

Whereas, Waverly Wray was a native of Panola County, spending his childhood years near Tocowa.

Whereas, Waverly Wray served his country and his state in the Army during World War II, earning the rank of First Lieutenant in Company D, Second Battalion of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Whereas, Waverly Wray demonstrated unselfish heroism and gallantry on June 7, 1944, at St. Mere Eglise, Normandy, France, and distinguished himself by leading an attack that shattered a reinforced German Grenadier Battalion. Wray's gallantry and intrepidity resulted in his killing eight Germans, including the battalion commander and his staff. Waverly Wray's actions also provided critical reconnaissance to the Allied armed forces, which resulted in the Allies' securing of St. Mere Eglise.

Whereas, Waverly Wray's heroism and service lead to his being awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the DSC, Purple Heart and the Cross of William awarded to Wray by the government of Netherlands. And, whereas, Wray's courage and bravery at St. Mere Eglise have been recognized and recorded by author Stephen Ambrose in the prologue of his book Citizen Soldier.

Whereas, Wray also earned a Silver Star for his role in "Operation Market Garden," where he unselfishly gave his life and was killed in the line of duty on September 21, 1943, at the age of 21 while attracting a sniper's fire so as to enable his American comrades to spot the sniper.

And, whereas, the Mississippi Legislature is considering House Bill 1181 and Senate Bill 2831 to designate a portion of Mississippi Highway 35 in Panola County, beginning with its intersection with Mississippi Highway 6 and extending southerly to the Tallahatchie County Line, as the "Waverly Wray Memorial Highway." This section of highway will encompass the community where Waverly Wray grew up and where many of his family members still reside.

Therefore, we adopt this resolution on this the ___ day of January in the year 2001 to support the Mississippi's Legislature's adoption and passage of House Bill 1181 and Senate Bill 2831 to designate the above-referenced portion of Mississippi Highway 35 in Panola County as the "Waverly Wray Memorial Highway."