

Testimony from David G. Oravec Executive Director Lucas County Veterans Service Commission May 7<sup>th</sup> 2025. In Support of House Bill 204.

Honorable Representatives of the OHR Veterans and Military Development Committee,

I am speaking here today in support of HB 204 to make March 9<sup>th</sup> 6888 battalion day in the state of Ohio. In 1991 and 1992 while deployed overseas, the boost from morale I received when receiving mail was immeasurable. Even during a peacetime deployment, receiving mail from my family and friends back home was a big support boost. In 1997 while deployed on the USS Guam, receiving mail was an immense priority for all those aboard. It helped to keep us in touch with the outside world back home and also helped our unit become a better fighting force as we were able to enjoy the little moments when receiving mail and helping each other to get through all of the struggles of life that happens when a military member is deployed, Everything from a wife giving birth to a new born child to the infamous “dear John Letter”. Information from home helped all of us who were deployed obtain a little peace in knowing that either things were ok back home, or it also allowed us to lean on each other for support in the event of any bad news. Not knowing what is going on back home is the worst thing to experience while on a deployment. It causes the mind to wander and to lose focus on the task at hand which may very well be a life-or-death situation. Even in today’s military, although emailing and video calls are commonplace, it is still a large morale boost when receiving a care package from home. Receiving mail helps to alleviate some of the stressors when a service member is deployed. The need for troops to receive their mail during World War II was extremely important. As the 6888<sup>th</sup> battalion motto states “no mail low morale.” The quick turn around and exemplary performance of that battalion allowed the American forces not only to receive their mail in very extreme and austere situations, but it also provided that immeasurable morale boost for troops to focus on winning the war and eventually being able to come home. During my time in the military from 1986-2006, a unit that performed above and beyond would normally receive a unit citation or for exceptional service or perhaps even a presidential unit citation. As the 6888<sup>th</sup> received no such unit citations or awards for exemplary performance, only decades later did they receive a congressional gold medal. It is only fitting that the State of Ohio recognizes the 6888<sup>th</sup> by designating March 9<sup>th</sup> as 6888 Battalion Day.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Executive Director Lucas County Veterans Service Commission