**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**H. 4378**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

House Resolution

Sponsors: Reps. Brewer, Alexander, Anderson, Atkinson, Bailey, Ballentine, Bamberg, Bannister, Bauer, Beach, Bernstein, Blackwell, Bradley, Brittain, Burns, Bustos, Calhoon, Carter, Caskey, Chapman, Chumley, Clyburn, Cobb-Hunter, Collins, Connell, B.J. Cox, B.L. Cox, Crawford, Cromer, Davis, Dillard, Elliott, Erickson, Felder, Forrest, Gagnon, Garvin, Gatch, Gibson, Gilliam, Gilliard, Guest, Guffey, Haddon, Hager, Hardee, Harris, Hart, Hartnett, Hayes, Henderson-Myers, Henegan, Herbkersman, Hewitt, Hiott, Hixon, Hosey, Howard, Hyde, Jefferson, J.E. Johnson, J.L. Johnson, S. Jones, W. Jones, Jordan, Kilmartin, King, Kirby, Landing, Lawson, Leber, Ligon, Long, Lowe, Magnuson, May, McCabe, McCravy, McDaniel, McGinnis, Mitchell, J. Moore, T. Moore, A.M. Morgan, T.A. Morgan, Moss, Murphy, Neese, B. Newton, W. Newton, Nutt, O'Neal, Oremus, Ott, Pace, Pedalino, Pendarvis, Pope, Rivers, Robbins, Rose, Rutherford, Sandifer, Schuessler, Sessions, G.M. Smith, M.M. Smith, Stavrinakis, Taylor, Tedder, Thayer, Thigpen, Trantham, Vaughan, Weeks, West, Wetmore, Wheeler, White, Whitmire, Williams, Willis, Wooten and Yow

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Introduced in the House on April 26, 2023

Adopted by the House on April 26, 2023

Summary: WWII pilot O. C. Fitzhenry

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 4/26/2023 House Introduced and adopted (House Journal‑page 103)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=4378&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[04/26/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4378_20230426.docx)

A house RESOLUTION

to recognize and honor the late Oscar C. Fitzhenry, a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force, and to commend his valor and courage during many air battles of World War II.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives holds deep appreciation for the service members who serve in the United States Armed Forces, like Oscar C. Fitzhenry who flew sixty‑four death‑defying combat missions in the South Pacific during World War II; and

Whereas, born August 3, 1921, in Yoakum, Texas, he was the son of the late Oliver Columbus Fitzhenry and Daisy Roden Fitzhenry and was reared on a ranch close to Victoria, Texas. Always called “O. C.” in his younger years, he attended Alamo Heights High School, where most boys his age went to pursue a career as a pilot, when his family relocated to San Antonio. At sixteen, he joined the Texas Army National Guard and took the first steps toward acquiring a pilot’s license; and

Whereas, five years later, young Fitzhenry graduated from Air Force flight training at Lubbock Air Base in Texas, and one week after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Air Corps at age twenty‑one. Five months later, he was promoted to First Lieutenant and, one of the first hundred fighter pilots to the Pacific, deployed in 1943 to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal. He served in the 5th Bomb Group of the 72nd Bomb Squadron of the 13th U.S. Army Air Corps and became the senior aircraft commander at age twenty‑two; and

Whereas, as a B‑24 Liberator pilot, he flew sixty‑four missions with his ten‑member crew in *Scootin’ Thunder* while the casualty rate was seventy percent, earning ten Air Medals and two Distinguished Flying Crosses. His was the only known Pacific crew with so many missions and no casualties; and

Whereas, in his *Scootin’ Thunder* B‑24 Liberator, he participated in the longest air battle in the Pacific over the islands of Kahili, Rabaul, and Truk, during which his skilled tactical maneuvers brought his crew safely home. A portrait of the *Scootin’ Thunder* over Truk during this battle is displayed in the halls of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs where he received a standing ovation; and

Whereas, after his service in World War II, he married the late Ruth Phyllis Burton on February 17, 1945, and they were married for sixty‑eight years and reared four children together. Their children blessed them with eleven loving grandchildren and fourteen great‑grandchildren. He continued to serve his country in the United States Air Force, amassing 402 flying hours over twenty years, until he retired at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1961 in Charleston where he became a financial advisor and real estate developer. He and his wife were active in the Republican Party and shared a strong Christian faith. He maintained an active life through his ninety‑eighth birthday, regularly attending church and the Friday night VFW on Isle of Palms; and

Whereas, the last member of the *Scootin’ Thunder* crew, O. C. Fitzhenry died on April 24, 2020, following the long train of the Greatest Generation. The South Carolina House of Representatives is grateful for his life and for the many heroes of countless battles of that great conflict. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor the late Oscar C. Fitzhenry, a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force, and commend his valor and courage during many air battles of World War II.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Oscar C. Fitzhenry.

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