

HOUSE BILL 3249
By Davis

AN ACT to designate several segments of highways as the "Purple Heart Trail" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly, along with the citizens of Tennessee and of this nation, are intensely proud of those brave men and women who have served their country in times of armed conflict in defense of our liberty and ways of life; all Americans are eternally grateful for and appreciative of the sacrifices made by those citizen-soldiers who have sometimes suffered injury or death at the hands of our foes; and

WHEREAS, General George Washington, Commander of the Continental Army, conceiving a need for a military decoration, which would be available to the common soldier for outstanding valor and merit, instituted by General Orders of August 7, 1782, the Badge of Military Merit; it was designed as a heart made of purple cloth or silk edged with narrow lace or binding to be worn on the left breast; and

WHEREAS, General Washington's orders were lost or misfiled for almost 150 years until a search in preparation of the celebration of his bicentennial brought them to light again; on February 22, 1932, the War Department revived the Purple Heart decoration as a bronze metal heart, plated with gold and enameled with various colors, with a bust of Washington in the center, surmounted with the Washington coat-of-arms, suspended from a purple and white ribbon; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart is awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of an enemy, and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action; Purple Hearts have been awarded for action in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, and up to and including more recent conflicts at the end of the last century and the beginning of this century; and

WHEREAS, in its national convention, the delegates of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Inc., the only congressionally chartered veterans organization exclusively for combat wounded, approved a resolution to promote the establishment of a symbolic Purple Heart Trail in each of the fifty states. The convention was inspired by the action of the George Washington Chapter #1732 of Fredricksburg/Spotsylvania, which in 1992 erected a marker for the start of a Purple Heart Trail at Mt. Vernon and, in 1996 and 1998, persuaded the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia to extend the trail to connect Mt. Vernon with Washington's birthplace, his boyhood home, and down I-95 and I-64 to General Douglas McArthur's tomb in Norfolk; and

WHEREAS, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Tennessee's Purple Heart Trail Committee has proposed that this State join in commemorating the sacrifices of those Tennesseans and other Americans who have suffered wounds or death at the hands of our enemies during wartime combat; and

WHEREAS, throughout the years, Tennesseans have been inspired by those who have earned the Purple Heart to renewed confidence, loyalty, and support for the U.S. Armed Forces; their combat wounds remind us of their great valor and unshaken commitment to the preservation of this nation, its liberty, and its way of life; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are profoundly appreciative of the selfless sacrifice made by countless sons and daughters of Tennessee who have served their nation in the United States Armed Forces, especially those who have received combat wounds, some of which resulted in death, who were awarded Purple Hearts; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly most heartily concurs with the excellent proposal of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The following highway segments in Tennessee shall be designated as the "Purple Heart Trail" in Tennessee:

1. That portion of US Highway 41A from the Kentucky state line to its intersection with US Highway 41 in Nashville and the portion of US Highway 41 from its intersection

with US Highway 41A in Nashville south to the boundary between Tennessee and Georgia;

2. That portion of US Highway 421 beginning at the boundary between Tennessee and North Carolina in Johnson County, proceeding northwest to its intersection with S R 1 - State Street in Bristol, then west along S R 1 to its intersection with US Highway 11 W, then southwest along US Highway 11W to its junction with US Highway 11E to become US Highway 11 in Knoxville, then along US Highway 11 to its intersection with US Highway 41 in Chattanooga;

3. That portion of US Highway 321 from the boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee in Johnson County, proceeding west to its intersection with US Highway 11 E in Johnson City and then along US Highway 11E to its intersection with US Highway 11 W in Knoxville;

4. That portion of US Highway 70/25 from the boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee in Cocke County proceeding west to its intersection with US Highway 11E in Knox County;

5. That portion of US Highway 70 from the point of its divergence from US Highway 11 in Loudon County west to the boundary between Tennessee and Arkansas in Memphis;

6. In Memphis, that portion of US Highway 51 from its intersection with US Highway 70 north to its intersection with Navy Road in Millington;

7. That portion of US Highway 31 from its intersection with US Highway 41 in Nashville south to the boundary between Maury County and Giles County.

8. That portion of US Highway 79 from its divergence from US Highway 70 near Atwood East to its intersection with US Highway 41A in Clarksville; and

9. That portion of S R 55 in Coffee County from its intersection with S R 16 in Tullahoma northeast to its intersection with US Highway 41 in Manchester.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers at appropriate locations designating the highway segments described in Section 1 as the "Purple Heart Trail".

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. The appellation "Purple Heart Trail" provided for in this act is for honorary purposes only and nothing contained herein shall be construed as requiring the alteration of any address, or the governmental system for assigning addresses, in any county, municipality, or other governmental entity affected by this act.

SECTION 6. Nothing in this act shall be construed as requiring the alteration of any previously named segments of, or bridges on, any highways described in Section 1 of this act.

SECTION 7. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 8. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.