

Senate Resolution No. 1255

BY: Senator ROLISON

COMMENDING Paul Davidson 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 Paul Davidson 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

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, Paul Davidson was born on July 23, 1948, at Parkchester Hospital and spent his formative years in the Eastchester Housing Project in the Bronx, New York; and

WHEREAS, Paul Davidson was raised in a family profoundly shaped by military service; his father, Jack Davidson, a World War II veteran, served in the Philippines and tragically passed away at the age of 38, when Paul was just 14 years old; and

WHEREAS, Continuing the family tradition of service, Paul's brother, Jerry Davidson, served honorably in the United States Navy from 1963 to 1965, while their mother, Betty Davidson, devoted herself to raising her children following their father's untimely passing; and

WHEREAS, Paul Davidson began his education at PS 121 and PS 135 in the Bronx and, inspired by a desire to pursue maritime service, enrolled in the John W. Brown Liberty Ship High School-the nation's only floating maritime high school-graduating in 1966; and

WHEREAS, Upon graduation, Paul Davidson enlisted in the United States Navy and served aboard the destroyer USS Robert H. McCard as an engineman before being transferred in 1967 to Task Force 116, known as the River Patrol Force, where he served on a Patrol Boat River (PBR) patrolling the perilous Mekong Delta during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, During his time in combat, Paul Davidson endured traumatic and life-altering events, including the loss of his friend, Navy medic Ralph D. Hale, during an ambush on December 9, 1967, and the subsequent loss of an entire PBR crew during the Tet Offensive; and

WHEREAS, Paul Davidson completed his service with honor and returned to civilian life in August 1968 at the age of 20, bearing the indelible marks of war that would remain with him throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, Following his military service, Paul Davidson worked as a cab driver in New York City before becoming a conductor with the railroad; he married and had three children before later divorcing, and in 1991 retired from the railroad to operate a carburetor shop; and

WHEREAS, Paul Davidson devoted himself to serving fellow veterans, actively participating in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and the American Legion; Paul also co-founded the Veterans Council of the Mid-Hudson Valley, where he spearheaded initiatives including the DAV transportation program to ensure veterans had access to medical care and essential services; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, following the death of his friend Frank Lavelle, Paul Davidson began working with the American Red Cross, driving the Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) to aid communities during times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, Paul Davidson continued his commitment to community service by volunteering with Friends of Seniors, where he helped expand transportation assistance for seniors across and beyond Dutchess County; and

WHEREAS, Paul Davidson died on April 9, 2020, and was laid to rest at the Saratoga National Cemetery on April 16, 2020; in recognition of his profound life of service, a social media tribute honoring Paul's contributions went viral, prompting a poignant flyover salute by a fellow veteran, symbolizing the respect and gratitude of a nation; 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 risked their lives for their beloved Nation; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Paul Davidson 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 Paul Davidson 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 Paul Davidson.

