

22104624D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 268

Offered February 22, 2022

Commending the 29th Infantry Division.

Patrons—Simon, Avoli, Bulova, Carr, Clark, Convirs-Fowler, Hope, Jenkins, Keam, Maldonado, McGuire, Murphy, Rasoul, Reid, Sewell, Shin, Simonds, Subramanyam, Sullivan, Ware, Watts, Wiley and Willett; Senators: Deeds, Ebbin, Edwards, Hanger, Howell, McPike, Morrissey, Norment and Ruff

WHEREAS, the 29th Infantry Division of the United States Army National Guard has served the Commonwealth and the nation since World War I, developing a distinguished heritage and rich esprit de corps through its outstanding performance in combat and legacy of achievements; and

WHEREAS, the 29th Infantry Division was constituted as a unit of the United States Army National Guard in July 1917, shortly after the United States entered World War I; and

WHEREAS, with original members drawn from multiple states that had fought on opposing sides of the Civil War, including Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., the 29th Infantry Division was nicknamed the "Blue and Gray Division," to reflect the reunification of the United States after the war; and

WHEREAS, Major General James A. Ulio, then the adjutant of the 29th Infantry Division, designed a division insignia based on the yin yang symbol, representing balance, unity, and strength; the Blue and Gray became the first such insignia officially registered with the Adjutant General of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, the 29th Infantry Division joined the American Expeditionary Force in France in 1918, and during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the final Allied advance of World War I, the Division captured more than 2,000 prisoners and knocked out more than 250 machine guns or artillery pieces over the course of 21 days in intense combat; and

WHEREAS, in the interwar period, the 29th Infantry Division was reconstituted in the Army National Guard with units from Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania; the Division was called back into active service in 1941 and subsequently deployed to England, where members of the unit immediately began training for a cross-channel invasion of occupied Europe; and

WHEREAS, on June 6, 1944, the 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division was part of the initial wave of troops landing on Omaha Beach as part of Operation Overlord; Company A, which consisted primarily of men from the Bedford area, suffered massive casualties in the assault, resulting in Bedford later being selected as the site of the National D-Day Memorial; and

WHEREAS, after intense fighting, units of the 29th Infantry Division captured the village of Saint-Lô and continued the advance through Brittany and into Germany; the division sustained more than 20,000 casualties, including 3,887 killed in action, in 242 days of combat; and

WHEREAS, the members of the 29th Infantry Division were highly decorated for their gallantry and valor during that period, earning five Congressional Medals of Honor, hundreds of Silver Star Medals, thousands of Bronze Star Medals, and four distinguished unit citations, among many other awards; and

WHEREAS, the 29th Infantry Division insignia became one of the most recognizable unit patches of World War II, and the Blue and Gray became an omnipresent symbol of liberation and victory over tyranny, appearing prominently on monuments throughout the United States and France; and

WHEREAS, after World War II, the 29th Infantry Division resumed its status as a National Guard unit in Norfolk and was drawn down or reorganized multiple times over the course of the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, the 29th Infantry Division was reactivated in 1984 as a light infantry division with units from the Virginia Army National Guard and the Maryland Army National Guard with its headquarters at Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County; units from several other states in the southeast and throughout the country have been listed among the Blue and Gray's order of battle since that time; and

WHEREAS, in the 1990s and 2000s, the 29th Infantry Division demonstrated a high degree of professionalism while conducting peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, and members of the division developed strong relationships with allied military forces through numerous training missions; and

WHEREAS, units from the 29th Infantry Division deployed to Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan in support of the Global War on Terrorism and more recently deployed to the Middle East as part of Task Force Spartan, a multi-component organization of National Guard units maintaining American presence in the region and building defense capacity with partner nations; and

WHEREAS, members of the 29th Infantry Division have participated in the statewide response to the

INTRODUCED

HJ268

56 COVID-19 pandemic by supporting testing sites, vaccination clinics, and other critical efforts; and

57 WHEREAS, after the events of January 6, 2021, units of the 29th Infantry Division were among the
58 first to arrive in Washington, D.C., to help civilian law-enforcement agencies restore order and maintain
59 security at the United States Capitol and were among more than 26,000 National Guard members from
60 50 states and three territories who were activated to support the inauguration by augmenting the Capitol
61 Police, United States Secret Service, United States Park Police and D.C. Metro Police Department; and

62 WHEREAS, during that time, the 29th Infantry Division Headquarters Company provided mission
63 command for a task force of more than 9,000 personnel from 24 states that was responsible for securing
64 property at the United States Capitol, protecting government employees, providing logistical support,
65 staffing traffic control points, and providing crowd management; and

66 WHEREAS, to the men and women who have served and sacrificed as members of the 29th Infantry
67 Division, the Blue and Gray represents what can be achieved when people of different backgrounds put
68 aside their differences for the good of the nation and the defense of American ideals at home and
69 abroad; now, therefore, be it

70 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the 29th Infantry Division hereby be commended for
71 more than 100 years of service to the Commonwealth, the United States, and free people throughout the
72 world; and, be it

73 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution
74 for presentation to Major General John M. Rhodes, commanding officer of the 29th Infantry Division, as
75 an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the division's rich history of accomplishments
76 and appreciation for the importance of the Blue and Gray as a symbol of liberty, solidarity, and
77 commitment to service.