

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMENDING Kenneth C. Thayer 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; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Kenneth C. Thayer 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 honored in September of 2024, by the people of Limburg Province and presented to King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of The Netherlands, in commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of The Netherlands; and

WHEREAS, As a combat infantryman of Company K, 119th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division, U.S. Army, Kenneth C. Thayer is believed to be one of the first soldiers of the Allied Armies to cross over from Belgium into The Netherlands in the pre-dawn hours of September 12, 2024; this historic event preceded the Allied combined ground/airborne operation known as Market Garden by five days; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth C. Thayer, in a brave act of selflessness, volunteered to conduct a one-man reconnaissance patrol into the Dutch village of Noorbeek to scope out the area ahead for his platoon; this village is considered by many to be the first village in The Netherlands to be liberated in World War II; and

WHEREAS, During his eleven-month tour of combat duty in the European Theater of Operations mainly with the United States Army 30th Infantry Division, from July 1944 to May 1945, Kenneth C. Thayer was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross, two Bronze Stars, and three Purple Hearts; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth C. Thayer was a Clinton, New York resident and a retired Air Force civilian employee who dutifully and proudly served four decades in a supervisory capacity at Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, New York; and

WHEREAS, This esteemed veteran was the author of "The Young Liberators: Volume One: From Citizen to Soldier" and "Volume Two: From Mortain to Victory in Europe"; he is also the past National Vice President of the Air Force Association whose mission is to educate the public about aerospace power and its importance in defending the United States; and

WHEREAS, For several decades, Kenneth C. Thayer served as Treasurer

for the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI); in 2023, CABVI named a new building in Utica, New York in his honor; 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, Kenneth C. Thayer 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 Kenneth C. Thayer posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Kenneth C. Thayer.