

SENATE BILL NO. 489  
INTRODUCED BY J. ELLIOTT

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT DESIGNATING U.S. INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS FROM THE MONTANA-IDAHO BORDER THROUGH WESTERN MONTANA, SOUTHERN MONTANA TO THE MONTANA-WYOMING BORDER, AND EASTERN MONTANA TO THE MONTANA-NORTH DAKOTA BORDER AS THE "PURPLE HEART TRAIL"; AND AMENDING SECTION 60-2-242, MCA."

WHEREAS, on August 7, 1782, at his Newburgh, New York, headquarters, George Washington devised a badge of distinction to be worn by enlisted men and noncommissioned officers; and

WHEREAS, the badge, named the Badge of Military Merit and patterned in the "figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk edged with narrow lace or binding", was awarded for "any singularly meritorious action", permitted the wearer to pass guards and sentinels without challenge, and required the honoree's name and regiment to be inscribed in a Book of Merit; and

WHEREAS, after the Revolutionary War, no more American soldiers received the Badge of Military Merit; and

WHEREAS, the valiant efforts in 1927 by Army Chief of Staff General Charles P. Summerall to revive the Badge of Military Merit ultimately failed in Congress; and

WHEREAS, on January 7, 1931, Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur pursued a new medal that the War Department formally announced on February 22, 1932; and

WHEREAS, after the award was reinstated, recipients of a Meritorious Service Citation Certificate during World War I, along with other eligible soldiers, could exchange their award for the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, Army regulations at the time defined the conditions of the award as "a wound which necessitates treatment by a medical officer and which is received in action with an enemy, may in the judgment of the commander authorized to make the award be construed as resulting from a singularly meritorious act of essential service"; and

WHEREAS, the award of the Purple Heart still represents the thoughts reflected in George Washington's orderly book dated August 7, 1782: "The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus open to all."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**NEW SECTION. Section 1. Purple heart trail.** The purple heart trail is U.S. interstate highway 15 from the Montana-Idaho border to its intersection with U.S. interstate highway 94 near Billings and:

(1) the remainder of U.S. interstate highway 90 southward from the intersection to the Montana-Wyoming border; and

(2) U.S. interstate highway 94 from the intersection eastward to the Montana-North Dakota border.

**Section 2.** Section 60-2-242, MCA, is amended to read:

**"60-2-242. Markers -- commemorative highways.** (1) As funds are available under subsection (2), the department may design and erect signs along the commemorative highways designated in 60-1-202 through 60-1-207 and [section 1] identifying the routes and providing interpretive information.

(2) The department may accept money from other state agencies, federal agencies, local governments, or private persons for the purposes of subsection (1) and may expend the money received for those purposes.

(3) For the purposes of [section 1] and subsection (2) of this section, private persons includes commonly recognized military veterans' organizations, including but not limited to the veterans of foreign wars, the American legion, the disabled American veterans, the Vietnam veterans of America, and the military order of the purple heart."

**NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 60, chapter 1, part 2, and the provisions of Title 60, chapter 1, part 2, apply to [section 1].

- END -