

2011-J231

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Wilfred Bank Post 413, Orange County Jewish War Veterans of America's Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony and the four chaplains who gave their lives so that others might live

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved with great respect and reverent esteem to pay tribute to the men and women who so courageously and heroically serve and have served in the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Wilfred Bank Post 413, Orange County Jewish War Veterans of America's Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony and the four chaplains who gave their lives so that others might live; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious occasion will be commemorated by a celebration of interfaith solidarity in a unique memorial service to be held on Sunday, February 6, 2011, at Congregation Agudas Israel, 290 North Street, Newburgh, New York; in addition to the traditional representation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants, representatives of other faith groups in the Newburgh, New York, area will participate; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1896, the Jewish War Veterans of America is the nation's oldest federally chartered veteran's organization; Wilfred Bank Post 413 in Orange County, New York, was established following World War II; and

WHEREAS, February 3, 2011, is the 68th Anniversary of the sinking of the United States Army transport Dorchester, an event that resulted in the loss of nearly 700 lives in 1943 and for which witnesses have recounted in the Congressional Record the heroism of four chaplains of different faiths, Lieutenant George L. Fox, Methodist; Lieutenant Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lieutenant John P. Washington, Catholic; and Lieutenant Clark V. Poling, Dutch Reformed; and

WHEREAS, Each of the four chaplains was awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously; the citation of each reads: "For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an enemy of the United States. On the night of the 3rd of

February, 1943, a loaded troop transport was torpedoed, without warning, by an enemy submarine in the North Atlantic and began to sink rapidly. In the resulting confusion and darkness some men found themselves without life jackets and others became helpless through fear and the dread of plunging into the freezing water. These four chaplains heroically and calmly moved about the deck, encouraging the men and assisting them to abandon ship; after the available supply of life jackets was exhausted, they gave up their own; they remained aboard ship and went down with it, offering words of encouragement and prayers to the last"; and

WHEREAS, On July 14, 1960, the United States Congress awarded a special medal for valor, given in memory of the four chaplains, never to be repeated; a memorial tribute to the four chaplains in the form of a commemorative coin-medal; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that these four chaplains, who removed their own life jackets and gave them to others to save their lives and who were last seen arm-in-arm in prayer on the hull of the ship, demonstrated a unique ecumenical spirit and love for their fellow man and should never be forgotten; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Wilfred Bank Post 413, Orange County Jewish War Veterans of America's Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony and the four chaplains who gave their lives so that others might live; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Wilfred Bank Post 413, Jewish War Veterans of America, P.O. Box 2157, Newburgh, New York 12550.