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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, March 3, 2013 marks the 90th anniversary of the birth of Private First Class (PFC) Manuel Perez Jr.; and

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WHEREAS, PFC Manuel Perez Jr. was a World War II paratrooper of Mexican heritage and a resident of Chicago; he was a naturally gifted athlete, whose peers gave him the nickname of "Bullet"; and

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WHEREAS, PFC Manuel Perez Jr. was a co-founder of the Cyclistas Bicycle Club and a member of the Benito Juarez Social Club; he was also a 1941 graduate of Crane Technical High School and an employee of the Best Foods Company in Chicago; and

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WHEREAS, PFC Manuel Perez Jr. was drafted into the United States Army on January 9, 1943; after completing infantry training, he volunteered for paratrooper training and was assigned to the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 11th Airborne Division (The Angels); he subsequently served in the Pacific Theater during the war; and

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WHEREAS, PFC Manuel Perez Jr. fought in the Battle of Luzon in the Philippines, where he accomplished a feat which is still unparalleled in American warfare; and

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1 WHEREAS, On February 13, 1945, while his company was pinned
2 down by ferocious enemy fire, PFC Manuel Perez Jr. as lead
3 scout for Company A, made a one-man charge against the enemy;
4 his action is credited with single-handedly neutralizing 11 of
5 12 concrete Japanese pillboxes, one of which maintained
6 twin-mounted 50 caliber machineguns, that held up the
7 advancement of his company at Fort McKinley, which was under
8 enemy control; in the course of the reduction of these enemy
9 strongholds, he was able to kill at least 75 of the enemy, 18
10 in hand-to-hand combat, as described in a letter he personally
11 wrote home informing family members of his heroic actions and
12 in recommendation for a medal; and

13 WHEREAS, On March 14, 1945, PFC Manuel Perez Jr. was shot
14 by an enemy sniper while covering the withdrawal of his fellow
15 Paratroopers during the Battle of Manila; for going above and
16 beyond the call of duty during this action, he was recommended
17 for the nation's highest military decoration for valor, the
18 Medal of Honor, along with the Purple Heart, the Combat
19 Infantry Badge, and the Parachutist Badge; unfortunately, he
20 would not live to receive the Medal of Honor; and

21 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor was presented to PFC Manuel
22 Perez Jr.'s father, Manuel Perez, Sr. of Nuevo Laredo,
23 Tamaulipas, Mexico, on the Mexican side of the International

1 Bridge between the United States and Mexico; and

2 WHEREAS, PFC Manuel Perez Jr. along with Edward (Butch)
3 O'Hare and Frank T. Witek, were the only Medal of Honor
4 recipients from Chicago to be killed in action during World War
5 II in the Pacific Theater and on June 22, 1946; and

6 WHEREAS, PFC Manuel Perez Jr.'s childhood friends, now
7 veterans themselves, with the assistance of Father Patrick
8 McPolin of Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Chicago, formed
9 the American Legion, Manuel Perez Jr. Post 1017; and

10 WHEREAS, The United States Department of the Army dedicated
11 the Manuel Perez Jr. Army Reserve Center, 221st Army Reserve
12 Hospital in Oklahoma in his honor; in 1980, the City of Chicago
13 dedicated the Manuel Perez Jr. Memorial Plaza at Kolin and 26th
14 Streets in Little Village; in 1990, a veterans task force
15 designated a newly constructed school as the Manuel Perez Jr.
16 Elementary School, where Medal of Honor recipients Roy
17 Benavidez and Al Lynch were joint keynote speakers at the
18 dedication; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we designate the date
21 of March 14, 2013 as Manuel Perez Jr. Day in the State of
22 Illinois; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to the family of Manuel Perez Jr. as a symbol of our
3 great respect and esteem.