



State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

NORTH CAROLINA MILITARY HALL OF FIRSTS

2025

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Major General (Ret.) Harvey Dean Williams Sr. blazed a trail as the first African American United States Army officer selected to attend the senior course program at the Naval War College; and

WHEREAS, Major General Williams was the first African American Commander of Fort Myer, Virginia, and the first African American Army General Officer in North Carolina, and Maj. Gen. Williams was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine by the State of North Carolina in August 1996; and

WHEREAS, Major General Elizabeth D. Austin was the first female General Officer in the North Carolina National Guard, and Maj. Gen. Austin had 39 years of service in an Army National Guard career that included combat deployments in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004; and she also served as the Chairperson for the National Guard Association of the United States Sustainment Committee; and

WHEREAS, through her demonstrated persistence and achievements, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Austin continues to be a champion promoting equal and inclusive opportunities for veterans and their families in all aspects of society; and

WHEREAS, Army Sergeant (Ret.) Patricia A. Harris is a Persian Gulf War veteran, advocate, and nonprofit leader and is the Founder of Women Veterans Support Services, Inc. (WVSS), the first nonprofit organization dedicated to women veterans and active-duty military women; and

WHEREAS, Army Sergeant Harris made history as the 98th Department Commander of North Carolina, becoming the first woman veteran, the first African American, and first dual member of the American Legion and the Auxiliary to hold the post, and was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2013; and

WHEREAS, all these trailblazers served with honor and distinction over a lifetime that brought the highest credit to themselves, their branches of service, and the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina and the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs are proud to honor and recognize these individuals as the third class of inductees for the North Carolina Military Hall of Firsts;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim November 6, 2025, as “**NORTH CAROLINA MILITARY HALL OF FIRSTS**” in North Carolina and commend its observance to all citizens.





JOSH STEIN

Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this twenty-first day of October in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-fifth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.