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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, It is highly fitting that the Illinois General Assembly pays honor and respect to the truly great individuals who served our country and in doing so have gone above and beyond the call of duty to take part in truly heroic tasks; and

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WHEREAS, Christian Frank Schilt was born March 19, 1895 in Richland County; he enlisted in the Marine Corps on June 23, 1917, and, as an enlisted man, he served at Ponta Delgada, in the Azores, with the 1st Marine Aeronautical Company, a seaplane squadron assigned to anti-submarine patrol during World War I; and

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WHEREAS, Returning to the United States as a corporal, Christian Schilt entered flight training and was commissioned a second lieutenant on June 10, 1919; in October of that year, he began his first tour of expeditionary duty in Santo Domingo that was followed with an assignment at Port-au-Prince, Haiti the following August; in March of 1921, he was assigned to make an aerial survey and mosaic map of the coast line of the Dominican Republic; in November of 1926, he won second place in the Schneider International Seaplane Race at Norfolk flying a special Curtiss racer at a speed of 231.3 mph (372.2 km/h) over 7 laps of a triangular 50 km course; and

1 WHEREAS, In November of 1927, now 1st Lieutenant Schilt was
2 ordered to Managua, Nicaragua, where he joined Observation
3 Squadron 7-M; the political climate in Nicaragua had rapidly
4 changed during the summer of 1927 when Augusto C. Sandino and
5 his followers, the Sandinistas, revolted against Nicaragua's
6 Chamorro government; and

7 WHEREAS, The Sandinistas established their base on the
8 Honduran border of northern Nicaragua; in December of 1927,
9 Sandino with 1000 men ambushed an American Marine detachment of
10 175 men, killing 8 and wounding 30; the marines fell back to
11 Quilali where the Sandinistas lay siege to the village; with
12 little hope of a breakout, plans were made for an air rescue;
13 the marines in Quilali built a make-shift airstrip by burning
14 and leveling part of the town to expand Quilali's main street
15 from 100 to 500 feet; Observation Squadron 7 modified an O-2U-1
16 Vought Corsair biplane with landing gear from a DeHavilland
17 DH-4 for the expected hard landings; and

18 WHEREAS, As if oblivious to the cramped space he was
19 entering, between January 6 and 8, 1928, Lt. Schilt took his
20 Corsair on 10 trips into the embattled village, hauling in
21 1,400 pounds of medical supplies and evacuating 18 of the
22 wounded Marines; since his O2U had no brakes, the marines on
23 the ground stopped the biplane by grabbing the wings when it
24 touched down; hostile fire on landings and take-offs, plus

1 low-hanging clouds, mountains, and tricky air currents, added
2 to the difficulty of the flights; he was awarded the Medal of
3 Honor for his flying skill combined with personal courage
4 during the rescue of the Quilali Marines; and

5 WHEREAS, Christian Schilt continued his military career
6 serving in both World War II and Korea; during World War II, he
7 participated in the Guadalcanal campaign, the consolidation of
8 Southern Solomons, and the air defense of Peleliu and Okinawa
9 earning the Legion of Merit with Combat "V", the Distinguished
10 Flying Cross, the Bronze Star with Combat "V" and 4 Air Medals;
11 in Korea, he commanded the 1st U.S. Marine Corps Aircraft Wing
12 from July of 1951 to April of 1952 earning the U.S. Air Force
13 Distinguished Service Medal and his fifth Air Medal; he retired
14 from the Marine Corps on April 1, 1957 when he was promoted to
15 full general; and

16 WHEREAS, General Schilt passed away on January 8, 1987 at
17 age 91, in Norfolk, Virginia, and was buried with honors in
18 Arlington National Cemetery; and

19 WHEREAS, On October 21, 2011, a new headquarters building
20 at the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina
21 was named in honor of General Schilt as a constant reminder of
22 the example he set; and

1 WHEREAS, It is highly fitting that the State of Illinois
2 honor the memory and example set by Marine Aviator General
3 Christian F. Schilt; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
5 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
6 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we designate the section of U.S.
7 Highway 50 one mile east of Illinois Route 130 to one mile west
8 of Illinois Route 130 at Olney as the "Marine Aviator General
9 Christian F. Schilt Memorial Highway"; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That upon completion of any unfinished sections
11 of highway, the Illinois Department of Transportation is
12 requested to erect at suitable locations, consistent with State
13 and federal regulations, appropriate plaques or signs giving
14 notice of the name; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
16 presented the family of General Christian F. Schilt, the
17 Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the
18 Mayor of Olney.