

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009**

**SESSION LAW 2009-198
HOUSE BILL 1021**

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE A PORTION OF U.S. HIGHWAY 17 AND U.S. HIGHWAY 70
AS "THE U.S. MARINE CORPS HIGHWAY: HOME OF THE CAROLINA-BASED
MARINES SINCE 1941."

Whereas, during 1940, amid the escalating mobilization of World War II, the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Marine Air Wings of the United States Marine Corps were in need of an operational staging area on the east coast of the United States; and

Whereas, in the summer of 1940, Major John C. McQueen and his pilot, Captain Verne McCaul, on the orders of then Major General Thomas Holcomb, Marine Corps Commandant, undertook an aerial survey that covered the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts from Norfolk, Virginia, to Corpus Christi, Texas, and determined that 14 miles of beach in Onslow County, North Carolina, was the only suitable location for a Marine Corps base in the Eastern United States; and

Whereas, in February 1941, President Roosevelt authorized an initial outlay of \$1,500,000 for the survey and purchase of a 174-square-mile tract near Jacksonville, North Carolina, and on April 5, 1941, the United States Congress authorized \$14,575,000 for the base's construction; and

Whereas, on May 1, 1941, the Marine Barracks New River was formally established as a major amphibious training ground and has grown since into the Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, partly bounded by U.S. Highway 17 in Jacksonville, North Carolina; and

Whereas, from April 1942 until desegregation of the Marine Corps in 1949, Montford Point Camp in North Carolina was the exclusive training grounds for African-American Marines; and

Whereas, from 1943 until passage of the Women's Armed Service Integration Act in 1948, the New River Base was the principal training center for the women Marines, having trained over 20,000 women Marines; and

Whereas, in 1944 the United States Marine Corps assumed control of Camp Davis at Holly Ridge when the United States Army declared it excess to their needs and utilized it to train the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps; and

Whereas, other sites along or near U.S. Highway 17 in Eastern North Carolina have historical significance to the United States Marine Corps, including major air stations at Cherry Point and Edenton, North Carolina, and auxiliary or outlying landing fields at Atlantic Beach, Beaufort, Bogue, Greenville, Manteo, New River, Oak Grove, Washington, and Wilson; and

Whereas, the Museum of the Marine currently being planned at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina, will honor the history of the Carolina-based Marines from World War II to the present and highlight the many historically significant locations along U.S. Highway 17; and

Whereas, estimates show that the Museum of the Marine has the potential to draw 100,000 visitors each year, and the designation of U.S. Highway 17 as a scenic byway will add to this attraction; and



Whereas, the General Assembly desires to honor the United States Marine Corps' large and enduring military presence at locations in Eastern North Carolina along U.S. Highway 17; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. U.S. Highway 17 running between the Town of Holly Ridge and the Town of Edenton, and the portion of U.S. Highway 70 running between the intersection of U.S. Highway 70 and N.C. Highway 101 near Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station and the intersection of U.S. Highway 70 and U.S. Highway 17 is designated as "The U.S. Marine Corps Highway: Home of Carolina-Based Marines since 1941" in light of the historical contributions of the United States Marine Corps.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation shall collaborate with the Highway 17 Association, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Cultural Resources concerning the appropriate signage along the Highway designated in this act, in order to maximize the economic development opportunities along the route of the Highway. The Department of Transportation may contract with nongovernmental entities to produce, install, and maintain the signs.

SECTION 2.1. No State funds shall be expended to purchase signage or for any other purpose authorized by this act. All costs shall be paid by the Marine Corps Parkway Association.

SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 18th day of June, 2009.

s/ Walter H. Dalton
President of the Senate

s/ Joe Hackney
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
Governor

Approved 11:49 a.m. this 26th day of June, 2009