



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution of Virginia in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

413th BIRTHDAY OF THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

WHEREAS, the Virginia National Guard traces the heritage and traditions of citizen service to the May 14, 1607, founding of Jamestown when Captain John Smith organized the colonists for defense, and there has not been a day since without a military presence in Virginia to defend freedom at home and overseas; and

WHEREAS, the oldest continuous service regiment in the Virginia National Guard is the 1st Virginia Regiment, which was organized in 1652 in Williamsburg as a state militia unit and later for service with the Continental Army, and its lineage lives on today in the Petersburg-based 276th Engineer Battalion; and

WHEREAS, Virginia National Guard service dates back to the American Revolution through the American Civil War to World Wars I and II and on into Operation Desert Shield / Desert Storm and the Global War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, the 29th Infantry Division, 116th Infantry Regiment, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 54th Field Artillery Brigade and 246th Field Artillery Regiment were all formed in 1917 from existing militia units as the United States prepared to enter World War I, and those units are either still in service today or their lineage has carried forward; and

WHEREAS, World War I marked the first time that volunteer state militia units were activated for federal duty under a formal Army structure and deployed overseas for combat operations, and National Guard Soldiers served with courage, honor and distinction, and that tradition continues on today as National Guard personnel are deployed all over the world; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, Soldiers from the 29th Division took part in the massive invasion of Normandy, France, that began the morning of June 6, 1944, to be known forever as "D-Day," and more than 800 members of the 116th Infantry were killed, wounded or missing during the assault on Omaha Beach, but their courage and bravery helped create a foothold that allowed follow-on forces to continue the assault, liberate France and bring an end to Nazi tyranny; and

WHEREAS, Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen served during Operation Desert Storm, and since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, more than 15,000 Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have served on federal active duty in support of Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Inherent Resolve; and

WHEREAS, since Sept. 11, 2001, ten Virginia National Guard Soldiers have been lost to hostile enemy action serving in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, since 2001, the Virginia National Guard has mobilized more than 13,600 Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force on state active duty to respond to hurricanes, winter storms, flooding and other severe weather events across the Commonwealth, in neighboring states, to Louisiana and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as for security operations in Charlottesville in August 2017 and 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia National Guard could not perform its mission without the support of the civilian workforce, families, employers and communities around the Commonwealth;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ralph S. Northam, do hereby recognize May 14, 2020, as the **413th BIRTHDAY OF THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.




Governor


Secretary of the Commonwealth