

Senate Resolution No. 1666

BY: Senator SCARCELLA-SPANTON

RECOGNIZING the 369th Veterans Association, Richmond District for its ongoing mission to preserve the history of the 369th Infantry Regiment

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to commend the efforts of those organizations which seek to bring recognition to important historical groups and their deeds, and in doing so, help to ensure that the complete history of our State and Nation is preserved and shared with present and future generations of citizens; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to recognize the 369th Veterans Association, Richmond District for its ongoing mission to preserve the history of the 369th Infantry Regiment; and

WHEREAS, In the course of American military history, there are certain infantry groups which are legendary for their unparalleled bravery in lending their might to the defense of our Nation during times of war, the 369th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed the Harlem Hellfighters, is one such group; and

WHEREAS, The 369th Infantry Regiment, famously known as the Harlem Hellfighters, was a segregated African American unit in World War I that became one of the most decorated and successful regiments in United States military history; and

WHEREAS, Due to racial segregation and refusal by white United States troops to serve with them, the United States Army assigned the unit to the French Army; and

WHEREAS, The Harlem Hellfighters spent 191 days in frontline trenches, more than any other American unit during the war and the regiment was the first Allied unit to reach the Rhine River in Germany; and

WHEREAS, Though the 369th Infantry Regiment suffered approximately 1,500 casualties, the highest of any American unit in the conflict, the Harlem Hellfighters never lost a foot of ground or a single soldier to capture; and

WHEREAS, Notable members of the 369th Infantry Regiment include: Sergeant Henry Johnson who single-handedly fought off a 24-man German raiding party with a bolo knife to save a fellow soldier for which, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2015, and James Reese Europe, a world-famous bandleader who led the 369th Regimental Band, credited with introducing Jazz to Europe; and

WHEREAS, The 369th Infantry Regiment, was recognized at the United States Capitol by Congress when the Congressional Gold Medal was

presented to descendants of some of the 4,000 Soldiers who served in the Harlem Hellfighters; and

WHEREAS, The 369th Veterans Association is a Federally Chartered non-profit organization, made up of black and white former servicemen and women who served with the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines; and

WHEREAS, Founded on October 6, 1953, by a small group of veterans who had served with the 369th Anti-Aircraft Artillery and affiliated units, during World War II, the 369th Veterans Association has districts throughout New York and the United States; and

WHEREAS, The 369th Veterans Association, Richmond District has vowed to keep the history of the 369th Infantry Regiment alive through its tireless community involvement; and

WHEREAS, With the motto "In the community for the community", the 369th Veterans Association, Richmond District maintains an outreach program with Girls Scout troops 5/526 and 75/312, sponsors a student each year for a tour of the HBCU campus, and provides a member at Fort Hamilton to assist Veterans in obtaining their health benefit cards; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is very pleased to have this opportunity to express its gratitude to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces for their tremendous sacrifices made for our Nation and for the benefit of all Americans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to recognize the 369th Veterans Association, Richmond District, for its ongoing mission to preserve the history of the 369th Infantry Regiment; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the 369th Veterans Association, Richmond District.