

**First Regular Session
Seventy-first General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

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HJR17-1031

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 17-1031

101 **CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF THE CIMARRON AVENUE BRIDGE**
102 **SPANNING INTERSTATE 25 IN COLORADO SPRINGS AS THE**
103 **"LIEUTENANT JAMES "JIM" DOWNING BRIDGE".**

1 WHEREAS, James "Jim" Downing was born in Oak Grove,
2 Missouri, on August 22, 1913; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1932, at the age of 19, Lieutenant Downing
4 enlisted in the United States Navy, serving as Gunner's Mate 1st Class
5 and postmaster aboard the U.S.S. *West Virginia* in Long Beach,
6 California; and

7 WHEREAS, During his time in California, Lieutenant Downing
8 met his wife, Morena, and the two were married just one month after the
9 couple was stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 WHEREAS, On the morning of December 7, 1941, while hosting
2 breakfast for several servicemen at their home on base, Lieutenant
3 Downing, his wife, and his guests heard the sound of explosions in the
4 distance, and then an anti-aircraft shell landed right outside their home,
5 exploding a large crater 25 feet across; and

6 WHEREAS, Realizing they were under attack, Lieutenant
7 Downing and his fellow servicemen immediately raced to their ships,
8 among which Lieutenant Downing's ship, the U.S.S. *West Virginia*, had
9 been hit in quick succession by nine Japanese torpedoes, and was in
10 flames and sinking by the time he arrived; and

11 WHEREAS, Running into danger, Lieutenant Downing slid down
12 the gun barrel of another ship, the U.S.S. *Tennessee*, to board the U.S.S.
13 *West Virginia*, where he fought to keep the fires from spreading to live
14 ammunition lockers and save his fellow servicemen; and

15 WHEREAS, Upon seeing the dead and wounded, Lieutenant
16 Downing quickly began memorizing the names of his fellow servicemen,
17 and later wrote personal letters to their families to let them know that he
18 was with them in their final moments; and

19 WHEREAS, On that "Day of Infamy", 2,403 people died and
20 another 1,143 were wounded, marking the attack on Pearl Harbor as one
21 of the deadliest foreign attacks on United States soil in modern history;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Lieutenant
24 Downing remained in the Navy for another 16 years, eventually serving
25 as the commanding officer of the U.S.S. *Patapsco* during the Korean War
26 from 1952 through 1955 before his retirement in 1956; and

27 WHEREAS, Following his retirement, Lieutenant Downing and
28 his wife, Morena, settled in Colorado with their seven children and
29 dedicated their lives to helping others deepen their Christian faith through
30 the Navigators ministry; and

31 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Downing has provided invaluable
32 historical information through the recounting of his experience at Pearl
33 Harbor, sharing his stories through public speaking, helping to develop
34 interactive educational materials, and publishing a book of his personal

1 account of the attack; and

2 WHEREAS, Today, at 103 years old, Lieutenant Downing resides
3 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and is the 2nd oldest known living
4 survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor; and

5 WHEREAS, It is fitting that we honor the life and valor of a man
6 devoted to his family, his country, and his God, and who bore witness to
7 one of the most important events in the history of the United States; now,
8 therefore,

9 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-first*
10 *General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:*

11 (1) That the Cimarron Avenue bridge spanning Interstate 25 in
12 Colorado Springs be designated as the "Lieutenant James "Jim" Downing
13 Bridge";

14 (2) That the Colorado Department of Transportation may accept
15 and expend gifts, grants, and donations for the purposes of the initial
16 placement of signs visible from Interstate 25 to mark the bridge as the
17 "Lieutenant James "Jim" Downing Bridge"; and

18 (3) That the Colorado Department of Transportation may explore
19 a cooperative agreement with the Board of County Commissioners for El
20 Paso County for the maintenance of the markings for the "Lieutenant
21 James "Jim" Downing Bridge".

22 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
23 to James "Jim" Downing; Mayor of Colorado Springs, John Suthers; the
24 City Council of Colorado Springs; the Board of County Commissioners
25 of El Paso County; the Executive Director of the Colorado Department
26 of Transportation, Shailen P. Bhatt; and the Colorado Transportation
27 Commission.