

2015-J6515

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Kenneth J. Atkins posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Kenneth J. Atkins posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate, to be celebrated at the Columbia County Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony on August 22, 2016; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth J. Atkins was born on July 27, 1921, in Andee, New York, to Dean and Maude L. (Roe) Atkins; he was one of 16 children who attended Andee Central School District; and

WHEREAS, After working as a farm hand on a dairy farm in Salisbury Mills, New York, Kenneth J. Atkins enlisted in the United States Army on April 12, 1946; after attending Engineer Basic Training, Private Atkins graduated to the Army Service Forces Technical School at Fort Belvoir in Virginia, where he was trained as a rigging specialist; and

WHEREAS, As a rigger, Private Kenneth J. Atkins used derricks, cranes, gin poles, A-frames, cableways and chain blocking to raise and move heavy equipment; proficiency in the splicing of wire and manila rope and the tying of all kinds of knots was essential to his many duties; and
WHEREAS, Private Kenneth J. Atkins was assigned to Camp Stoneman, California, which was a hub for all troops making their way to the Pacific battlefields; three days before the surrender of Japan, just over one million men came through the Stoneman staging area, which was used as a separation center which ensured that returning soldiers were promptly returned to their homes; and

WHEREAS, Upon the deactivation of military forces after the end of World War II on December 28, 1946, Private Kenneth J. Atkins was honorably discharged at Camp Beale, California; and

WHEREAS, An exceptional marksman, Private Kenneth J. Atkins was qualified to use the M1 Rifle, and for his meritorious service, he was the recipient of the World War II Victory Medal; and

WHEREAS, On April 16, 1955, Kenneth J. Atkins married the former Doris Doolittle; together, the couple moved to Columbia County where they raised their three children; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth J. Atkins returned to his farming roots and worked as a dairy farmer for many years; devoted to his profession, he was proudly affiliated with HOARDS DAIRYMAN MAGAZINE; three years prior to his passing he worked for Peter J. Schweitzer Paper Mill in Ancram, New York; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man and soldier's loving family will always remember him as their hero who taught them about hard work and respect; a true American patriot, he taught his children that the Stars and Stripes is a symbol for freedom and honesty; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth J. Atkins died on December 24, 1975, at the age of 54; he is survived by his three children, Doris M., Ruth A., and Kenneth E.; five grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation and to those who continue to be missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited their patriotism both at home and abroad, these men and women demonstrated their love for their country and merit forevermore, the highest respect of their State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Kenneth J. Atkins posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Kenneth J. Atkins.