

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 349

By Durham

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Colonel Alfred Asch for his meritorious service to the citizens of this State and Nation.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly pause in their deliberations to recognize those intrepid individuals who, throughout their years of industry and service, have dedicated themselves to performing their duties with acumen, alacrity, dedication, and bravery in the face of all dangers; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Alfred "Al" Asch is one such individual, a member of this country's Greatest Generation, a veteran of World War II, and a longtime aviator; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Asch was born on April 15, 1920, and raised on a small farm in Beaverton, Michigan, and, from a young age, he cultivated a deep and abiding love of flying; and

WHEREAS, in September of 1941, Colonel Asch joined the United States Army Air Corps and received training to become a combat bomber pilot. A member of the flying school graduating class of 42D, he was first assigned to the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group; and

WHEREAS, by the end of 1942, Colonel Asch was flying combat missions in the newly-developed B-24 Liberator with the Eighth Air Force in England. Soon thereafter, he and the rest of the 93<sup>rd</sup> played a vital role in the defeat of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel in North Africa; and

WHEREAS, after valorous service in twenty-eight combat missions, Colonel Asch was returned stateside, reassigned as the Squadron Operations Officer, and given the important task of training the newly-formed 455<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group of the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force; and

WHEREAS, he returned to Italy and the European Theater with the 455<sup>th</sup> and, with his new pilots, flew an incredible forty-two combat missions over Nazi Germany; and

WHEREAS, after the war's end, Colonel Asch accepted a regular officer appointment in the Army Air Corps, which became the United States Air Force in 1947. During this time of service to his country, he also earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Central Michigan University and a master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, after earning his Command Pilot Wings, Colonel Asch became directly involved in the introduction of automation to the Air Force in the early 1950s and served a vital role as a member of the project team which developed COBOL, the breakthrough computer language; and

WHEREAS, after retiring as a full Colonel in 1968, Colonel Asch became a Systems Engineer for the Mitre Corporation, in which position he spent sixteen years developing automation for the air traffic control system for the FAA, a development which has had incredible impact on the safety of air travel; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Colonel Al Asch earned a number of decorations during his military service, including the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal with seven Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Commendation Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Purple Heart, a Unit Citation with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with six Campaign Stars, the WWII Victory Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal (Korea), and the Air Force Longevity Service Award Medal; and

WHEREAS, following his retirement from military and civilian service, Colonel Asch toiled tirelessly to preserve the legacy of the World War II air war and the important role played by United States air crews. He served as the president of the 455<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association and as vice president of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, co-authored and published the history of the 455<sup>th</sup>, authored the B-24 Memorial Presentation at the United States Air Force Academy, provided support for the construction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich,

England, and in the erection of a model B-24 on the parade grounds of the Air Force Academy, raised funds for the construction of the Air Force Memorial in Washington, D.C., and developed the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group historical display for the Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Asch's experiences as a member of the vanguard of modern military air warfare, coupled with the path of his life following World War II, will be long remembered. In an effort to preserve the history of the 455<sup>th</sup>, he donated his extensive 455<sup>th</sup> research documents to the library of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and is currently writing his memoir. *The Whole Nine Yards* is scheduled for publication in 2013; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Asch was proudest of the love and support he shared with his wife of sixty-six years, Naomi, before her passing in 2008. Mrs. Asch was buried with honors in Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Al Asch stands as a beacon of inspiration to all who are lucky enough to know him, and his long and storied military history and his many contributions to the world of flying comprise a legacy which will be remembered for a long, long time, and it is wholly fitting that this body formally recognize him; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Colonel Alfred Asch for his many varied contributions to society, applaud his brave and unflinching service in combat during World War II, and extend our best wishes for his every future happiness

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.