

## 2015-J3534

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Eugene Jacques Bullard posthumously for his many accomplishments and brave military service during World War I

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so faithfully and courageously in wars in which our Nation's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace during peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Eugene Jacques Bullard posthumously for his many accomplishments and brave military service during World War I as we commence to observe February as Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, Eugene Jacques Bullard, the grandson of a slave, was born in Columbus, Georgia, on October 9, 1895; he spent years looking for a place where he could live free of discrimination; and

WHEREAS, In 1912, he stowed away on a ship bound for Scotland where he worked odd jobs before finally arriving in France; two years later, Eugene Jacques Bullard joined the French Foreign Legion, eventually transferring to the fierce 170th Infantry Regiment which was nicknamed "The Swallows of Death"; and

WHEREAS, Due to injuries he sustained in his battles that prevented him from continuing his service in the infantry, he was afforded the opportunity to begin pilot training at an aviation school in Tours, France, in May of 1917; and

WHEREAS, At the French School of Military Aviation, Eugene Jacques Bullard flew all types of planes; he is widely recognized as the first Black military pilot; and

WHEREAS, Eugene Jacques Bullard wanted to fly combat missions, but his dream was put on hold when an influential American major living in France discouraged the French from accepting Bullard as a pilot due to

his skin color; and

WHEREAS, After the United States declared war on Germany, white pilots were given the chance to transfer from the French flying service to the American side and promoted to lieutenant; Eugene Jacques Bullard was turned down; and

WHEREAS, During his lifetime, Eugene Jacques Bullard earned 15 medals, including the Legion of Honor, the Victory Medal, the World War Commemorative Medal, an Insignia for the Military Wounded, the Commemorative Medal for Volunteer Service and the Combatant's Cross; and

WHEREAS, After being discharged from the Armed Forces, Eugene Jacques Bullard became part owner of a nightclub, L'Escadrille, in France, and during World War II, he agreed to serve France as a spy; and

WHEREAS, In July 1940, Eugene Jacques Bullard returned to the United States where he worked as a perfume salesman, a security guard, and as an interpreter for Louis Armstrong; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, the United States Air Force honored Eugene Jacques Bullard posthumously by commissioning him a Second Lieutenant; there is now an exhibit in the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio, in recognition of this valiant man; and

WHEREAS, Eugene Jacques Bullard died in New York City on October 12, 1961, at the age of 66; he was buried with military honors in the French War Veterans' section of Flushing Cemetery in Queens, New York; and

WHEREAS, The dedication and sacrifices of our military personnel ensure our continued role as a Nation which embodies the ideals of democracy, and is a defender of liberty for peoples throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The banner of freedom will always wave over this great Nation, the land of the free and the home of the brave; 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 appreciation and eternal gratitude for their sacrifices and courageous acts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Eugene Jacques Bullard posthumously for his many accomplishments and brave military service during World War I as we commence to observe February as Black History Month; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Second Lieutenant Eugene Jacques Bullard.