

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 396

Celebrating the accomplishments of the Virginia National Guard in 2011.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 24, 2012

Agreed to by the Senate, March 1, 2012

WHEREAS, the courageous soldiers and airmen of the Virginia National Guard made outstanding and valuable contributions to the defense of the United States and the security of the Commonwealth and advanced the cause of freedom around the world; and

WHEREAS, these same soldiers and airmen put themselves in harm's way, fought bravely, made great sacrifices, and provided an example of selfless service for all the citizens of the Commonwealth and the nation; and

WHEREAS, the families and employers of these courageous soldiers and airmen are worthy of special gratitude and appreciation for their unwavering support that makes it possible for the Virginia National Guard to accomplish its mission both in Virginia and overseas; and

WHEREAS, more than 600 Virginia National Guard soldiers and airmen returned from federal active duty in Afghanistan and other parts of the world, and the following units completed remarkable deployments: the Staunton-based 116th Brigade Combat Team, the Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, the Virginia Beach-based 203rd RED HORSE Squadron, and the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division Security Partnering Rotation #1; and

WHEREAS, Virginia National Guard soldiers returned from federal active duty in Iraq in December with approximately 250 soldiers from the Sandston-based 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment as one of the last aviation units to leave Iraq as the United States completed the withdrawal of all military personnel, and more than 850 soldiers from across the Commonwealth serving in Task Force 183 completed the largest single-unit Virginia Army National Guard mobilization since World War II; and

WHEREAS, approximately 75 soldiers from the Hampton-based Provincial Reconstruction Team Security Force Platoon and Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division Security Partnering Rotation #2 continue to serve on active duty in Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia National Guard was one of 15 states to achieve all the readiness training and certification goals set by National Guard Bureau for National Guard Reaction Forces, demonstrating that the Virginia National Guard was fully trained and ready to perform the mission essential tasks expected of a National Guard Response Force; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia National Guard brought more than 350 personnel on state active duty to assist in the Commonwealth's response to Hurricane Irene in August and worked side by side with Virginia State Police personnel to clear nearly 350 fallen trees during the hurricane and in the immediate response after the storm had passed, and soldiers used chainsaws to open a path for 10 motorists trapped after fallen trees blocked them in both directions and left them trapped for more than seven hours; and

WHEREAS, approximately 25 soldiers from the Fort Pickett-based 157th Engineer Platoon and the Blackstone-based 3647th Maintenance Company supported recovery operations in Vermont in the wake of Hurricane Irene by operating six 20-ton dump trucks and hauling more than 780 loads of rock and fill dirt to help repair almost 400 miles of damaged roads over an 11-day period in September; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Fighter Wing earned an overall grade of "Excellent" alongside the 633rd Air Base Wing and 1st Fighter Wing for the Phase I Operational Readiness Inspection conducted in April at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, where the Wing was evaluated on major mission areas including command and control, deployment processing, employment readiness, information operations, and force protection; and

WHEREAS, soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Petersburg-based 276th Engineer Battalion, 91st Troop Command put their engineering skills to practical use for two community service projects in Stafford County and Richmond during their two-week annual training period in July with the work being part of the Innovative Readiness Training program that allows engineers to put their military skills to work on community service projects approved by National Guard Bureau; and

WHEREAS, soldiers and airmen of the Virginia Guard's Fort Pickett-based 34th Civil Support Team and Petersburg-based Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package trained side by side with local, state, and federal emergency response organizations in May during the Hampton Roads Full Scale Exercise, an event that brought together many different agencies to improve their interoperability in the event of a catastrophic event within the Commonwealth, whether from a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, or any other emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Pickett-based 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute Maintenance and Supply Shop earned the 2010 Army Award for Maintenance Excellence runner-up award for a

ENROLLED

HJ396ER

medium-sized National Guard Table of Distributions and Allowances unit; and

WHEREAS, the Gate City-based 1032nd Transportation Company, 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group was named the U.S. Army National Guard Runner-up in the 2012 Philip A. Connelly Awards Competition for food service excellence in the National Guard field kitchen category; and

WHEREAS, the names of five Virginia Army National Guard combat engineers lost during combat operations in the Global War on Terror were among the more than 330 names etched on the Memorial Wall for Fallen Engineers unveiled in April at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, the U.S. Army Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and home to the U.S. Army Engineer School and Regiment; and

WHEREAS, soldiers of the Blackstone-based 3647th Maintenance Company completed two overseas annual training rotations in Hohenfels, Germany, in support of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center during October and November, where the soldiers provided a wide variety of skill sets including armament repairers, wheeled vehicle mechanics, automated logistical specialists, and food operations specialists; and

WHEREAS, the all-volunteer Virginia Defense Force continues to be integrated into every major operation conducted by the Virginia National Guard and to train arduously to provide support to the citizens of the Commonwealth and to embody the spirit of selflessness; and

WHEREAS, the Military Funeral Honors Program performed more than 2,400 funerals attended by almost 44,000 people at cemeteries throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Counterdrug Program provided support to state and federal law-enforcement agencies resulting in the confiscation of more than 37,000 marijuana plants, 441 arrests, and the seizure of more than \$136 million in narcotics, currency, and weapons and assisted the Drug Enforcement Administration with the destruction of more than 9,400 pounds of excess pharmaceutical drugs; and

WHEREAS, the Counterdrug Program's Drug Demand Reduction program reached more than 15,000 youth in 649 events providing life skills, mentorship, and drug abuse prevention training; and

WHEREAS, since 1994, the Virginia National Guard's Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy has intervened in the lives of at-risk youth to produce over 3,640 responsible and productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia National Guard strives to be the premier, relevant, rapid response force, manned, equipped, and trained to respond to federal and state requirements and prepared to deploy as directed by the Governor to assist state and local authorities to protect life and property and preserve peace, order, and public safety; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Virginia National Guard and its dedicated soldiers, airmen, and civilian employees for their devotion to duty and many outstanding and valuable contributions to the defense of the United States and the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Major General Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, on behalf of the patriotic soldiers, airmen, and civilian employees under his command as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for their dedication to the citizens of the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.