

BY: Senator HELMING

COMMEMORATING the rededication of the World War I Memorial in Sodus Point, New York, in conjunction with the observance of the 100th Anniversary of the United States' entrance into World War I on April 29, 2017

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those young people within the great Empire State who have made strong contributions to their communities and who serve as role models for their peers; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the rededication of the World War I Memorial, complete with its replica of the WW I Memorial, in Sodus Point, New York, in conjunction with the observance of the 100th Anniversary of the United States' entrance into World War I, to be celebrated on Saturday, April 29, 2017, at the Methodist Church on Bay Street in Sodus Point, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Neighborhood Association of Sodus Point has also sponsored a new plaque which tells the story of the local World War I soldiers and the village's infamous machine gun, which was stolen from the memorial 55 years ago; and

WHEREAS, On October 11, 1918, a memorial service was held for John McMillan, a Sodus Point native, who died in France while serving his country during World War I; and

WHEREAS, On March 13, 1925, the Sodus Point John McMillan American Legion Post 910 was organized in recognition of their native son; a year later, the post displayed various "war trophies" such as trench mortar on wheels, a machine gun, three rifles, six bayonets, six canteens, three steel helmets, and three sabers; and

WHEREAS, On Memorial Day in 1929, a World War I Memorial was erected, and then dedicated in front of the Sodus Point Methodist Church on Bay Street; along with tablets for veterans, John McMillan and Delancy Smith, the centerpiece of the monument was the German machine gun war trophy; and

WHEREAS, Between 1926 and 1961, two generations of Sodus Point boys played soldier around the WW I Memorial; unfortunately, on August 17, 1961, the barrel portion of the machine gun was stolen, leaving only the empty machine gun carriage; and

WHEREAS, As the years passed the Sodus Point American Legion Post closed, and the World War I Memorial was largely unnoticed for many years, until recently one of the boy soldiers decided that it was time to restore the Memorial; and

WHEREAS, Tom Kirkpatrick, and the Sodus Point Historian, Sandy Hopkins, and a number of the boys who played soldier behind the Memorial, did research and discovered the barrel portion of the gun was stolen and cast off in Sodus Bay, only a few hundred yards from the Memorial; and

WHEREAS, The Wayne County Sheriff's Department scuba divers diligently searched the Sodus Bay Katlinn Marine, but were unable to find the lost WW I gun trophy; and

WHEREAS, Fortunately, upon hearing the story, teacher David Ross and his Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering class at the Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES Wayne Tech and Career Center were inspired to create an amazing replica of the missing World War I German machine gun; the hard-working and dedicated students included Jarrett Arnold, Abigail Clark, Molly Zwick, Scott O'Connor, John DeRoo, Seth Faeth, Lance Pentycofe, Nathan Hubright, Noshua Cramer, Daniel Kunz, Josh DiMora, Nathan LeClair, and teachers, Dave Ross and Kelly Paladino; and

WHEREAS, As our State and Nation observes this 100th Anniversary, we reflect with solemn reverence upon the valor of a generation that served with honor, and pay tribute to the more than four million servicemen who left their families to serve bravely, a world away from everything they knew and everyone they loved; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the rededication of the World War I Memorial in Sodus Point, New York, in conjunction with the observance of the 100th Anniversary of the United States' entrance into World War I; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sandy Hopkins, Town of Sodus Point Historian, and to the aforementioned students and teachers of the Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES Wayne Technical and Career Center.