

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending World War II veteran Laurence "Sparky" Rector for his distinguished military service to his country

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so faithfully and courageously in wars in which our Nation's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace during peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend World War II veteran Laurence "Sparky" Rector for his distinguished military service to his country, celebrated at a public viewing of his video testimony for the Library of Congress on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, at the Mexico VFW in Mexico, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans History Project was started by the United States Congress in 2000, with the purpose of collecting, preserving, and making accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear their voices and better understand the realities of war; and

WHEREAS, A native of New Haven, New York, Sparky Rector proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army during World War II, and has been recognized for a number of achievements throughout his 90-plus years; and

WHEREAS, On December 26, 2015, Sparky Rector was interviewed by Joe Messineo, a volunteer with the Veterans History Project, who, together with cameraman Dick Calagiovanni worked tirelessly to ensure this incredible testament is forever secured in the records of the United States Library of Congress; and

WHEREAS, As part of this remarkable historical project, Sparky Rector recounted the many experiences and dangers he faced over his two years, seven months, and 14 days of wartime service; and

WHEREAS, Sparky Rector graduated from Mexico Academy and Central High School, and was drafted into service in the United States Army in February of 1943; following basic training at Camp Croft in South Carolina, he became part of 2nd Battalion, 157th, Company G, 2nd Platoon, and was shipped overseas; and

WHEREAS, Joining his unit as a replacement, Sparky Rector landed in Oran, Algeria, and traveled with his fellow soldiers through Africa and then to the island of Sicily; he was later stationed in the Italian mountains, and experienced heavy combat after his company landed in Anzio and fought their way through Italy to Rome; and

WHEREAS, After receiving additional training, Sparky Rector took part in the massive D-Day invasion of Southern France; from there, he was involved in serious fighting during the Allied advance across Europe, and helped liberate the Dachau Concentration Camp in 1945; and

WHEREAS, Following the completion of his military service at the esteemed rank of Corporal, Sparky Rector returned home, started a family, and became a respected member of the Mexico, New York, community; and

WHEREAS, On April 25, 2015, Sparky Rector, escorted by his son Jay, traveled with 80 of his fellow World War II veterans from Central New York on Honor Flight Syracuse, Mission 005, to Washington, DC, where they visited military memorials and were honored for their exceptional service to our country; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation and to those who continue to be missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited their patriotism both at home and abroad,

these men and women demonstrated their love for their country and merit forevermore, the highest respect of their State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor World War II veteran Laurence "Sparky" Rector for his distinguished military service to his country; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Laurence "Sparky" Rector.