

2019 -- H 5928

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF 1ST LIEUTENANT JOHN D. CROUCHLEY, JR., WHILE IN HEROIC SERVICE ON BEHALF OF OUR NATION IN WORLD WAR II

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, Vella-Wilkinson, Price, Casey, and Solomon

Date Introduced: March 28, 2019

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, First Lieutenant John D. “Dud” Crouchley, Jr., of the United States Army  
2 Air Force, was born in Providence, on September 4, 1917, the oldest of five brothers, all of whom  
3 served our nation in World War II. He graduated from Hope High School and Rhode Island  
4 College in 1939, where he learned to fly and obtained his civilian pilots license. He enlisted in the  
5 United States Army shortly after Pearl Harbor, and was married to Jean Barber on July 12, 1943.  
6 In 1944, while Lieutenant Crouchley was serving our nation in combat, his wife had their child, a  
7 son named John Dudley Crouchley III; and

8           WHEREAS, Lieutenant Crouchley, was the pilot of a B-24 bomber plane serving in the  
9 485th Bombardment Group of the 15th Air Force. On June 28, 1944, he and his crew took off  
10 with their bomb group on an extremely dangerous mission to bomb the German Titan Oil  
11 Refineries in Bucharest, Romania. The attack formation faced heavy resistance and had to fight  
12 off 50 enemy fighter planes and thick artillery flak. Despite facing these severe dangers, the  
13 bomber formation hit their target; and

14           WHEREAS, Unfortunately, Lieutenant Crouchley’s plane was hit hard by enemy  
15 fighters, resulting in two of the plane’s engines being severely damaged by fires. He immediately  
16 summoned all of his extraordinary piloting skill, and a whole lot of courage, and took the plane  
17 into a 30-40 degree dive to try to put out the fires, which was successful. However, the plane kept  
18 losing altitude and was still under enemy fighter attack. Lieutenant Crouchley turned his severely  
19 damaged plane away from the enemy fighters and his bomber formation and was able to keep the

1 plane in the air for another hour, while the gunners in his crew kept the enemy fighter planes at  
2 bay; and

3 WHEREAS, Tragically, the crippled plane began to lose altitude and Lieutenant  
4 Crouchley knew time was up and he had to get his crew safely out of the plane. Using all of his  
5 strength and skill, he held the plane steady to allow his crew to bail out safely. Nine members of  
6 the crew survived, ending up in a POW camp, but Lieutenant Crouchley, who bailed out last,  
7 sadly perished. He had given his life in order to save his crew; and

8 WHEREAS, The plane crashed into a mountain in Romania, but over the years, there was  
9 confusion and unanswered questions regarding Lieutenant Crouchley's remains. Finally, Dan  
10 Crouchley, the nephew of Lieutenant Crouchley, began looking into his family's history. He  
11 tracked down some of the crew members and their descendants along with historian Jerry  
12 Whiting and Bulgarian Colonel Stanimir Stanev. Thanks to this group's persistence, a United  
13 States Army Military Recovery Team investigated and excavated the crash site in 2017. After  
14 many months of difficult work and numerous DNA tests, the Army team confirmed Lieutenant  
15 Crouchley's remains and also discovered his wedding band. After 75 years, an American hero  
16 was finally coming home to his family and a grateful nation; now, therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
18 Providence Plantations hereby expresses its deepest condolences on the passing of Lieutenant  
19 John D. Crouchley, Jr., and posthumously thanks him for his heroic service to our nation during  
20 World War II; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
22 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Autumn Williams, John D. Crouchley IV, and  
23 Dan Crouchley.

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