

By: Representative Shanks

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 89

1 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE "100 RAVENO BOYS"
2 AND DESIGNATING JUNE 6-7, 2024, AS "ETERNAL HEROES' MEMORIAL DAYS"
3 IN MISSISSIPPI.

4 WHEREAS, on the nights of June 5-6, 1944, more than 6,500
5 elite paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division, the first of
6 the first, spearheaded the American airborne assault on the
7 Cotentin Peninsula in Normandy, France, with the critical missions
8 of securing four causeways leading inland from the beach codenamed
9 "Utah" and neutralizing enemy resistance in advance of the
10 amphibious landings at dawn on D-Day morning by 4th Infantry
11 Division; and

12 WHEREAS, a great many of the paratroopers were mis-dropped
13 from their designated drop zones, and before dawn, a small group
14 led by Major John P. Stopka, 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment,
15 attacked and captured a strategically sited and important German
16 garrison headquarters and strongpoint at Marmion Farm, on the
17 outskirts of Ravenoville village in Normandy, France; and



18 WHEREAS, Major Stopka took the decision to hold the farm
19 until relief arrived from Utah Beach, thereby denying enemy
20 movement against the northern shoulder of the 101st assault area
21 and the critical exits; and

22 WHEREAS, throughout D-Day, other mis-dropped paratroopers
23 from mixed elements of the 101st, even some from the 82nd
24 Airborne, arrived at the farm thereby strengthening the American
25 defense against "...repeated enemy counter-attacks..." the
26 paratroopers held firm until relieved on the early morning of June
27 7, 1944, by lead elements of 4th Infantry Division; and

28 WHEREAS, in 2009, David A. Ashe, a native of Belfast,
29 Ireland, retired to Ravenoville, in Normandy, France, a village of
30 about 260 residents, which was strategically located between the
31 seaborne landing area of Utah Beach and the drop zones for the
32 101st Airborne Division, and was amongst the first liberated towns
33 on D-Day; and

34 WHEREAS, because of the tiny community's significant D-Day
35 history and the absence of any memorial to its liberators, Mr.
36 Ashe resolved to build the Eternal Heroes' Memorial on June 6,
37 2012, in honor and remembrance of those, known as the "100 Raveno
38 Boys", whose heroic stand made a significant contribution to the
39 success of the amphibious landings on Utah Beach, and ultimately,
40 the Allied invasion of Normandy, France on D-Day; and

41 WHEREAS, afterwards, Mr. Ashe embarked on a 15-month quest to
42 identify the paratroopers who saw combat at Ravenoville, or on the



43 nearby Marmion Farm in June 1944, and this entailed tracking down
44 survivors from both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, and
45 their families and descendants, and among their number was a
46 gallant son of Mississippi, Walter S. Gordon, Jr., of Hinds
47 County, Mississippi; and

48 WHEREAS, since 2012, each June, Mr. Ashe hosts a Ceremony of
49 Remembrance, which to date has welcomed over 40 D-Day/World War II
50 veterans, families of other soldiers either killed during World
51 War II or who survived and have since passed, active duty United
52 States and German troops, and other distinguished guests such as
53 Susan E. Eisenhower, granddaughter of then President Dwight D.
54 Eisenhower; and

55 WHEREAS, many paid the ultimate price to pay in World War II
56 in order to protect the American way of life, and the "100 Raveno
57 Boys", especially Walter S. Gordon, Jr., of Hinds County,
58 Mississippi, certainly distinguished themselves as fearless
59 heroes, as their unflinching courage, unparalleled bravery and
60 gallant sacrifice reflects lasting honor, as they nobly put their
61 lives on the line to protect the freedoms of all Americans during
62 World War II:

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
64 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
65 recognize and commend the "100 Raveno Boys", and Walter S. Gordon,
66 Jr., of Hinds County, Mississippi, for their heroic service during
67 World War II, and designate June 6-7, 2024 as "Eternal Heroes'



68 Memorial Days" in Mississippi in memoriam of the "100 Raveno
69 Boys".

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
71 furnished to the Eternal Heroes' Memorial, the family of Walter S.
72 Gordon, Jr., and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

