
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 275 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY PIELLI, GREINER, PICKETT, GIRAL, KINSEY, SANCHEZ,
DONAHUE, FLICK, JOZWIAK, KHAN, HADDOCK, MENTZER, STEELE AND
HILL-EVANS, DECEMBER 8, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, DECEMBER 8, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating December 16, 2023, as "Battle of the Bulge Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, In mid-December 1944, Allied soldiers were stretched
4 over hundreds of miles of front lines in Western Europe, and a
5 few United States divisions were stationed near the Ardennes
6 sector of Luxembourg with little prospect of an enemy attack or
7 offensive operations; and

8 WHEREAS, Germany planned a surprise winter attack, "Watch on
9 the Rhine," to sweep through the Ardennes Forest in Luxembourg
10 on the morning of December 16, 1944, with more than 200,000
11 troops in 20 divisions armed with close to 3,000 tanks and
12 artillery pieces and supported by 1,000 planes of the Luftwaffe
13 to advance past Bastogne, Belgium, across the Meuse River and
14 toward Antwerp, splitting the Allied forces in two, and forcing
15 another allied evacuation like in Dunkirk; and

16 WHEREAS, The powerful 5th Panzer Army, with parts of eight
17 different armor and infantry divisions, was positioned at the

1 center of the strike to quickly attack and overwhelm the United
2 States troops on the west side of the Our River in Luxembourg,
3 rapidly advance the 15 miles to Bastogne and then reach the
4 Meuse River in three days; and

5 WHEREAS, The target of the 5th Panzer Army's planned attack,
6 located mostly on the east side of the Our River in Luxembourg
7 and in other positions in the Ardennes, was the 28th Infantry
8 Division, formed from units and soldiers from Pennsylvania's
9 Army National Guard; and

10 WHEREAS, The 28th Infantry Division had recently been in
11 combat in the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest, which had resulted
12 in approximately 5,000 casualties from their original strength
13 of approximately 14,000 soldiers and officers; and

14 WHEREAS, While stationed in Luxembourg in the few weeks
15 before the battle, the 28th Infantry Division had received
16 thousands of replacement soldiers, but their three infantry
17 regiments, the 109th, the 110th and the 112th, each with
18 approximately 3,500 soldiers, were still overextended defending
19 25 miles of front lines, up to three to four times wider than
20 traditional Army doctrine; and

21 WHEREAS, Additionally, the 103rd Engineer and 707th Tank
22 Battalions were organized into the infantry regiments to assist
23 with the defense of the front lines; and

24 WHEREAS, The 112th Infantry Regiment was covering the
25 northernmost part of the 28th Infantry Division's front lines,
26 holding positions along an estimated three to six-mile corridor
27 on the German, or eastern, side of the Our River, defending
28 important bridges in Ouren while surrounded in many areas by
29 dense pine forests; and

30 WHEREAS, The 110th Infantry Regiment was deployed to cover a

1 13-mile front in the center of the 28th Infantry Division's
2 positions in separate fortifications in Luxembourg mostly
3 connected by a road named by soldiers as "Skyline Drive" that
4 overlooked the western side of the Our River and Clerf River;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The 109th Infantry Regiment was assigned to guard
7 the nine to ten-mile southern front of the 28th Infantry
8 Division's lines in Diekirch, Luxembourg, on the Our River and
9 also had separate but not linked fortifications; and

10 WHEREAS, The 5th Panzer Army's assault against the 110th
11 Infantry Regiment started on the morning of December 16, 1944,
12 from three German divisions that had up to 27,000 troops and 200
13 tanks; and

14 WHEREAS, Spread out in numerous small towns in the center of
15 the line and on the eastern shore of the Our River, soldiers of
16 the 110th Infantry Regiment on the first day of the battle
17 repelled several strong attacks, eventually losing many front
18 line positions but still fighting against German assault troops
19 who were not yet able to bring their heavy weapons and tanks
20 across the river and into the battle; and

21 WHEREAS, The 112th Infantry Regiment in the north faced an
22 enemy who, on December 16, 1944, was able to initially
23 infiltrate and attack kitchens, medical units and headquarters
24 groups, along with infantry positions, cutting off the 112th
25 Infantry Regiment from the rest of the 28th Infantry Division,
26 and yet the soldiers of the 112th Infantry Regiment reported
27 that they managed to kill or capture most of the soldiers in the
28 initial German assault wave; and

29 WHEREAS, The 109th Infantry Regiment in the south was
30 attacked by almost two German divisions with 300 tanks, guns and

1 rocket launchers on December 16, 1944; and

2 WHEREAS, On December 16, 1944, the 109th Infantry Regiment
3 also successfully defended against the first wave of German
4 attacks whose heavy weapons and tanks were mostly stuck on the
5 other side of the river; and

6 WHEREAS, Starting late on the first day and continuing on the
7 second day of the Battle of the Bulge, several German divisions,
8 using newly constructed or seized bridges over the Our River and
9 Clerf River, then sent hundreds of tanks and thousands of troops
10 in a second wave of attacks against the numerous but isolated
11 109th, 110th and 112th Infantry Regiment's fortified positions
12 and began to systematically overwhelm them in a deadly house-to-
13 house and hand-to-hand combat; and

14 WHEREAS, In countless small towns across the Ardennes,
15 individual units from the 109th, 110th and 112th Infantry
16 Regiments, along with 107th, 108th, 109th and 229th Field
17 Artillery Battalions and numerous combat engineering, tank and
18 tank destroyer units fought almost to the last round and with
19 every available soldier, suffering tremendous casualties; and

20 WHEREAS, On the northern front of the 28th Infantry
21 Division's lines, the 112th Infantry Regiment's position on the
22 German, or east, side of the Our River was no longer tenable and
23 the troops were withdrawn to the high ground west of the Our
24 River; and

25 WHEREAS, According to the United States Center for Military
26 History, one patrol of GIs evaded capture by crossing a lightly
27 guarded stone bridge over the river at night by lining up in
28 German formation and, while an officer shouted commands in
29 German, marched boldly across the bridge; and

30 WHEREAS, Despite their crossing the river, the 112th Infantry

1 Regiment had denied German forces the use of the Ouren bridges,
2 one of their key northern approaches to Bastogne and the Meuse
3 River, for two crucial days; and

4 WHEREAS, One example of the bravery of the soldiers of the
5 112th Infantry Regiment on the northern front lines was
6 described in the book "Alamo in the Ardennes" by John C.
7 McManus, in which a platoon-sized force from Company A, east of
8 Harspelt, held off 10 times their number in German infantry and
9 three tanks for three days until they ran out of ammunition and
10 were forced to surrender; and

11 WHEREAS, The 112th Infantry Regiment bravely fought and
12 delayed German army units for up to four days while detached and
13 isolated from the rest of the 28th Infantry Division and then
14 joined the defense of St. Vith; and

15 WHEREAS, In the center, the 110th Infantry Regiment, against
16 overwhelming enemy forces, fought individual battles against the
17 massive German waves of tanks, troops and artillery in the first
18 few days in the towns such as Reuler, Heinerscheid, Marnach,
19 Munshausen, Clervaux, Holtzum, Weiler, Hoscheid, Hosingen,
20 Consthum and Urspelt; and

21 WHEREAS, One example of both the courage and sacrifice of the
22 soldiers of the 110th Infantry Regiment was in Hosingen, where
23 300 soldiers defended the town in house-to-house and hand-to-
24 hand combat for almost two and a half days against nonstop
25 attacks from up to 5,000 German troops and numerous Panzer
26 tanks, suffering only 7 deaths and 10 wounded against 2,000
27 German casualties and surrendering only when they ran out of all
28 ammunition; and

29 WHEREAS, A second example of the resolve of the 110th
30 Infantry Regiment was the last stand of 100 soldiers from its

1 Headquarters Company within the stone walls of the Clervaux
2 Castle where they held off assaults from a much larger force of
3 German tanks and infantry firing at point blank range for three
4 days until they were forced to surrender; and

5 WHEREAS, In the south, the heroic defenses by the 109th
6 Infantry Regiment delayed significant progress by German troops
7 in their sector from December 16 through the beginning of
8 December 20, 1944, and the 109th Infantry Regiment temporarily
9 joined forces with the 9th Armored Division; and

10 WHEREAS, After the German advances against the individual
11 infantry regiments, cooks, signalmen, drivers, quartermasters
12 and even the Division Band joined in the defense of the 28th
13 Infantry Division's Headquarters at Wiltz, where they bravely
14 fought alongside infantry, artillery and armor until they were
15 overwhelmed by the Panzer Lehr's firepower, which included Tiger
16 Tanks; and

17 WHEREAS, The 109th, 110th and 112th Infantry Regiments of the
18 28th Infantry Division along with numerous smaller but related
19 units of the 28th Infantry Division and other attached United
20 States Army units could not stop, but did delay, the massive
21 German armored advance in the Ardennes; and

22 WHEREAS, The length of the 28th Infantry Division's hard-
23 fought delay might not be able to be precisely calculated but it
24 definitely changed the course of the battle, as the United
25 States Center for Military History concluded by stating: "It is
26 impossible to assess in hours the violence done the 2d Panzer
27 Division timetable at Clerf, but it is clear that the race by
28 this division to Bastogne was lost as the result of the gallant
29 action by the 110th Infantry in front of and at the Clerf
30 crossings."; and

1 WHEREAS, The 101st Airborne Division was not ordered to
2 Bastogne until the second day of the Battle of the Bulge,
3 December 17, 1944, and its paratroopers did not arrive in the
4 city until December 18, 1944; and

5 WHEREAS, The soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division, along
6 with soldiers from other units, including the 28th Infantry
7 Division, defended Bastogne during its six-day siege from German
8 forces until its liberation by units from General Patton's
9 Fourth Armored Division on December 26, 1944; and

10 WHEREAS, Without the determined fight in the first five days
11 of the Battle of the Bulge from the soldiers and officers of the
12 28th Infantry Division, along with smaller units from the 9th
13 and 10th Armored Divisions, it would not have been possible for
14 the 101st Airborne Division and other reinforcements to arrive
15 in Bastogne before it was cut off and for the successful defense
16 of Bastogne to take place; and

17 WHEREAS, Another goal of the 5th Panzer Army attack was to
18 prevent United States reinforcements from arriving from the
19 south to stop the advances of the 6th Panzer Army, but the
20 defense of the 28th Infantry Division also helped keep the roads
21 open long enough so that the 82nd Airborne Division, in addition
22 to the 101st Airborne Division, could also deploy from their
23 bases in France and both play an important role in the Battle of
24 the Bulge; and

25 WHEREAS, This heroism came at unbelievable human cost to the
26 soldiers of the 28th Infantry Division, and while many records
27 were destroyed in the battle, early after-action reports from
28 the United States Army report almost 5,300 combat and noncombat
29 casualties along with soldiers missing in action in December
30 1944; and

1 WHEREAS, Overall, United States forces suffered more than
2 80,000 casualties during the Battle of the Bulge, almost 1 out
3 of every 10 during the entire war; and

4 WHEREAS, While thousands of Pennsylvanians fought in the
5 Battle of the Bulge without passing on their story for
6 posterity, other soldiers like Philadelphians William "Wild
7 Bill" Guarneri, Sr., and Edward James "Babe" Heffron of the
8 101st, the last Malmedy Massacre survivor Harold Billow from
9 Mount Joy and P-47 pilot Edwin Cottrell from Slippery Rock and
10 West Chester have been able to pass on their stories to future
11 generations; and

12 WHEREAS, Recognizing the anniversary of the Battle of the
13 Bulge encourages Pennsylvanians to visit the Pennsylvania
14 National Guard Military Museum at Fort Indiantown Gap in
15 Annville and the Pennsylvania Military Museum, run by the
16 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, in Boalsburg,
17 along with other military museums throughout this Commonwealth
18 to learn about this battle and the other important contributions
19 made by veterans of this Commonwealth; and

20 WHEREAS, The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has
21 a long and proud tradition of honoring the historic
22 contributions, heroism and sacrifice of the soldiers of the 28th
23 Infantry Division and the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, the
24 airmen and women of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and all
25 Pennsylvania veterans through its memorials, museums and
26 ceremonies, including the annual Memorial Day Service at the
27 28th Infantry Division National Shrine in Boalsburg; therefore
28 be it

29 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate
30 December 16, 2023, as "Battle of the Bulge Day" in Pennsylvania;

1 and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives call on the
3 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to develop, publish
4 and present educational and informational materials and events
5 to honor Pennsylvania's significant involvement in the Battle of
6 the Bulge in time for the 80th anniversary of the battle in
7 December 2024.