

By: Baxter

H.R. No. 224

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, A memorial marker is being dedicated on May 31,  
2 2004, at the Texas State Cemetery in honor of Colonel Thomas  
3 Jonathan Jackson Christian, Jr., of the United States Army Air  
4 Force, who gave up his life in the service of his country on August  
5 12, 1944; and

6           WHEREAS, Born in San Francisco on November 19, 1915, to  
7 Brigadier General Thomas Jonathan Jackson Christian, Sr., and  
8 Bertha Marguerite Cook, Col. Christian was the great-grandson of  
9 Confederate General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson and a  
10 third-generation graduate of the United States Military Academy at  
11 West Point in 1939; and

12           WHEREAS, After enlisting in the Army Air Corps, Col.  
13 Christian received his training as a pilot in Texas at the Air Corps  
14 Primary Flying School at Love Field in Dallas and the Air Corps  
15 Training Center at Randolph Field in San Antonio; he also gave  
16 flying lessons at the Air Corps Advanced Flying School at Kelly  
17 Field in San Antonio; and

18           WHEREAS, Col. Christian was stationed at Clark Field in the  
19 Philippines when Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor in December  
20 1941; this courageous soldier transferred to the 1st Air Group at  
21 Guadalcanal, where he flew more than 60 hours in combat missions; on  
22 one of those missions, he was shot down and declared missing in  
23 action, but later returned to his unit after surviving in the  
24 jungles of the South Pacific; for his extraordinary heroism in

1 combat, Col. Christian was awarded the Silver Star; and

2 WHEREAS, On January 2, 1943, after returning to Texas, he  
3 married Marjorie Lou Ashcroft, whom he had met while in Dallas, but  
4 was soon transferred to England where he commanded the 361st  
5 Fighting Group, which he had formed and trained; he flew more than  
6 70 combat missions throughout Europe, was awarded the Distinguished  
7 Service Cross, the Air Medal, and the Purple Heart, and, in March  
8 1944, was promoted to the rank of colonel; and

9 WHEREAS, Two months prior, Col. Christian had become a father  
10 when his daughter, Lou Ellen, was born in Dallas, Texas, in January  
11 1944; although he never met her, Col. Christian named each of his  
12 fighter planes in honor of his beloved infant girl; on his last  
13 bombing mission, he was flying the "Lou IV" over Arras, France, when  
14 he was killed in action; Col. Christian's body was never recovered,  
15 but he has been honored with a cenotaph in the Texas State Cemetery;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, It is most fitting that the exemplary patriotism and  
18 valor demonstrated by this World War II hero be recognized on  
19 Memorial Day, as the citizens of our state and nation gather  
20 together to pay tribute to the brave men and women who have nobly  
21 sacrificed their lives in the service of our country; now,  
22 therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 78th Texas  
24 Legislature, 4th Called Session, hereby honor the life and memory  
25 of Colonel Thomas Jonathan Jackson Christian, Jr.; and, be it  
26 further

27 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be

1 prepared for his daughter, Lou Ellen Wilson Loving of Austin, and  
2 that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it  
3 do so in the memory of Colonel Thomas Jonathan Jackson Christian,  
4 Jr.