

State of South Carolina

Governor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, in 1943, almost 3,000 men answered President Franklin D. Roosevelt's call for a secret "dangerous and hazardous" mission, not knowing where they were going or what they would be doing; and

WHEREAS, this unnamed provisional unit of United States Army volunteers, expected to have more than 85 percent casualties, landed October 31, 1943, in Bombay, India, and was officially designated on January 1, 1944, as the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional, code named, "Galahad," and later nicknamed Merrill's Marauders by the press; and

WHEREAS, with only what they could carry on their backs or pack on mules, Merrill's Marauders walked almost 1,000 miles, further than any other World War II fighting force, trudging behind enemy lines up the foothills of the Himalayas and into the jungles of Burma to capture the only all-weather airstrip at Myitkyina, crushing Japan's control of the sky and enabling the Allies to begin flying supplies into Burma so the Ledo and Burma Roads could be connected and a crucial pathway opened up into China; and

WHEREAS, the short-lived Merrill's Marauders unit, the first American ground troops to fight the Japanese in Asia, was disbanded 70 years ago on August 10, 1944, after defeating the Japanese 18th Imperial Division in five major battles and 30 minor engagements; and

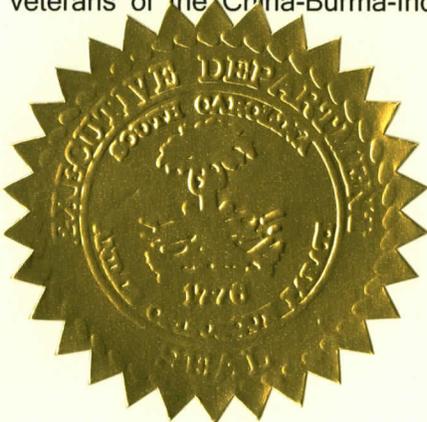
WHEREAS, due to the ravages of disease, only about 300 of the approximate 1,300 remaining Merrill's Marauders were fit for combat after reaching their objective and joined replacements in the 475th Infantry, part of the Mars Task Force, to continue to fight in Burma; and

WHEREAS, for their 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.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nikki R. Haley, Governor of the Great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim August 10, 2014, as

WORLD WAR II MERRILL'S MARAUDERS DAY

throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to honor with gratitude the brave veterans of the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II.



Handwritten signature of Nikki R. Haley in black ink.

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA