

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 14

Celebrating the life of Brigadier General James Postell Jervey, USA, Ret.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 3, 2022

WHEREAS, Brigadier General James Postell Jervey, USA, Ret., a military engineer whose legacy lives on through his contributions to harbors and marine waterways throughout the United States and the world, including work on the Panama Canal, died on March 12, 1947; and

WHEREAS, James Jervey, the third of six sons born to Dr. Henry D. Jervey, an assistant surgeon originally from Charleston, South Carolina, and Helen Louise Wesson Jervey, of Northampton County, North Carolina, was born on November 14, 1869, and raised at St. Helen's, a modest farm in the Fine Creek Mills area of Powhatan County; and

WHEREAS, James Jervey was employed by the Southern Cotton Oil Company in Atlanta when he was notified that he had been appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York; he entered West Point on June 16, 1888, just days after his eldest brother, Henry, had graduated; and

WHEREAS, James Jervey graduated with honors as the second-highest ranked student in the Class of 1892 and was assigned to the United States Army Corps of Engineers; he entered the Army Engineering School of Application at Willet's Point in New York Harbor and graduated on August 7, 1895, with the equivalent of a master's degree in civil engineering; and

WHEREAS, after completing his education, James Jervey was initially assigned to Montgomery, Alabama, then was placed in charge of fortification work and underwater mine defenses at Pensacola, Florida, during the Spanish-American War; and

WHEREAS, James Jervey was subsequently ordered back to West Point, where he was an instructor in practical military engineering and an assistant professor in the Department of Civil and Military Engineering until 1901; and

WHEREAS, James Jervey completed a tour of duty in the Philippines serving as engineer of the Moro Province, secretary of the Moro Province, and commander in charge of fortification work at Subic Bay; upon returning to the United States in August 1907, he commanded the 1st Battalion of Engineers and the post of Fort Mason, California, until 1907 when he was sent to Washington, D.C., as an instructor of civil engineering; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his outstanding service record, James Jervey was selected to assist with the construction of the Panama Canal; he reported to the Isthmian Canal Commission on July 16, 1908, as assistant engineer in charge of construction of Gatun Locks and later resident engineer in charge of construction until 1913; and

WHEREAS, James Jervey then served as a district engineer in Wheeling, West Virginia, building dams and locks to make the Upper Ohio River navigable for shipping, and in Norfolk, where his duties included expanding and improving the intracoastal waterway in the region; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, James Jervey commanded the 304th Engineers of the 79th Division, participating in the Meuse-Argonne offensive; he later became chief engineer of the 7th Corps and assistant to the chief engineer of the American Expeditionary Forces; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades, James Jervey received the Distinguished Military Service Medal for his contributions to maintaining roads in a suitable condition for the transportation of artillery and large quantities of supplies during the attack on Montfaucon and Nantillois; and

WHEREAS, after the war, James Jervey was assigned to postings in Washington, D.C., Delaware, and Maryland and served as a member of the River and Harbor Board; he retired from the United States Army on September 21, 1920, with the rank of brigadier general; and

WHEREAS, from 1920 to 1926, James Jervey was city manager of Portsmouth, and his engineering ability, sound judgment, and management skills helped the city build an exceptional record of economic efficiency; and

WHEREAS, a talented and passionate educator, James Jervey joined the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, as chair of the mathematics department, and at the onset of World War II, he contributed to the war effort by teaching an accelerated course in navigation to Naval ROTC cadets and United States Navy officers; and

WHEREAS, James Jervey retired in 1945 and settled in Powhatan with his wife, Jean; after his death in 1947, he was laid to rest at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, the church of his youth, alongside many fellow members of the Jervey family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Brigadier General James Postell Jervey, USA, Ret., a leader in military engineering who made many contributions

to the Commonwealth and the United States; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Brigadier General James Postell Jervey, USA, Ret., as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.