

State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

CENTENNIAL OF WWI ALONG THE NORTH CAROLINA COAST

2018

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the coast of North Carolina was the scene of submarine warfare during World War I; and

WHEREAS, on August 6, 1918, Lightship LV-71, Diamond Shoal, under Master Walter Barnett, observed German submarine U-140 attacking SS Merak, ordered a warning be sent out to alert friendly ships in the area, and subsequently rescued the crew of Merak; and

WHEREAS, having intercepted the warning signal, U-140 sank LV-71 Diamond Shoal, the first and only United States Lightship sunk by enemy action in WWI, after letting her twelve-member crew and the survivors of Merak row towards shore in a lifeboat; and

WHEREAS, on August 16, 1918, German submarine U-117 torpedoed Mirlo, a British tanker fully loaded with fuel desperately needed by our allies in England; and

WHEREAS, the explosion, seven miles off the coast at Rodanthe, was noticed by Surfman Leroy Midgett who was on watch at the Chicamacomico Coast Guard Station; and

WHEREAS, Keeper John Allen "Captain Johnny" Midgett, Jr. called his crew to action and, despite fifteen-foot seas and the lingering threat of U-boat activity, launched Surfboat 1046 into the sea; and

WHEREAS, Captain Johnny and his surfmen rescued 42 of 51 British seamen and got them safely ashore; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the daring rescue, John Allen and his crew were awarded the Gold Life Saving Medal as well as the Grand Cross of the American Cross of Honor; King George VI struck Gold Medals for the rescuers and the British Board of Trade honored John Allen with a Silver Loving Cup; and

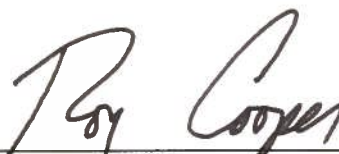
WHEREAS, for his lifetime of service to the United States Coast Guard, John Allen had two USCG Cutters named in his honor, including the recently christened National Security Cutter John Allen Midgett, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, August 6 and 16, 2018, mark the 100th anniversary of these events; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina recognizes the generations of men and women who have braved the hardships of life on the Outer Banks and risked their personal safety to keep countless ships safe throughout the course of the rich history of the North Carolina coast;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROY COOPER, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim August 6 – 16, 2018, as the "CENTENNIAL OF WWI ALONG THE NORTH CAROLINA COAST" in North Carolina, and commend its observance to all citizens.





Roy Cooper
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 thirty-first day of July in the year of our Lord two thousand and eighteen and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-second.