

By: Stephenson

H.C.R. No. 74

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, During World War II, U.S. Navy Seaman First Class  
2 Johnnie David Hutchins of Eagle Lake performed an extraordinary act  
3 of heroism that cost him his life and earned him the Medal of Honor;  
4 and

5           WHEREAS, Born in Weimar on August 4, 1922, to Johnnie Marion  
6 and Callie Drue Hutchins, Johnnie David Hutchins worked with his  
7 family as a sharecropper in the fields near Lissie while growing up;  
8 he played on the Eagle Lake High School football team, and after  
9 graduation, he found employment at the Parker Brothers shipyard in  
10 Houston; and

11           WHEREAS, Answering his nation's call to duty, Mr. Hutchins  
12 enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve in November 1942, and the  
13 following year he became the helmsman of the USS *LST-473*, a landing  
14 craft that was part of an amphibious force under the command of  
15 General Douglas MacArthur off the coast of New Guinea; and

16           WHEREAS, On September 4, 1943, the *LST-473* was one of six  
17 landing craft approaching a Japanese-occupied beach under heavy  
18 fire when Seaman Hutchins, at the helm, saw a Japanese torpedo  
19 bearing down on his ship; before he could steer away from this  
20 threat, two shells struck the landing craft, knocking him away from  
21 the wheel and setting the pilot house on fire; and

22           WHEREAS, Already mortally wounded, Seaman Hutchins returned  
23 to his post and steered his landing craft safely out of the path of  
24 the torpedo; he died still clinging to the wheel, having devoted the

1 last moments of his life to saving the other men aboard the vessel;  
2 he was exactly a month past his 21st birthday; and

3 WHEREAS, A year later, Seaman Hutchins was posthumously  
4 awarded the nation's highest military award, the Medal of Honor,  
5 and his family attended the christening of a ship named in his  
6 honor, the USS *Johnnie Hutchins*; after the war, his body was  
7 returned to Texas and buried in Eagle Lake, and on the 57th  
8 anniversary of his death in 2000, a crowd of 300 people, including  
9 former crew members of *LST-473*, gathered at his graveside for a  
10 solemn ceremony; and

11 WHEREAS, Johnnie Hutchins demonstrated conspicuous bravery  
12 above and beyond the call of duty, making the ultimate sacrifice to  
13 save the lives of his comrades, and for this heroic act, Americans  
14 owe him a debt of remembrance that the passage of time can never  
15 diminish; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas  
17 hereby pay tribute to U.S. Navy Seaman Johnnie David Hutchins and  
18 honor his family for keeping alive the memory of this courageous  
19 service member; and, be it further

20 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
21 prepared for his family as an expression of high regard by the Texas  
22 House of Representatives and Senate.