



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A PROCLAMATION

WWII MERRILL'S MARAUDER DAY

WHEREAS: In 1943, almost 3,000 men from Panama, Trinidad, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, New Georgia, and the United States answered President Franklin Roosevelt's call for a classified, "dangerous and hazardous" mission without knowing where they would be sent or what orders they would be given; and

WHEREAS: This unnamed provisional unit of U.S. Army volunteers landed in Bombay, India, on October 31, 1943, and was expected to incur 85 percent casualties in the course of their missions. On January 1, 1944, the unit was officially designated as the 5307th Composite Unit, code-named "Galahad" and eventually nicknamed Merrill's Marauders by the press after their commanding officer, General Frank D. Merrill. These daring men were the first American ground troops to fight the Japanese in the Pacific Theater; and

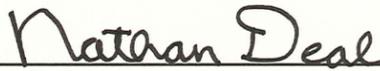
WHEREAS: Merrill's Marauders walked farther than any other WWII fighting force, trudging behind enemy lines up the foothills of the Himalayas and into the jungles of northern Burma to capture the only all-weather airstrip on May 17, 1944, at Myitkyina. These efforts ended Japan's control of the sky and enabled the Allies to begin flying supplies into Burma, opening a crucial pathway into China; and

WHEREAS: 70 years ago, the short-lived Merrill's Marauders unit was disbanded after defeating the Japanese 18th Imperial Division, which vastly outnumbered the small group of men, in five major battles and 30 minor engagements. With disease ravaging their numbers, only about 300 of the roughly 1,300 remaining Merrill's Marauders were fit for combat when they reached their objective and later went on to join replacements who continued to fight in Burma as the 475th Infantry; and

WHEREAS: For their exceptional accomplishments in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations, Merrill's Marauders were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and have the extremely rare distinction of every member of the unit receiving the Bronze Star Medal. There were six Distinguished Service Crosses, four Legions of Merit, and 44 Silver Star Medals awarded to members of this legendary group. 25 Merrill's Marauders have been inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame. The legacy of every one of these courageous men continues to inspire us today and is honored by members of the 75th Ranger Regiment who wear the Marauder patch as their crest; now

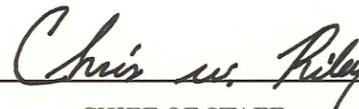
THEREFORE: I, NATHAN DEAL, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim August 10, 2014, as WWII MERRILL'S MARAUDER DAY in Georgia and encourage my fellow citizens to participate in this collective effort to honor and thank these aging veterans.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 21st day of July in the year of our Lord two thousand fourteen.



GOVERNOR

ATTEST



CHIEF OF STAFF

