

By: Smithee

H.C.R. No. 164

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, During the epic events of World War II, a
2 15-year-old French citizen named Jean Hilfiger distinguished
3 himself by helping United States troops to effect a crucial
4 crossing of the Moselle River as they battled against the armed
5 forces of Nazi Germany; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Hilfiger grew up in a patriotic French family;
7 his father fought with the French army during the war, and his
8 mother helped form a *maquis*, a group of resistance fighters, to
9 battle against the German occupation that began in 1940; and

10 WHEREAS, When American forces advanced into eastern France in
11 the fall of 1944, soldiers from the U.S. 36th Infantry Division
12 called at Mr. Hilfiger's house and asked for a guide to take them to
13 a vantage point above the Moselle to observe enemy positions along
14 the opposite bank; though only a teenager, Jean Hilfiger
15 volunteered for the job and successfully carried it out; afterward,
16 American officers requested his assistance in finding a suitable
17 place for their forces to ford the river; again, he agreed to help
18 and was outfitted with a uniform and a rifle for the dangerous work
19 ahead; and

20 WHEREAS, Under cover of darkness, this brave young man guided
21 a group of 10 soldiers through the farmlands near the river, risking
22 attack from the Germans as they journeyed to the crossing point Mr.
23 Hilfiger had selected; before dawn the next morning, he led the
24 advance party across the river, assisting them in their efforts to

1 establish a pontoon bridge to carry out their regiment's offensive;
2 as daylight spread across the landscape, the group came under enemy
3 machine gun fire and shelling, and he helped a badly wounded
4 American to get back across the Moselle; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Hilfiger's crossing at Noirgeux was well chosen,
6 and the U.S. forces were able to quickly establish a bridgehead to
7 begin moving their men and equipment across the river; their
8 advance helped bring about the capture of the city of Remiremont
9 several days later, which was another step on the path to the
10 ultimate Allied victory in Europe; and

11 WHEREAS, Always appreciative of the sacrifices that
12 Americans made to help his country, Mr. Hilfiger is active in a
13 "Friends of the 36th U.S. Infantry Division" organization that each
14 year commemorates the river crossing and helps focus attention on
15 the important events that transpired during the war; and

16 WHEREAS, Jean Hilfiger had not yet reached adulthood when he
17 was called into action to help liberate his homeland, yet he put his
18 life on the line to achieve that goal without hesitation by
19 assisting American soldiers, and his actions continue to resonate
20 more than six decades later; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas
22 hereby honor Jean Hilfiger on his courageous work in aiding U.S.
23 military forces during World War II and extend to him sincere
24 appreciation for his remarkable heroism; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
26 prepared for Mr. Hilfiger as an expression of high regard by the
27 Texas House of Representatives and Senate.