By: Senator(s) McLendon, McMahan, Blackwell, Parker, England, Barrett, Moran, Parks, Sparks, Whaley, Thomas, Butler (38th), Frazier, Barnett, Branning, Kirby, McCaughn, Polk, Younger, Caughman, Simmons (13th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 547

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE AND LEGACY OF WORLD WAR II HERO AND POW OLIN PICKENS OF NESBIT, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXTEND THE BEST WISHES OF THE LEGISLATURE ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY.

WHEREAS, we join the citizens of DeSoto County in celebrating the 100th Birthday of a local World War II Hero; and

WHEREAS, not many people have the opportunity to celebrate 100 years of life, especially when that 100 years includes Olin Pickens' heroism and sacrifice. Nesbit resident and WWII Hero, Olin Pickens, will celebrate his birthday on December 31st; and

WHEREAS, during his time as a soldier in World War II, Pickens spent 28 months as a prisoner of war (POW). He said his time as a POW taught him valuable life lessons. "My advice to anyone would be to accept the situation you're in," Pickens said. "That's how I got through my time of being a prisoner. If you can't accept the situation, you can't fix it." Pickens was only 20 years old when he left for the war. Before he left, he made a promise to his parents that he intended to keep. "I was 20 years old in 1942 when I left home," Pickens said. "I told my mother

and daddy that I would be home when the war was over and I meant that." Soon, Pickens found himself training to be sent overseas with the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Reflecting on the mission that would soon land him as a POW, Pickens said he knew there were only two ways out, to be dead or to be captured. "They told us it was a suicide mission," he explained. "We lost 75 men in just a few minutes of that battle. I heard the bullets go by, but I was never struck." Although Pickens was lucky enough to survive the battle, he would soon be questioning his luck. Pickens did not die that day, January 26, 1943, in North Africa, but he did lose his freedom. After Pickens was captured, it would be over two years before he was a free man again. During his time as a POW, Pickens said food was scarce and work days were long digging canals and hauling rocks; and

WHEREAS, Olin Pickens escaped with one of his comrades and fled to Czechoslovakia, but they were recaptured. He was eventually freed for good on April 27, 1945, when the Russians liberated the camp. "One of the best days of my life was getting my freedom back," Pickens said. "Before I was free, I was ready to give up, but I remembered the promise that I had made to my parents. I would be back when the war was over"; and

WHEREAS, Pickens' son, Larry, said he has been extremely lucky to have his father around for so many years. Larry said his father has been a blessing to him, and he's looking forward to celebrating his 100th Birthday with him. "I am so fortunate to be

able to spend time with him now," Larry said. "His age is a blessing and we're excited to celebrate it"; and

WHEREAS, Olin Pickens' legacy is a strong and free America, and for this and for his selfless heroic military service, a grateful Nation and State thank him:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize the service and legacy of World War II Hero and POW Olin Pickens of Nesbit, Mississippi, and extend the best wishes of the Legislature on his 100th Birthday.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Olin Pickens and his family, forwarded to Mississippi's Congressional delegation, and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.