

State of Vermont
Executive Department
A Proclamation

WHEREAS, the Second Vermont Brigade was commanded by Brigadier General George Jerrison Stannard, a native of Georgia, Vermont; and

WHEREAS, the Second Vermont Brigade, untested in battle and with but days remaining in its men's enlistments, reached Gettysburg July 1, 1863 at the end of the first day's fighting in the Civil War's greatest battle; and

WHEREAS, Stannard's Brigade fought ably late the second day at Gettysburg, helping to stabilize the threatened Union line and earning it a place at the front on Cemetery Ridge; and

WHEREAS, on the battle's final day as Pickett's Charge, probably the most important attack of the entire Civil War, approached the Union line on Cemetery Ridge, the Confederates suddenly shifted north, leaving no enemy troops to the Vermonters' front; and

WHEREAS, General Stannard instantly recognized the resulting military opportunity and ordered this 13th and 16th regiments to "change front forward on first company," sending 900 Vermonters in a great wheeling motion into the shot and shell to front of the Union lines; and

WHEREAS, Stannard's men hit the exposed right flank of Pickett's Charge in an attack utterly unexpected by Confederates, inflicting hundreds of casualties; and

WHEREAS, Major Abner Doubleday, commanding the Army of the Potomac's First Corp, in which the Vermonters served, said: "It is to General Stannard that the country is mainly indebted for the repulse of the enemy's charge and the final victory of July 3. His brilliant flank movement...greatly contributed to, if it did not completely insure, our final success;" and

WHEREAS, at Gettysburg, Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was dealt a blow from which it never fully recovered; and

WHEREAS, General Stannard was severely wounded while commanding the Gettysburg flank attack from an exposed position at the front on Cemetery Ridge; and

WHEREAS, Stannard was also seriously wounded at Cold Harbor, in the great Union attack on June 10, 1864, driving his men for a time into the invincible enemy lines; and

WHEREAS, Stannard lost an arm leading the capture and defense of Fort Harrison in the Richmond defenses on September 30, 1864; and

WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor was given to two of General Stannard's men for valor in the attack on Pickett's Charge; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Peter Shumlin, Governor, do hereby support efforts to posthumously award the Medal of Honor to George Jerrison Stannard. May the brave actions at Cold Harbor and Fort Harrison of this great Vermonter and American soldier be considered in determining the qualifications for receiving his nation's highest military honor;



Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 26th day of April, A.D. 2016.

Peter Shumlin
Governor