

BY: Senator LANZA

COMMENDING the Richmond County American Legion upon the occasion of celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the American Legion on March 15, 2019

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

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those patriotic organizations and individuals who devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Richmond County American Legion upon the occasion of celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the American Legion to be observed at an event on Friday, March 15, 2019, at LiGreci's Staaten in Staten Island, New York; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Centennial Celebration is not only about honoring the past 100 years of its history, but also preparing to continue its legacy of service to veterans and their families; events and activities at posts around the world will showcase the American Legion "Still Serving America"; and

WHEREAS, On March 15, 1919, the American Legion was founded in Paris, France, by United States World War I military personnel who were dedicated to four pillars of service and advocacy: veterans, military personnel, youth and patriotic values; membership is open to military personnel and veterans who have served their nation on active duty during wartime; and

WHEREAS, Today, the American Legion consists of 55 departments in each of the 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, France, Mexico, the Philippines and Puerto Rico; there are approximately 13,000 local posts worldwide; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's current national membership is approximately two million, and combined with the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion, membership in the American Legion Family exceeds three million; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the last century, the American Legion has been instrumental in the creation of a number of major institutions of American society, such as the formation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, creation of the United States Flag Code, the passage of the GI Bill and much more; and

WHEREAS, On November 10, 1919, 100 New Yorkers attended the first American Legion National Convention at the Minneapolis Convention Center, making it one of the largest delegations; at this time, New York State was comprised of 646 posts including New Brighton's James S. Slosson Post No. 53, Port Richmond's Arthur Egbert Post No. 95, and Stapleton's James J. Tappen Post; and

WHEREAS, From 1919-1920, A. Hunter Platt, a member of Slosson Post, served as the American Legion of Richmond County's first County Commander; and

WHEREAS, Most of the Staten Island American Legion Posts are named after United States servicemen killed in action including: Cespino, Russo, Beauvais, Hudson, Huttner, Pasqualini, Watkins, Kellett, Cichon, Kells, Grennie, Granito, Smith, Dalessio, Tappen, Merrell and Slosson; and

WHEREAS, James S. Slosson Post is named after Captain James S. Slosson who was killed in action on September 27, 1918; Arthur Egbert Post is named after Seaman 2nd class Arthur S. Egbert who perished aboard the USS President Lincoln when it was sunk on May 31, 1918, and James J. Tappen Post is named for Private First Class James J. Tappen who was killed near Binarville, France, on September 28, 1918; and

WHEREAS, On January 2, 1946, an American Legion Post charter was issued to the Post No. 1368, named after Medal of Honor recipient Joseph F. Merrell, who single-handedly attacked German positions that were firing on his unit; he disabled two enemy machine gun emplacements and killed nearly two dozen German soldiers before he was himself killed; and

WHEREAS, Richmond County has held various positions in the American Legion Department of New York including Past Department Commanders Aldo Benedetto (1960-1961) and Frank Peters (2014-2015); Frank LaMarsh is a candidate for Department Commander in 2020; and

WHEREAS, The present American Legion of Richmond County leadership team consists of Commander Anthony DeNatale, Adjutant Frank LaMarsh, Treasurer William Magnuski, and Vice Commanders Steve Ayling, Paul Dietrich, David Martin and Daniel Venezia who oversee the county programs, some of which include the High School Oratorical Contest, Boys State, and the Interfaith Memorial honoring the Four Chaplains; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, the Legion sponsors various events which commend the outstanding youth in the community, recognizes first responders, visits veterans in nursing homes, and honoring those who have passed on; this vital organization also provides vital input to city, state and national legislators on issues impacting all veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, Most importantly, the American Legion of Richmond County's Posts continues to support veterans affairs and foster both patriotism and Americanism; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous leadership of Commander Anthony DeNatale, the success of the Richmond County American Legion is in direct correlation to the efforts of its members and volunteers, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, Today, the American Legion continues its dedication to fostering the traditions of patriotism, excellence, and commitment which have made our nation strong; it is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize the significance of their contributions and to note their worthy endeavors which have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Richmond County American Legion upon the occasion of celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the American Legion on March 15, 2019; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Anthony DeNatale, Commander, Richmond County American Legion.