



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA RECOGNIZING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II AND MONTANA'S VETERANS OF THAT WAR.

WHEREAS, Montana's 163rd Infantry Regiment, 41st Sunset Infantry Division, know to the world as the Fighting Junglers, was called to active duty on September 16, 1940, for 1 year of training; and

WHEREAS, on December 7, 1941, the United States came under attack by Japanese forces at Pearl Harbor and locations throughout the Pacific, with the United States declaring war on December 8, 1941, and subsequently declaring war on Germany and Italy; and

WHEREAS, the largest ever mobilization of American power took place, ultimately calling up over 15 million U.S. men and women to serve from 1941 to 1946. Over 75,000 Montanans served as a key part of that force and over 6,000 Montana women volunteered to serve in the various military services and auxiliary services in World War II, including the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), Women's Army Corps (WAC), Army Nurse Corps (ANC), United States Navy Reserve (women's reserve), Women Accepted For Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard (SPARS), Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), Public Health Service (PHS), and the Cadet Nurse Corps (CNC); and

WHEREAS, many thousands of Native American men and women of Montana served in all major elements of the United States military during World War II with honor and great patriotism. They served as infantryman, code talkers, air crewman, nurses, and many other roles throughout all branches of the United States military. The 163rd Infantry Regiment had over 230 Native Americans as members, representing the eight tribal nations located in Montana, all of whom fought with distinction as Junglers; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regiment, Montana National Guard, and 41st Infantry Division served with distinction at Fort Lewis and various locations on the West Coast of the United States until their departure

to Australia in April 1942 as a part of the Southwest Pacific Command, going on to fight in the Pacific Theater of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Montana's 163rd Infantry Regiment was recognized as the first U.S. unit to defeat Imperial Japanese forces at the Battle of Sanananda, Papua New Guinea, in January 1943. They were subsequently recognized by the 28th Montana Legislative Assembly through resolution and were the inspiration for a famous painting by Irwin "Shorty" Shope in April 1943; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regiment served in the Pacific Theater in three major campaigns: the Papuan Campaign in 1943, where they won epic battles at Sanananda, Gona, and Kumusi River; the New Guinea Campaign in 1944, where they won the battles of Aitape, Wadke, and "Bloody" Biak; and the Southern Philippines Campaign in 1945, where they won battles at Zamboanga, Sanga-Sanga Island, Jolo, and captured the key village of Calinan from seasoned Japanese land forces, stopping only because hostilities were ceased due to the dropping of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. They then became an occupation force on the Japanese mainland before being demobilized in Japan on January 1, 1946, and sent home after over 5 years of active duty; and

WHEREAS, the First Special Service Force, a unique joint US-Canadian special operations force, was secretly formed at Fort William Henry Harrison near Helena, Montana, in April through July 1942, to organize and train for the mission known as Operation Plough; and

WHEREAS, the First Special Service Force went on to serve in both the Pacific Theater and the European Theater, where they fought in the Aleutians Campaign 1943, the Naples-Foggia Campaign 1943-1944, the Anzio Rome-Arno Campaign 1944, recognized as being the first unit into Rome on June 4, 1944, the Southern France Campaign, and the Rhineland Campaign. They were inactivated December 5, 1944, at Villeneuve-Loubet, France, without losing a battle and with battle casualties equivalent to 137% of its strength. The members went on to serve in the 474th Infantry Regiment in Norway through the end of the European conflict as well as with other historical military units such as the 45th Infantry Division; and

WHEREAS, Camp Rimini War Dog Reception and Training Center was established in late 1942 west of Helena at a former Civilian Conservation Corps site, where over 800 dogs and their handlers trained as a part of the effort to disrupt the Axis powers. Unit members would go on to acquit themselves in places along great circle military air routes as search and rescue and providing specialized transport in remote areas of the

Northern Hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, the Army Air Force organized and trained bomber forces throughout Montana at such locations as Great Falls, Lewistown, and Cutbank from 1941 to 1945, training personnel in the use of heavy bombers that were ultimately deployed to both the European and Pacific Theaters of World War II; and

WHEREAS, the 7th Ferrying Command, Air Transport Command, was formed at what is now the Great Falls International Airport and at what is now Malmstrom AFB, to carry out the mission of providing aircraft and critical supplies to our allies over the great circle route, a critical part of global war air operation of World War II; and

WHEREAS, specialized units such as the first all-Black airborne unit, the 555th Parachute Battalion, known as the Triple Nickels, trained and served in Montana at Missoula fighting forest fires throughout Montana and the Northwest; and

WHEREAS, the people of Montana overwhelmingly supported the World War II efforts in many ways on the home front, providing food and other strategic supplies and minerals and meeting or exceeding the quotas for the eight war bond drives; and

WHEREAS, the population of Montana in 1941 was 558,000 people and only 514,000 in 1946; and

WHEREAS, Montanans supported, fought, died, and were wounded in all theaters of World War II. Joseph Howard Kinsey wrote in his text "High, Wide and Handsome": "--of the more than 15 million men and women in the US Armed forces during World War II, Montana furnished 75,000 to the effort."; "Proportionately this was near the top of all states. In World War II as in World War I, Montanans were quick to enlist, and they were healthy; the proportion rejected because of physical defect was smaller than the national average. Further the Montana death rate in World War II was only exceeded by that of New Mexico in proportion to population. Montana [also] had the record of oversubscribing first in eight World War II saving bond drives."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the 69th Legislature of the State of Montana recognizes the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and recognizes all Montanans who served in the armed forces, at home and abroad, and all Montanans who aided in the war effort during World War II.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to the Governor of Montana, the Department Commander of the American Legion of Montana, the State Commander, the State Senior Vice Commander, the State Junior Vice Commander, and the State Adjutant/Quartermaster of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Montana, the State Commander of the Disabled American Veterans of Montana, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, each of the federally recognized tribal governments in Montana, and each member of the Montana Congressional Delegation.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
SJ 20, originated in the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20

INTRODUCED BY M. CUFFE, E. BYRNE

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