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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, It is necessary to honor and remember the military heroes of our State and country who have served with great dedication to preserving our liberties and freedoms; and

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WHEREAS, Russell E. Dunham was born in 1920 in East Carondelet and raised on a small farm near Fosterburg; when he was 20 years old he enlisted in the United States Army; and

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WHEREAS, Russell Dunham achieved the rank of Technical Sergeant and platoon leader with the 30th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division, and saw combat in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and France; and

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WHEREAS, On January 8th, 1945, Technical Sergeant Dunham's unit was pinned down between artillery fire and enemy machine gun nests at the base of snow-covered Hill 616 in Alsace-Lorraine near Kaisersberg, France; Technical Sergeant Dunham made the decision to advance single-handedly, using a white mattress as camouflage and cover; Technical Sergeant Dunham then preceded to neutralize all three machine gun emplacements using only his carbine and hand grenades, while being wounded by enemy fire in the process; and

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WHEREAS, Technical Sergeant Dunham was awarded the Medal of

1 Honor 1945 for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk  
2 of life above and beyond the call of duty"; General Alexander  
3 Patch said, while he placed the award around Dunham's neck,  
4 that his actions had single-handedly saved the lives of 120  
5 pinned-down US soldiers; and

6 WHEREAS, In addition to the Medal of Honor, Technical  
7 Sergeant Dunham was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star,  
8 Purple Heart, and the Croix de Guerre for Heroism from the  
9 President of France for his valiant service during the Second  
10 World War; and

11 WHEREAS, After his service, Technical Sergeant Dunham  
12 returned to west central Illinois, where he continued to serve  
13 his fellow soldiers by working as a benefits counselor with the  
14 Veterans Administration in St. Louis for 32 years; he also  
15 honored his fellow infantrymen by getting a monument erected at  
16 Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery to honor those who served  
17 with the 3rd Infantry Division; and

18 WHEREAS, He was an avid hunter and proud member of the  
19 Alton Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1308; and

20 WHEREAS, After his marriage to Mary Dunham ended, Technical  
21 Sergeant Dunham lived out the remainder of his life in Jersey  
22 County with his second wife, Wilda Long-Bazzell Dunham; and

1           WHEREAS, He had a daughter, Mary Neal, with his first wife;  
2           and two stepchildren, Annette Wilson and David Bazzell; in  
3           addition, Technical Sergeant Dunham had 8 brothers, 5 sisters,  
4           and multiple grandchildren; and

5           WHEREAS, Technical Sergeant Dunham passed away in 2009 in  
6           Godfrey, at the age of 89; and

7           WHEREAS, The members of this Body are humbled and honored  
8           by Technical Sergeant Russell Dunham's distinguished life and  
9           valiant military service; and

10          WHEREAS, When completed, there shall be a section of  
11          Illinois State Highway 255 running between Seminary Road at  
12          Milepost 16 to U.S. Route 67 at Milepost 21; therefore, be it

13          RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
14          NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
15          SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that, when completed, the stretch of  
16          Illinois State Highway 255 between Mileposts 16 and 21 be  
17          designated the "Russell E. Dunham Memorial Highway"; and be it  
18          further

19          RESOLVED, That, upon completion of the highway, the  
20          Illinois Department of Transportation is requested to erect at

1 suitable locations, consistent with State and federal  
2 regulations, appropriate plaques or signs giving notice of the  
3 name; and be it further

4       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
5 presented to the Dunham family, the Village of Godfrey, the  
6 county boards of both Jersey and Madison Counties, and the  
7 Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation.