



Executive Department
State of Idaho

The Office of the Governor
Proclamation

State Capitol
Boise

WHEREAS, in 1943, almost 3,000 men from the jungles of Panama and Trinidad, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, New Georgia and the United States 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 U.S. 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 in honor of their commander, Gen. Frank D. Merrill, who led the first American ground troops to fight the Japanese in Asia; and

WHEREAS, with only what they could carry on their backs or pack on mules, Merrill’s Marauders walked farther than any other World War II fighting force – almost 1,000 miles – 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, crushing Japan’s control on air transport 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, it has been 70 years since the short-lived Merrill’s Marauders unit of the mostly overlooked China-Burma-India Theater of Operations was disbanded on August 10, 1944, after defeating the Japanese 18th Imperial Division, which vastly outnumbered them, in five major battles and 30 minor engagements; and

WHEREAS, jungle diseases ravaged their numbers so only about 300 of the approximate 1,300 remaining Merrill’s Marauders were still 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, which became part of the Mars Task Force; 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 by executive order; and

WHEREAS, there were six Distinguished Service Crosses, four Legions of Merit and 44 Silver Star medals awarded to members of Merrill’s Marauders; 25 Merrill’s Marauders were inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame, and the Merrill’s Marauders legacy continues to be honored today by members of the 75th Ranger Regiment who wear the Marauder patch as their crest;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, C.L. “BUTCH” OTTER, Governor of the State of Idaho, do hereby proclaim August 10, 2014 to be

NATIONAL WWII MERRILL’S MARAUDERS DAY

in Idaho, and encourage all Idahoans to honor and thank these aging WW II China-Burma-India Theater veterans who now number only about 50, for their successes 70 years ago in the jungles of Burma and for their contributions to our nation



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Idaho at the Capitol in Boise on this 10th day of August in the year of our Lord two thousand and fourteen and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred thirty-ninth and of the Statehood of Idaho the one hundred twenty-fifth.

C.L. “BUTCH” OTTER
GOVERNOR

BEN YSURSA
SECRETARY OF STATE