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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen is the popular name of a group
3 of African-American pilots who fought in World War II under the
4 332nd Fighter Group, 477th Bombardment Group of the U.S. Army
5 Air Corps; the Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated, determined young
6 men who enlisted to become America's first black military
7 airmen; and

8 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen were the first
9 African-American military aviators in the United States Armed
10 Forces; during World War II, African-Americans in many U.S.
11 states were still subject to racist Jim Crow laws; the American
12 military was no exception, as it too was racially segregated,
13 along with much of the federal government; the Tuskegee Airmen
14 were subject to racial discrimination, both within and outside
15 the Army; despite these adversities, they trained and flew with
16 distinction; each of the men possessed a strong personal desire
17 to serve the United States to the best of his ability; and

18 WHEREAS, By the spring of 1944, the all-black 332nd Fighter
19 Group had been sent overseas with the 100th, 301st, and 302nd
20 Fighter Squadrons; these squadrons were moved to mainland
21 Italy, where the 99th Fighter Squadron, assigned to the group
22 on May 1, 1944, joined them on June 6, at Rarnitelli Airfield,
23 near Termoli, on the Adriatic coast; from Rarnitelli, the 332nd

1 Fighter Group escorted the Fifteenth Air Force to heavy
2 strategic bombing raids into Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary,
3 Poland, and Germany; flying escort for heavy bombers, the 332nd
4 earned an impressive combat record; the Allies called these
5 airmen "Red Tails" or "Red-Tail Angels" because of the
6 distinctive crimson paint predominately applied on the tail
7 section of the unit's aircraft; these assignments marked the
8 first aerial combat missions ever carried out by
9 African-American pilots; and

10 WHEREAS, Of the 996 total pilots trained in Tuskegee from
11 1941 to 1946, approximately 445 were deployed overseas and 150
12 airmen lost their lives in accidents or combat; the blood cost
13 included 66 pilots killed in action or accidents and 32 taken
14 into captivity as prisoners of war; the Tuskegee Airmen were
15 credited by higher commands with the following
16 accomplishments:

17 15,533 combat sorties and 1,578 missions;

18 112 German aircraft destroyed in the air and another
19 150 on the ground;

20 950 railcars, trucks, and other motor vehicles
21 destroyed;

22 One destroyer sunk by P-47 machine gun fire;

23 A nearly perfect record of not losing U.S. bombers; and

24 WHEREAS, Awards and decorations awarded to the Tuskegee

1 Airmen for valor and performance included:

2 3 Distinguished Unit Citations (99th Pursuit Squadron:
3 May 30-June 11, 1943 for the capture of Pantelleria, Italy;
4 99th Fighter Squadron: May 12-14, 1944 for successful air
5 strikes against Monte Cassino, Italy; and 332nd Fighter
6 Group: March 24, 1945 for the longest bomber escort mission
7 of World War II);

8 At least one Silver Star;

9 An estimated 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses;

10 14 Bronze Stars;

11 744 Air Medals;

12 8 Purple Hearts; and

13 WHEREAS, After the end of World War II, black airmen
14 returned to the United States and once again faced racism and
15 hatred, despite their outstanding service record; and

16 WHEREAS, These brave men deserve to be recognized by the
17 State of Illinois for their service to their country during
18 wartime; and

19 WHEREAS, The City of Rockford will honor the
20 accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen and the Montford Point
21 Marines during a celebration on February 24-26, 2012; the
22 celebration will include a VIP screening of the film "Red
23 Tails" on February 24, a presentation about the Tuskegee Airmen

1 on February 25, and presentation about the Montford Point
2 Marines on February 26; therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
5 we honor the Tuskegee Airman for their bravery and patriotism
6 and thank them for the services they have rendered to our
7 nation; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
9 presented to the City of Rockford and the Chicago "DODO"
10 Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Incorporated.