

# Proclamation

## by Governor Jim Justice

- Whereas,** on the night of June 5-6, 1944, more than 6,500 elite paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division - the first of the first - spearheaded the American airborne assault on the Cotentin Peninsula in Normandy, France with the critical missions of securing four causeways leading inland from the beach codenamed 'Utah' and neutralizing enemy resistance in advance of the amphibious landings at dawn on D-Day morning by 4th Infantry Division; and
- Whereas,** a great many of the paratroopers were mis-dropped from their designated drop zones, before dawn a small group led by Major John P. Stopka, 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment, attacked and captured a strategically sited and important German garrison headquarters and strongpoint at Marmion Farm, on the outskirts of Ravenoville village; and
- Whereas,** Major Stopka took the decision to hold the farm until relief arrived from Utah Beach, thereby denying enemy movement against the northern shoulder of the 101st assault area and the critical exits; and
- Whereas,** throughout D-Day, other mis-dropped paratroopers from mixed elements of the 101st, even some from the 82nd Airborne, arrived at the farm thereby strengthening the American defense against "...repeated enemy counter-attacks..." the paratroopers held firm until relieved on the early morning of June 7, 1944, by lead elements of 4th Infantry Division; and
- Whereas,** on June 6, 2012, the Eternal Heroes' Memorial was inaugurated in Ravenoville Honoring the "Raveno Boys" whose heroic stand made a significant contribution to the success of the amphibious landings on Utah Beach and ultimately the Allied invasion of Normandy on D-Day; and
- Whereas,** among their number were the gallant sons of West Virginia: Ervin E. Metz, Nicholas County; Junior I. Nutter.

**Now, Therefore,** Be it Resolved that I, Jim Justice, Governor of the Great State of West Virginia, do hereby proclaim *June 6-7, 2024* as:

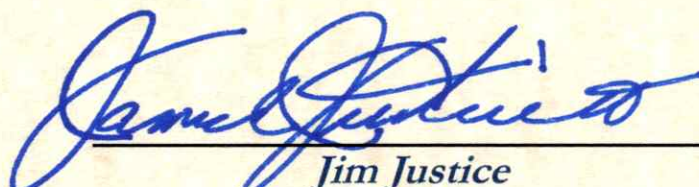
### *Eternal Heroes' Memorial Days*

in the Mountain State and encourage all citizens to join me in observance by honoring the "Raveno Boys" whose heroic stand made a significant contribution to the success of the allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944.


**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

**Done** at the Capitol, City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Thirteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-Three, and in the One Hundred Sixty-First year of the State.



  
Jim Justice  
Governor

*By the Governor:*

  
Mac Warner  
Secretary of State