

BY: Senator JORDAN

COMMENDING Robert E. Barss posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

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, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Robert E. Barss posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate, to be presented at the Saratoga County Honor A Deceased Veteran Ceremony on Tuesday, March 19, 2019; 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, Robert E. Barss was born on December 20, 1922, at his home in Greenfield Center to Charles and Carrie Barss; one of eight children, he graduated from Saratoga Springs High School; and

WHEREAS, Robert E. Barss entered into the United States Army on January 16, 1943; he served with the 225th AAA Searchlight Battalion, better known as the "Skylighters" as a Radio Operator; and

WHEREAS, Just before January 1, 1944, Robert E. Barss arrived in England and became part of the antiaircraft defense; in June of that same year, the Skylighters landed on Omaha Beach and formed part of the defense of Normandy; from there, they were attached to the 9th Air Forces' 422nd and 425th Night Fighter Squadrons where they had a role in downing over 36 enemy planes and V-1 Buzz bombs; and

WHEREAS, The battalions 36 GE Searchlights were used to put up over 4,000 light canopies that saved countless planes, as well as saving countless civilian lives by deflecting enemy planes by blinding them with their lights; and

WHEREAS, Following the surrender of Japan, the Unit was disbanded in December of 1945; Robert E. Barss was discharged on December 16, 1945, with the rank of T-5, having served in Central Europe, Normandy, Northern France and Rhineland; and

WHEREAS, For his courageous service during the World War II, Robert E. Barss was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the WWII Victory Medal; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service, Robert E. Barss married the former Ruth Nowhitney on June 23, 1951, and together they had seven children; and

WHEREAS, An avid outdoorsman, Robert E. Barss loved sharing his skills and the love of nature with his children and grandchildren; for many years, he served as a 4-H Club Leader; and

WHEREAS, Robert E. Barss worked in manufacturing and retired from the Cottrell Paper Company; he was also the caretaker of the North Milton Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Robert E. Barss died on September 24, 2015, at the age of 92; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation and to those who continue to be missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Robert E. Barss 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 and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Robert E. Barss posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Robert E. Barss.