

Senate Resolution No. 1341

**BY:** Senator RITCHIE

**COMMENDING** five off-post Fort Drum Soldiers upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend the caring concern and heroic acts of individuals who take prompt and appropriate action in emergency situations, nobly risking their own lives in an effort to preserve the life of another; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend five off-post Fort Drum Soldiers upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

**WHEREAS,** The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

**WHEREAS,** On the evening of Thursday, October 14, 2021, Sergeant Major Jake Smith was pulling into the plaza on Arsenal Street in the City of Watertown, New York, when he observed a pickup truck speeding down the street before smashing into another vehicle and exploding into flames; and

**WHEREAS,** Four other soldiers, Specialists Shane T. Cockerham, William L. Berube, Jacob G. Jones and Zachary Broxson, had just finished dinner in the same plaza when they saw and heard the violent, fiery crash; and

**WHEREAS,** Without hesitation or regard for their own safety, these five brave United States Army Soldiers rushed to the scene where one victim remained trapped in the driver's side of the pickup truck; and

**WHEREAS,** During this time, as the vehicle continued to become engulfed in flames, these brave men attempted to kick in the door and break the seat while one of the soldiers crawled under the vehicle in an effort to put out the fire; and

**WHEREAS,** Shortly thereafter, local firefighters arrived and were able to use the Jaws of Life to remove the victim from the vehicle; and

**WHEREAS,** Justly recognized as heroes, Sergeant Major Jake Smith and Specialists Shane T. Cockerham, William L. Berube, Jacob G. Jones and Zachary Broxson richly merit the admiration of this Legislative Body and their communities for their consummate, swift action in saving the lives of these five individuals; and

**WHEREAS,** Moreover, they should be meritoriously commended for remaining calm under pressure and for showing valor and true courage while performing a lifesaving deed; and

**WHEREAS,** Sergeant Major Jake Smith and Specialists Shane T. Cockerham, William L. Berube, Jacob G. Jones and Zachary Broxson, in their spontaneous and heroic acts, have so aptly demonstrated their character and compassion for the welfare of others, personifying, by virtue of their actions, the collective concern of ordinary citizens across the community of New York State who voluntarily respond without thought of danger or reward when others are in need of help; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend five off-post Fort Drum Soldiers upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sergeant Major Jake Smith and Specialists Shane T. Cockerham, William L. Berube, Jacob G. Jones and Zachary Broxson.