

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Memorial Day in the Village of Waterloo, New York, on May 30th, 2016

WHEREAS, In the course of the evolving development of this Empire State, certain communities have endured and exist today as evidence of the proud heritage of this State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Settled in 1792, the Village of Waterloo has a particularly vibrant heritage and holds claim to a number of historically significant events in the progression of this State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Most notably, the Village of Waterloo is proud to have Federal designation as the birthplace of Memorial Day; this National Holiday, celebrated the last Monday during the month of May, was first observed one hundred and fifty years ago in Waterloo, New York; and

WHEREAS, On May 30th, 2016, the community of Waterloo will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Memorial Day with a myriad of events scheduled throughout the day including ceremonies at area cemeteries, a dignitary reception at the National Memorial Day Museum, and a Memorial Day parade down Main Street, as well as a commemorative ceremony in Lafayette Park; and

WHEREAS, During the summer of 1865, a prominent local druggist, Henry C. Welles, mentioned to some of his friends at a social gathering that while praising the living veterans of the Civil War it would be well to remember the patriotic dead by placing flowers on their graves; the following year he advanced the idea again to General John B. Murray; and

WHEREAS, General John B. Murray, an intensely patriotic Civil War hero supported the idea wholeheartedly and marshalled veterans' support; plans were developed for a more complete celebration by a local citizens' committee headed by Henry C. Welles and General John B. Murray; and

WHEREAS, On May 5th, 1866, the Village of Waterloo was decorated with flags at half mast, draped with evergreens and mourning black; veterans, civic societies and residents, led by General John B. Murray, marched to the strains of martial music to the three village cemeteries where ceremonies were held and soldiers' graves decorated; and

WHEREAS, One year later, the ceremonies were repeated and in 1868, Waterloo joined with other communities in holding their observance on May 30th, in accordance with General Logan's orders, and has been held annually ever since; and

WHEREAS, The Village of Waterloo held the first formal, village wide annual observance of a day dedicated to honoring the war dead and on March 7th, 1966, the State of New York recognized Waterloo by a proclamation signed by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller; the United States Congress followed in recognizing Waterloo when the House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously passed House Concurrent Resolution 587 on May 17th and May 19th, 1966, respectively; and

WHEREAS, The Resolution reads in part as follows: "Resolved that the Congress of the United States, in recognition of the patriotic tradition set in motion one hundred years ago in the Village of Waterloo, New York, does hereby officially recognize Waterloo, New York as the birthplace of Memorial Day,.."; on May 26th, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson, signed a Presidential Proclamation recognizing the Village of Waterloo as the official birthplace of Memorial Day; and

WHEREAS, Each Memorial Day our Nation remembers those veterans who served in our Armed Forces with a special remembrance to those who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, In remembering our deceased veterans, we recall their courage and patriotism which, throughout more than 200 years of the existence of

the United States, have served to preserve our most precious freedoms;

now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Memorial Day in Waterloo, New York, on May 30th, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Village of Waterloo, New York.