

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION paying tribute to the memory of Staff Sergeant William F. Leonard, United States Army, upon the occasion of his posthumous designation as recipient of the Medal of Honor

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Forces, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which our Nation's freedom was at stake, and during which the United States proudly stood as a defender of liberty and human dignity, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to pay tribute to the memory of Staff Sergeant William F. Leonard, United States Army, upon the occasion of his posthumous designation as recipient of the Medal of Honor; this meritorious honor will be presented at a White House ceremony on Tuesday, March 18, 2014; and

WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is the highest military medal bestowed by the United States; it is awarded for valor in action against an enemy force; and

WHEREAS, Pfc. William F. Leonard, of Lockport, New York, is being recognized for his valorous actions during World War II while serving as a squad leader with Company C, 30th Infantry, on November 7, 1944, near St. Die, France; and

WHEREAS, On that fateful day, William F. Leonard's platoon was in the middle of a vicious firefight with Nazi forces, and reduced to eight men by blistering artillery, mortar, machine-gun, and rifle power; this brave soldier and leader led the survivors in an assault over a tree-and-shrub-covered hill, continuously swept by automatic fire; and

WHEREAS, William F. Leonard killed two snipers at ranges of 50 and 75 yards and, disregarding the bullets that pierced his back, he engaged and destroyed a heavy machine gun with rifle grenades, killing its two-man crew; and

WHEREAS, Although he was stunned by an exploding bazooka shell, he continued his relentless advance to knock out a second machine-gun and capture the roadblock objective; and

WHEREAS, William F. Leonard left the United States Army with the rank of staff sergeant and, after his service, returned to Lockport where he worked in the auto industry and as a butcher before retiring from work at a radiator company; he died in 1985 at the age of 71; and

WHEREAS, A truly valiant soldier, Staff Sergeant William F. Leonard received the Distinguished Service Cross, which will be upgraded to the Medal of Honor, the Bronze Star Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one Bronze Service Star, the World War II Victory Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Honorable Service Lapel Button-World War II; and

WHEREAS, The banner of freedom will always wave over this great Nation, the land of the free and the home of the brave; and

WHEREAS, The freedoms and security we cherish as Americans come at a very high price for those serving in the military in times of conflict; it is fitting and proper that we who are the beneficiaries of those who risk their lives, leaving their families behind, express our appreciation and eternal gratitude for their sacrifices and courageous acts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Staff Sergeant William F. Leonard, United States Army, upon the occasion of his posthumous designation as recipient of the Medal of Honor, and to pay tribute to him for his courageous actions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Staff Sergeant William F. Leonard.

