

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 408

Commending the United States Army.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 19, 2025
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2025

WHEREAS, the United States Army, the first and oldest branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, has played a defining role in the development and defense of the nation and shaped history as one of the foremost land warfare service branches around the world for 250 years; and

WHEREAS, the United States Army is older than the nation it serves, tracing its roots to June 14, 1775, when the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution calling for the formation of 10 companies of expert riflemen in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, who were to join the militias already gathered near Boston; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of the Continental Army predated the signing of the Declaration of Independence by more than a year, and the rapid growth and development of the force proved essential to the security and integrity of the early United States; and

WHEREAS, while the Continental Army was largely disbanded after the end of the Revolutionary War, a few units continued to serve the nation in limited roles; the first full regiment of regular infantry formed in peacetime was the 3rd United States Infantry Regiment, The Old Guard, which remains on active duty as a ceremonial unit and is stationed at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall; and

WHEREAS, in 1791, ongoing global conflicts and upheaval on the Western Frontier led to the reorganization of a standing ground force, the Legion of the United States, which was renamed in 1796 as the United States Army; during the War of 1812, when many militia units struggled to repulse British forces, the United States Army demonstrated its effectiveness through victories at the Battle of Plattsburgh and the Battle of Baltimore; and

WHEREAS, the United States Army continued to grow, and its victory in the Mexican-American War was a defining moment for the nation, resulting in the acquisition of a large swath of territory that eventually became California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, the United States Army was typically referred to as the Union Army, the Federal Army, or the Northern Army; regular forces were supplemented and strengthened by units of volunteers, and after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, more than 180,000 Black men volunteered for service in the United States Army, playing a crucial role in the triumph over the Confederacy; and

WHEREAS, in the 1890s, the United States Army's successes during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War established the United States as a global power with a significant role to play in international affairs; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, the American Expeditionary Force was composed mostly of units from the United States Army, and these units not only helped turn the tide of the war, but gained crucial battlefield experience that would be needed in the coming decades; and

WHEREAS, units of the United States Army fought in every theater of operations in World War II, deploying to Asia and the Pacific Islands, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, as well as making contributions on the home front; and

WHEREAS, throughout the Cold War, the United States Army garrisoned several units in Europe to deter Soviet aggression and saw major combat actions during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operation Urgent Fury, Operation Just Cause, and other conflicts around the world; and

WHEREAS, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States Army demonstrated American military power during Operation Desert Storm and provided crucial assistance to United Nations interventions in the Balkan Wars; and

WHEREAS, after September 11, 2001, members of the United States Army Special Forces were some of the first American forces on the ground in Afghanistan, and members of the United States Army served extensively in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other hotspots during the Global War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, for 250 years, the United States Army has served as a steadfast guardian, protecting the American way of life with resilience and strength, exemplified by its longstanding motto, "This We'll Defend," which dates back to the Continental Army; and

WHEREAS, the United States Army's iconic slogan, "Be All You Can Be," reflects a way of life that has challenged, equipped, and motivated generations of men and women to serve the nation with distinction and reach their full potential; and

WHEREAS, from the Revolutionary War to the present, active duty members and veterans of the United States Army have epitomized a commitment to service by transforming obstacles into opportunities and

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demonstrating leadership, strength, and honor in all their endeavors; veterans of the United States Army have gone on to serve as leaders in every career field and every level of government across the Commonwealth and the nation, including several United States presidents; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is home to several significant United States Army installations, including Fort Gregg-Adams, Fort Belvoir, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, and Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, all of which play an important role in their communities as major employers; and

WHEREAS, on June 14, 2025, the United States Army will kick off its 250th anniversary celebration with a float at the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California; the design of the float highlights historic events and the accomplishments of exceptional members of the United States Army from George Washington through the modern era; and

WHEREAS, the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States Army through numerous programs and exhibits throughout the year, including "Call To Arms: The Soldier and the Revolutionary War," featuring a collection of rare Revolutionary War artifacts, and a full-day symposium focusing on the first two years of the Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, as the United States Army celebrates its 250th birthday and looks ahead to shape a future of innovation and continued excellence, its purpose remains timeless and clear: to fight and win the nation's wars; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the United States Army, the first and oldest national institution of the United States, on the occasion of its 250th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the National Museum of the United States Army as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the United States Army's incomparable contributions to the formation, growth, and defense of the United States.