

2020 -- H 8027

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LC003682
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

HOUSE RESOLUTION

POSTHUMOUSLY HONORING RHODE ISLAND NATIVE FIRST LIEUTENANT AND
MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT ROBERT T. WAUGH FOR HIS HEROIC SERVICE TO
OUR NATION IN WORLD WAR II

Introduced By: Representatives Marszalkowski, McLaughlin, Ackerman, Mattiello, and
Shekarchi

Date Introduced: June 17, 2020

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Robert T. Waugh was born on January 16, 1919, in Ashton, the son of John
2 and Emma Waugh. He attended Cumberland High School and graduated in 1936. In 1937, his
3 family moved to Maine when his father took a job as a Supervisor with the Edwards
4 Manufacturing Company. Robert also took a job with the company as a Machinery Overhauler;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, On April 4, 1938, Robert Waugh joined the Maine National Guard and on
7 December 1, 1939, he enlisted in the United States Army, and was assigned to serve as a line
8 mechanic with the United States Army Air Corps at Langley Field, Virginia. In January of 1941,
9 he was transferred to Losey Field, Ponce, Puerto Rico, and shortly thereafter, was promoted to
10 Sergeant and transferred to the infantry; and

11 WHEREAS, After joining the infantry, Sergeant Waugh was sent to Camp Wolters in
12 Texas where he served as a Recruit Instructor. In September of 1942, he entered Officers
13 Candidate School and graduated as a Second Lieutenant. He was assigned to serve with the 85th
14 Infantry Division, 339th Infantry Regiment at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, where he trained until
15 December 23, 1943, when he departed for Africa and Italy; and

16 WHEREAS, Shortly after arriving in Naples, Lieutenant Waugh and the 85th Division,
17 339th Infantry Regiment, were sent to the Gustav Line, a heavily fortified German defensive line
18 in Italy that was defended by fifteen German Divisions, anchored at Monte Cassino. To reach
19 Rome, the Allies had to break through the Gustav Line; and

1 WHEREAS, In May, Lieutenant Waugh's Infantry Regiment attacked the Gustav Line.
2 Lieutenant Waugh risked his life on many occasions during this battle. When attacking an enemy-
3 held hill, he alone reconnoitered a heavily mined area before later entering it with his platoon.
4 While directing his men to deliver fire on six German bunkers guarding the hill, he alone
5 advanced towards them and upon reaching the first bunker, he threw three grenades into it and
6 killed the defenders with his machine gun as they exited the bunker. He repeated the process on
7 the remaining five bunkers, killing or capturing all of the occupants; and

8 WHEREAS, Later, on May 14, Lieutenant Waugh ordered his men to lay fire on German
9 pillboxes defending a knoll that commanded the only path up the hill. He proceeded to run to the
10 first pillbox, throw grenades into it, and kill the defenders once they were driven into the open.
11 He repeated the same action with the second pillbox, which was also destroyed. Lieutenant
12 Waugh also, at other points in the battle, maintained communication amongst various American
13 held positions by running through a constantly shelled battlefield to deliver messages; and

14 WHEREAS, Altogether, Lieutenant Waugh destroyed six bunkers, two pillboxes, and
15 was personally responsible for numerous enemy fatalities and the capture of 25 others. He was
16 credited for inspiring his fellow soldiers to continue fighting on under dire conditions, and played
17 a vital role in the ultimate breaking of the Gustav Line; and

18 WHEREAS, For his heroic service to our nation in Italy during World War II, Lieutenant
19 Robert T. Waugh received the Purple Heart and the Medal of Honor "For his conspicuous
20 gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the
21 enemy"; and

22 WHEREAS, Tragically, on May 19, 1944, Second Lieutenant Robert T. Waugh perished
23 in service to our nation when he was hit by shrapnel. He was posthumously promoted to the rank
24 of First Lieutenant and is buried in Italy. On the fiftieth Anniversary of the Gustav Line battles
25 and the creation of this cemetery, President Bill Clinton visited First Lieutenant Robert Waugh's
26 gravesite; and

27 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Robert Waugh left behind his wife, Helen Waugh, his parents
28 John and Emma, and his siblings John and Mildred; now, therefore be it

29 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
30 Providence Plantations hereby posthumously honors Rhode Island native and Medal of Honor
31 recipient Robert Waugh for his heroic bravery and sacrifice in service to our nation during World
32 War II. May we never forget the sacrifices all of our veterans have made to preserve our precious
33 freedoms and liberties; and be it further

34 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to

- 1 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Jeff Mutter, Mayor of
- 2 Cumberland, and Mr. Clinton Curtis.

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