

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 15

Celebrating the life of Major General Henry Jervey, Jr., USA, Ret.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 3, 2022

WHEREAS, Major General Henry Jervey, Jr., USA, Ret., an inspiration to military engineers whose legacy lives on through the countless enhancements he made to American harbors and waterways, died September 30, 1942, after a lifetime of dauntless service; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey was born on June 5, 1866, and raised on St. Helen's Farm in the Fine Creek Mills area of Powhatan; he was the eldest of six sons born to Dr. Henry D. Jervey, an assistant surgeon originally of Charleston, South Carolina, and to Helen Louise Wesson Jervey, originally of Summit Plantation, Northampton County, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, after the death of his paternal grandfather, Henry Jervey helped escort the coffin to Charleston for burial and remained in the area; he graduated from high school with high marks, entered The University of the South at the age of 15, and graduated with a degree in civil engineering, as both the youngest and highest-ranked student in his class; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey subsequently graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point with a degree in civil engineering as the top-ranked student in the Class of 1888; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey was assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers' Engineering School of Application at Willet's Point in the New York Harbor and graduated three years later with the equivalent of a master's degree in civil engineering; he served an additional tour of duty there as an instructor in military photography and in self-propelled naval mines; and

WHEREAS, in 1898, Henry Jervey was in charge of the Mississippi River Improvement Fourth District, supervising a crew of 19 aboard a ship taking up mines which had been laid at the onset of the Spanish-American War, when an unseen mine several feet below the surface exploded suddenly; and

WHEREAS, the ship's forecastle and pilot house were destroyed, six men were blown into the water and killed, and the ship sank within a day; however, Henry Jervey, who had been standing just feet from the pilot house, was left miraculously unscathed; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey continued to work with the Mississippi River Improvement Fourth District and supervised hundreds of laborers who moved 200,000 cubic yards of earth in the construction of the Kempe Levee, which was 18 feet tall and three-quarters of a mile in length when completed; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey was subsequently assigned to the defense of rivers and harbors of Tampa Bay and the west coast of Florida, served in the Philippines as a lighthouse inspector, and then returned to West Point as an assistant professor of chemistry; and

WHEREAS, from 1905 to 1910, Henry Jervey was in charge of harbors and defenses of the Mobile District in Alabama and directed the expansion of Mobile Bay's channel to better accommodate modern ships; and

WHEREAS, from 1910 to 1915, Henry Jervey was responsible for the improvement of the Ohio River for navigation; during that period, he completed the Fernbank Dam and began construction of several other dams in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana; according to a Cincinnati newspaper article, he was reportedly the most popular and well-respected army engineer ever assigned to supervise the area; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey graduated from the Army War College in 1916 and was assigned an additional tour of duty there as an instructor, during which time he wrote *Warfare of the Future*, published in 1917; and

WHEREAS, in 1917, Henry Jervey oversaw the construction of army barracks erected on the American University grounds in Washington, D.C., and the construction of fortifications along the south Atlantic coastline, including Cape Henry at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay; he also served as commander of the 66th Field Artillery Group at Camp Greene in Charlotte, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, later in 1917, Henry Jervey was assigned as acting assistant chief of staff/director of operations for the first Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General Hugh Scott, followed by General Tasker Bliss; and

WHEREAS, in 1918, newly appointed Chief of Staff General Peyton March reappointed Henry Jervey his assistant chief of staff/director of operations, overseeing what was then the largest and fastest military buildup in history; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey was among the first six officers to receive the Distinguished Military Service Medal, created by the United States Congress in 1918, for "especially meritorious and conspicuous services as Director of Operations, General Staff during the Great World War"; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his service during World War I, Henry Jervey also received honors from the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Italy; and

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WHEREAS, after the war, Henry Jervey oversaw the purchase of 135,000 acres near Fayetteville, North Carolina, for the creation of what is now Fort Bragg; he later served as commander of the 41st Division at Camp Mills, then as commander of the 11th Brigade Field Artillery in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, Henry Jervey retired from the United States Army in 1922 and resided in Washington and California before returning to South Carolina; he was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery after his passing in 1942; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Major General Henry Jervey, Jr., USA, Ret., a distinguished veteran who made contributions to communities throughout the United States; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to descendants of Major General Henry Jervey, Jr., USA, Ret., as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.