

SENATE BILL NO. 413

INTRODUCED BY S. KITZENBERG

BY REQUEST OF THE SENATE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT NAMING U.S. HIGHWAY 2 AS THE 163RD INFANTRY REGIMENT (SUNSET DIVISION) HERITAGE HIGHWAY."

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regiment has served Montana and this nation in war and in peace throughout the past 2 centuries; and

WHEREAS, the year 2003 is the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 163rd Infantry Regiment's heroic efforts to help the allied forces win the Battle of Sanananda in World War II in the Southwest Pacific, a battle recognized as the first major land victory against the Japanese forces; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regiment was ordered into active duty on September 16, 1940, with a force of 1,700 men, including nearly 200 representatives of Montana tribes, and after training for 1 year became part of the initial American forces ordered into duty in the Pacific theater when the United States entered World War II in December 1941; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regiment earned numerous citations and letters of appreciation from Army headquarters during and after World War II, in particular for what General Jacob Devers referred to as "76 days of unrelieved fighting, a record in jungle warfare", as the 163rd Infantry Regiment and the 41st Infantry Division to which it was assigned carried on a 1,000-mile campaign in the jungles of New Guinea; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regimental combat team served as one of the initial occupation forces in Japan after World War II until being demobilized and sent home in January 1946; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regimental combat team upon its return to Montana became a major element of Montana's National Guard, serving as the basis for the Montana Army and Air National Guard, which continue to serve Montana today; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regimental combat team and its successor organizations, the 163rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 163rd Armored Brigade and current units, recruited along U.S. Highway 2 among Montana's Hi-Line communities of Bainville, Poplar, Wolf Point, Glasgow, Malta, Harlem, Chinook, Shelby, Havre, Whitefish, Kalispell, and Libby and on the Fort Peck, Rocky Boy, Fort Belknap, and Blackfeet Reservations; and

WHEREAS, the 163rd Infantry Regiment is the successor to volunteer troops that started with the

Montana Territorial Volunteers, who served from 1867 to 1887, and proceeded to the First Montana Infantry Regiment, the Montana National Guard formed in March 1887, which became the First Montana Infantry Regiment, United States Volunteers, which was formed to fight in the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars in 1898-1899 and which later became the 2nd Montana Infantry, which provided emergency services for Montana before being activated to serve on the U.S.-Mexican Border in 1916 and then was redesignated as the 163rd Infantry Regiment prior to being called to duty in World War I in 1917-1919; and

WHEREAS, the cities and towns of the Hi-Line and the rest of Montana are extremely proud of the services of the 163rd Infantry Regiment; and

WHEREAS, more than 100,000 Montanans have served or are currently serving in units associated with the 163rd Infantry Regiment and deserve recognition for their accomplishments in serving the state and the country.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. 163rd Infantry Regiment (Sunset Division) heritage highway.** (1) U.S. highway 2 from the eastern border to the western border of Montana, a distance of 670 miles, is established as the 163rd Infantry Regiment (Sunset Division) heritage highway.

(2) The department of transportation shall provide appropriate markers to recognize the new name of the highway.

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 60, chapter 1, part 2, and the provisions of Title 60, chapter 1, part 2, apply to [section 1].

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Notification to tribal governments.** The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell band of Chippewa.

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