

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

*Commemorating the life and legacy of Earle Davis Gregory.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 15, 2016  
Agreed to by the Senate, February 25, 2016

WHEREAS, the people of Powhatan, from the earliest years of the Virginia Colony, have never hesitated to defend their liberty with arms; and

WHEREAS, "to honor valor is mankind's delight," as declares the monument on the green of Powhatan Court House to the legendary Powhatan Troop of the War Between the States; and

WHEREAS, this sacred remembrance of soldiers who have laid down their lives in the cause of liberty is an obligation and a conviction of the heart for which the people of Powhatan have always been, and are today, notable; and

WHEREAS, the sons of Virginia arose when summoned by the federal government to enter the Great War of 1914 - 1918 that the world—so the President of the time, Woodrow Wilson of Virginia, declared, however unsuccessfully—might be "made safe for democracy"; and

WHEREAS, only one Virginian soldier, a son of Powhatan County, on the Western Front of Europe received the United States' highest accolade for military bravery, The Congressional Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, during the continuing centennial commemoration of the Great War, it is fitting to remember the bravery of Earle Davis Gregory; and

WHEREAS, Earle Gregory was born at Claysville in southeastern Powhatan County, near both Moseley and Dorset, on October 18, 1897; and

WHEREAS, in 1901, when Earle Gregory's father, W.J. Gregory, was named agent for the Southern Railway at Chase City, the Gregory family relocated to that village in Mecklenburg County, so that Mecklenburg shares with Powhatan the formation of the character of one of the great Virginian soldiers of the 20th Century; and

WHEREAS, Earle Gregory graduated from Fork Union Military Academy, so that Fluvanna County shares in the formation of the character of the future Virginian hero; and

WHEREAS, in 1917, when the United States decided to enter the Great War on the side of Britain and France, Earle Gregory enlisted as a private in the 29th Division, 116th Infantry of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, having earned promotion to sergeant, Earle Gregory and his men in a mortar platoon were engaged in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive at Bois-de-Consenvoye, north of Verdun, France, where they were pinned down in trenches by heavy fire from the enemy; and

WHEREAS, Earle Gregory, shouting "I will get them!" left his detachment and advanced toward the enemy bearing both his rifle and a trench-mortar shell that he deployed as a grenade; and

WHEREAS, acting alone, Earle Gregory captured a machine gun and three enemy soldiers, and, advancing yet farther, captured a 7.5-centimeter mountain howitzer and then, after shooting to death a German officer, rushed a dugout to capture—again single-handedly—an additional 19 enemy soldiers; and

WHEREAS, The Congressional Medal of Honor was presented to Earle Gregory by Major General Omar Bundy on April 29, 1919, during ceremonies at Fort Lee, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the French people showered Earle Gregory with their highest awards for valor, the Croix de Guerre, the Medal of the Legion of Honor, the Médaille Militaire, and the Montengrin Order of Merit; and

WHEREAS, after the war Earle Gregory entered Virginia Polytechnic Institute, now Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), and graduated in 1923, while serving as president of the institute's famed Corps of Cadets; and

WHEREAS, after graduation Earle Gregory moved to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he was employed for many years in the Veterans Administration Hospital; and

WHEREAS, Earle Gregory died on January 6, 1972, and is buried in Tuscaloosa Memorial Park; and

WHEREAS, the memory of Earle Gregory is maintained at American Legion Post 1 in France, the Virginia State Library, and Virginia Tech, where the precision marching unit in the Corps of Cadets is known as The Gregory Guard; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the life and legacy of Earle Davis Gregory, "the Sergeant York of Virginia," during the Great War of a century ago in Europe; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution

for presentation to American Legion Post 201 of Powhatan County, American Legion Post 79 of South Hill in Mecklenburg County, Fork Union Military Academy in Fluvanna County, and other appropriate institutions of Powhatan County as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for Earle Davis Gregory's dedicated service to the nation and the Powhatan community.