

BY: M. of A. Hawley

COMMENDING Eugene D. Dollard upon the occasion of
being awarded France's Legion of Honor Medal

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge outstanding individuals whose exemplary military service merited decorations for achievement and commendable service, especially those soldiers who so valiantly served for the benefit of other peoples and nations; and

WHEREAS, It is also the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to those distinguished veterans whose service has been recognized by the governments of other nations, in appreciation and gratitude for their contributions to securing or maintaining the freedom of those lands; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Eugene D. Dollard upon the occasion of being awarded France's Legion of Honor Medal; and

WHEREAS, Eugene D. Dollard, a member of the vanishing Greatest Generation who survived fighting Germans in France during World War II, will be honored by the Ambassador to France for aiding the liberation of hundreds of thousands from the grips of the Nazis 77 years ago; and

WHEREAS, By presidential decree of French President Emmanuel Macron, the Legion of Honor Medal is the highest accolade conferred for military bravery and service, notably initiated by French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802; and

WHEREAS, As France's Legion of Honor's distinguished recipient, Eugene D. Dollard, is in good company, sharing prominence with other American recipients, including, Generals Dwight David Eisenhower, Douglas MacArthur, George S. Patton, and Admiral Michael Mullen; and

WHEREAS, In 1943, at eighteen years-of-age with one semester at the University of Notre Dame under his belt, Eugene D. Dollard answered the call by enlisting in the United States Navy; he endured three months of grueling training, divided between Sampson Naval Base, Geneva, New York, Lido Beach, Long Island, and then onto Quonset Point, Rhode Island, for gunnery school; and

WHEREAS, Assigned to the United States Naval Amphibious Division, he departed from Hoboken, New Jersey, on the newly commissioned U.S.S. Henrico; and

WHEREAS, After refitting at Bayonne Naval Supply Depot in New Jersey, Eugene D. Dollard's ship headed out to Great Britain; in a cat and mouse game to distract the Germans, his ship constantly moved about England's and Scotland's harbors including Weymouth, Portsmouth, and

Greenock, preparing and amassing for the greatest armada in history, June 6, 1944, when Allied forces launched a combined naval, air and land assault on Nazi-occupied France; and

WHEREAS, On D-Day, Eugene D. Dollard and the crew onboard the U.S.S. Henrico were among numerous ships which sailed through the English Channel as part of the largest invasion in history, the Storming of Normandy at Omaha Beach; the U.S.S. Henrico transported General Eisenhower's 1st Division in the initial wave on Omaha Beach, providing supporting naval artillery for the landing forces; and

WHEREAS, As he manned twenty-millimeter machine guns aboard the ship, Eugene D. Dollard vividly remembers the water turning red and the wholesale slaughter where seven thousand men were killed in the first 24 hours; and

WHEREAS, During the invasion, Eugene D. Dollard was in charge of the LCVP's or small crafts off the U.S.S. Henrico APA 45; as the Germans continually fired off the French cliffs hammering the beach and water, and under aircraft fire, the heroic French Resistance ran to the small boats to assist; and

WHEREAS, Under a heavy barrage of bullets, Eugene D. Dollard landed on the beach and dove in the trenches; after crawling out, he dragged numerous wounded men into the trenches to administer first aid; and

WHEREAS, Upon the conclusion of the battle at Omaha Beach, Eugene D. Dollard moved to the French colonies of North Africa, Morocco, and Oran, Algiers; while in the Mediterranean the U.S.S. Henrico was hit, remaining faintly above water level, and later in Naples, Italy, the crew picked up General Patton's 3rd Army, delivering the troops to St. Tropez, and then onto Marseille for Southern France's D-Day Invasion on August 15, 1944; and

WHEREAS, Eugene D. Dollard was then transferred to the U.S.S. Chilton for the Pacific tour, island-hopping to the Marshall Islands, Caroline Islands and onto the chain of the formidable Ryukyu Islands; and

WHEREAS, In June of 1945, Eugene D. Dollard faced the "Violent Typhoon of Steel" at Okinawa Island; during the battle, 50,000 Americans died, and Eugene was wounded; and

WHEREAS, Later, on Awase Beach, Okinawa, Eugene D. Dollard was assigned the task of overseeing vast supply shipments, including trucks, tanks, food, jeeps, and weapon carriers; even though the United States had taken over Okinawa, the Japanese remained a threat and securing the island proved problematic; and

WHEREAS, Around 1:00 a.m. most mornings, the Japanese would bomb the island; while in a bunker during one of these raids, Eugene D. Dollard observed shadowy figures along the beach, and subsequently, crawled out into the darkness and tackled a Japanese general; and

WHEREAS, With a knife held at his throat, Eugene D. Dollard was able to wrench the general's arm in a half-nelson move, and turned him over to the Military Police; and

WHEREAS, After three years of brutal war, Eugene D. Dollard was honorably discharged, and returned to the United States where he earned his law degree from the University of Notre Dame; upon graduating, he took over the family business in Hamlin, New York; and

WHEREAS, Today, at the age of 96, Eugene D. Dollard remains an active and vital part of his Hamlin community; he maintains several businesses, attends church every Sunday and enjoys spending time with his wife Marci; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Eugene D. Dollard has demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore, the highest respect of his 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, their Nation, and to the ideal of freedom throughout the world; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Eugene D. Dollard upon the occasion of being awarded France's Legion of Honor Medal; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Eugene D. Dollard.