

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

**SESSION 2007
RATIFIED BILL**

**RESOLUTION 2008-23
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2798**

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE CREW OF THE B-24J LIBERATOR WHO WAS LOST DURING WORLD WAR II, AND EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO CLAYTON KUHLES FOR HIS DISCOVERY OF THE PLANE, NICKNAMED "HOT AS HELL," IN 2006.

Whereas, in April of 1942, Allied Forces began flying missions from India over the Himalayan Mountains to supply Chinese forces fighting the Japanese; and

Whereas, these resupply missions over "The Hump" were among the most dangerous of World War II resulting in the loss of hundreds of aircraft and crew of which more than 500 aircraft and 1,200 crew members still remain missing today; and

Whereas, on January 25, 1944, the crew of the B-24J Liberator, nicknamed "Hot as Hell," was lost on a return flight from Kunming, China, to Chabua, India; and

Whereas, on November 20, 1944, the eight crew members were declared dead, including Pilot, 1st Lt. William A. Swanson; Co-Pilot, Flight Officer Sheldon L. Chambers; Navigator, 1st Lt. Irwin Zaetz; Bombardier, 1st Lt. Robert E. Oxford; Engineer, Staff Sgt. Charles D. Ginn; Radio Op., Staff Sgt. Harry B. Queen; Gunner, Sgt. James A. Hinson; and Gunner, Sgt. Alfred H. Gerrans; and

Whereas, Sergeant James A. Hinson was a native of Greensboro, North Carolina and Sergeant Alfred H. Gerrans was a native of Kinston, North Carolina; and

Whereas, Flight Officer Sheldon Chambers was the uncle of Shirley Black of Mocksville, North Carolina, and 1st Lt. Irwin Zaetz was the uncle of Gary Zaetz of Cary, North Carolina, who has been instrumental in locating the surviving family members of the crew; and

Whereas, on December 7, 2006, Clayton Kuhles of Prescott, Arizona, discovered the crash site and wreckage of "Hot as Hell" in a remote area of India; and

Whereas, Clayton Kuhles has dedicated his personal time and resources to locate American and Allied aircraft lost in the India-Burma-China theater of war; and

Whereas, Clayton Kuhles has since assisted surviving family members of the crew to successfully petition for the recovery of the crew's remains by the United States Air Force in cooperation with the government of India; and

Whereas, this mission to be conducted in 2008 will, after 64 years, secure the remains of eight brave and honored Americans for interment in their native soil; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

SECTION 1. The General Assembly wishes to honor the memory of the crew of the B-24 Liberator, "Hot as Hell," who gave the full measure of their lives while rendering service to our country during World War II, and pays tribute to all members of the Armed Forces still missing in action.

SECTION 2. The General Assembly wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the work of Clayton Kuhles whose efforts and dedication to the memory of American service members lost in the India-Burma-China theater of war led to the discovery of these and other missing airmen.

SECTION 3. The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Kuhles and to the surviving families of the crew members of the "Hot as Hell."

SECTION 4. This resolution is effective upon ratification. In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 3rd day of July, 2008.

Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

Joe Hackney
Speaker of the House of Representatives