Family Farms; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the life and legacy of Private Oscar C. Hicks, USA, a courageous member of the United States Army and World War II liberator, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of his death; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Private Oscar C. Hicks, USA, as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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