

2009-J3959

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Robert D. Shields, heroic World War II veteran, elite paratrooper of the 82nd Airborne Division, and devoted family man

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Robert Daniel Shields of Tappan, New York, died on Sunday, January 17, 2010, at the age of 89; and

WHEREAS, Born on August 2, 1920, to Robert A. and Lillian Parsels Shields in Sparkill, New York, Robert D. Shields graduated from Tappan Zee High School, in Piermont, New York, in June of 1939; and

WHEREAS, This brave World War II soldier was among the elite paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division known as "pathfinders"; on the eve of the Normandy Invasion, June 5, 1944, his responsibility was to parachute behind German lines in France in preparation for D-Day, the Allied attack that proved a turning point in the War; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Robert D. Shields was awarded numerous military decorations including: two Bronze Stars with "V" device for valor, the Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge and Senior Army Parachute wings with two combat stars; and

WHEREAS, Upon cessation of hostilities, Lieutenant Robert D. Shields was assigned to General Dwight D. Eisenhower's Honor Guard; when he returned to Sparkill, New York, in January of 1946, he became an Army Reservist assigned to Company A, an engineer company in the 860th Aviation Engineer Battalion where he continued to serve for 16 years; and

WHEREAS, After leaving the service, Robert D. Shields began work in

1946, at Lederle Laboratories in Pearl River, New York, until December of 1980; prior to departing for military service, he met Mae E. Thompson, first president of the union at Lederle; he joined the Army in 1942 and married Mae on August 22, 1943, before he deployed to the United Kingdom to prepare for the D-Day invasion; and

WHEREAS, Sadly, Mrs. Mae E. Shields preceded him in death in 1998; and
WHEREAS, He started his esteemed career as a carpenter, and was eventually promoted to Department Head for Plant Maintenance and later to Plant Sanitation Manager; and

WHEREAS, It was in 1952, that Robert D. Shields began a part time career with the Rockland County Sheriff's Department, serving with distinction as a firearms instructor and training officer; he went on to attain the title of Senior Firearms Instructor with the Police Academy; and

WHEREAS, Robert D. Shields was still active as an officer in 2008, holding the rank of Sergeant; he held the distinction of the longest standing officer in the history of the Rockland County Sheriff's Department for 56 years; and

WHEREAS, Robert D. Shields' commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, His interests and associations after the War included a six year stint as a pilot and commander of the 1st Civil Air Patrol Squadron in Blauvelt, New York; throughout this period, he continued to enjoy skydiving and accumulated just over 300 parachute jumps; and

WHEREAS, He worked tirelessly to promote gun safety and was a strong advocate of wildlife conservation; in May of 2006, the New York State Fish and Wildlife Board presented Robert D. Shields with a Certificate

recognizing him for more than 40 years of faithful service to the Board and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; and
WHEREAS, In addition, Robert D. Shields was the recipient of well over

50 distinguished service awards and Certificates of Appreciation from the many organizations he has represented including a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his parents, Robert A. and Lillian Parsels Shields; a brother, George Shields; and a sister, Eleanor Stroud, Robert D. Shields is survived by Mrs. Barbara Shields, who he married on December 7, 2001; three children, Colonel (Retired) Robert G. Shields, Carol A. Laskos and Debra R. Morano; two sisters, Ruth Dizzine and Etta Behrens; two step-children, Susan D. Shields Furchak and Frances M. Shields Dedeian; four grandchildren, Captain Sean Shields, SSG Robert D. Shields, Cadet (West Point) Terrence H. Shields, and Ameila M. Shields; two great-grandchildren, Robert G. and Adrianna Shields; and two step-grandchildren, Michaila Furchak and Lily Dedeian; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit, imbued with a sense of compassion, and comforted by a loving family, Robert D. Shields leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Robert D. Shields, heroic World War II veteran, elite paratrooper of the 82nd Airborne Division, and devoted family man; and be it further

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