

## 2011-K93

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Sergeant Bill Blessing upon the occasion of receiving the Bronze Star Medal for his meritorious service during Operation Enduring Freedom

WHEREAS, The courage and bravery of our military personnel since the United States Armed Forces commenced Operation Enduring Freedom will ensure our continued role as a Nation which embodies the ideals of democracy, and as a defender of liberty for people throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York who have served so valiantly and honorably during Operation Enduring Freedom, in particular those who have earned one of our Nation's highest honors, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, The Bronze Star Medal is the fourth-highest military decoration awarded to individuals who distinguish themselves by performing acts of heroism or meritorious achievement in connection with military operations against an armed enemy; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Sergeant Bill Blessing upon the occasion of receiving the Bronze Star Medal for his meritorious service during Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Bill Blessing, of Skaneateles, New York, is a squad leader in the 2nd Battalion of the 327th Infantry Division of the 101st Airborne and commands a team of three infantrymen; and

WHEREAS, In April of 2010, Sergeant Bill Blessing deployed from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to Command Outpost Monti in the Kunar Province, a rugged location in the northeast mountains of Afghanistan within five to seven miles of the Pakistan border; and

WHEREAS, In August of 2010, on an enemy-seeking mission, Sergeant Bill Blessing and the infantrymen had orders to maneuver to the front line, a

7-foot long .50-caliber machine gun that takes all four men to operate; once there, Sergeant Blessing situated the gun and his men below a mountain ridge and readied for combat; and

WHEREAS, For the next three to four hours, Sergeant Blessing, his team and a good portion of his 120 to 130 soldier company fought off approximately 100 Taliban fighters; and

WHEREAS, During the assault, the team of four became three when one soldier took a bullet in the arm; as the team's trained medic, Sergeant Bill Blessing dragged the wounded soldier over the ridge to safety; the remaining two soldiers were shot and one man fell to the ground, unconscious; while under fire, Sergeant Blessing once again escorted his injured comrade to safety; and

WHEREAS, When Sergeant Bill Blessing returned to his diminished team, his comrade had regained consciousness and together they took control of the large weapon and resumed fighting and continued to operate the gun until they were ordered to displace; and

WHEREAS, After scrambling to a position of relative safety, the war-worn team of two withdrew the heavy-duty artillery to their base; the fire fight was considered a victory as nearly three-quarters of the enemy resisters perished; and

WHEREAS, With Sergeant Bill Blessing throughout have been his parents, Sue and Bill Blessing, Sr., his sister Terry, and brother Chris, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his many achievements; and

WHEREAS, The freedoms and security we cherish as Americans come at a very high price for those serving in the military in times of conflict; it is fitting and proper that we who are the beneficiaries of those who risk their lives, leaving their families behind, express our appreci-

ation and eternal gratitude for their sacrifices and courageous acts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to

commend Sergeant Bill Blessing upon the occasion of receiving the Bronze Star Medal for his meritorious service during Operation Enduring Freedom and to wish him continued success in all of his future endeavors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sergeant Bill Blessing.