

2017-J1348

Senate Resolution No. 1348

BY: Senator GOLDEN

HONORING Colonel Thomas J. Kelly 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, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peace-time, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Colonel Thomas J. Kelly 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

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, Thomas Joseph Kelly was born on January 6, 1833, in Mountbellew, County Galway, Ireland; from 1846-1849, he attended St. Jarlath's College in Tuam, County Galway, Ireland; and

WHEREAS, After college, Thomas J. Kelly served as an apprentice with Kelly's Printers in Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland; at the young age of 18, he emigrated to New York City, arriving on the ship Castillian on March 27, 1851; he worked as a printer, and joined the Printer's Union in New York City; and

WHEREAS, In that same year, Thomas J. Kelly joined the 9th Regiment New York State Militia, which later became the 69th Infantry Regiment; today, the Regiment is known as the Fighting Sixty-Ninth, a name said to have been given by Robert E. Lee during the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Thomas J. Kelly later joined the Emmet Monument Association, and became a founding member of the Fenian Brotherhood in 1857; he also became involved with the Masons, serving as Master Mason of Pacific Lodge 233, and Royal Arch Mason of Orient Chapter 187; and

WHEREAS, Thomas J. Kelly then moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he worked as a foreman for the S. W. Publishing House; soon thereafter, he established the Nashville Evening Democrat, which supported the presidential campaign of Stephen A. Douglas in the Presidential election of 1860; and

WHEREAS, On July 15, 1859, Thomas J. Kelly became a Knight Templar of the Nashville Commandery; and

WHEREAS, Following the outbreak of the American Civil War, Thomas J. Kelly, a supporter of the Union, chose to leave Nashville for the North; en route to joining the famous Irish 69th Infantry Regiment, he heard

about the Irish 10th Ohio Infantry, and enlisted with them for its initial three months, and then re-enlisted for an additional three years; and

WHEREAS, Thomas J. Kelly served in Company "C", where his military knowledge and ability was soon recognized and he was promoted to Sergeant; by the end of the summer of 1861, he was functioning as First Sergeant of the Company; and

WHEREAS, Although he was shot in the jaw at the Battle of Carnifex Ferry in Western Virginia on September 10, 1861, he volunteered to return to duty before the end of the year; and

WHEREAS, In January of 1862, Sergeant Thomas J. Kelly was commissioned, and later seconded to the staff of Major General George Henry Thomas of the XIV Corps, United States Army of the Cumberland, as a Signal Officer; he was promoted to Captain on March 17, 1863, becoming the Chief Signal Officer; and

WHEREAS, On August 19, 1863, Captain Thomas J. Kelly was ordered to return to the "Bloody Tenth" as Captain, Company "I", from which he was mustered out with the rest of the 10th Ohio on June 17, 1864; and

WHEREAS, After the war, Captain Thomas J. Kelly joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in New York; the group dispatched him to Ireland as an envoy to meet with IRB leader James Stephens; upon his return to New York in April of 1866, he became the Deputy to James Stephens; and

WHEREAS, In December of 1866, Captain Thomas J. Kelly became the Chief Central Organiser of the Irish Republic; in this capacity, he penned a Proclamation of the Irish Republic, and supported the cause of

Irish Independence; and

WHEREAS, On September 11, 1867, Captain Thomas J. Kelly and Captain Timothy Deasy were detained by the British government in Manchester, England; one week later, the two men were rescued by a contingency of faithful and loyal followers; and

WHEREAS, During the rescue effort, a policeman was killed, however, Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy managed to escape to the United States; William Philip Allen, Michael Larkin, and Michael O'Brien were arrested in connection with the attack, and were later executed; thereafter, they became known as the Manchester Martyrs for their loyalty to Ireland; and

WHEREAS, The song, "God Save Ireland" was written as a tribute to the memory of the Manchester Martyrs, Colonel Thomas J. Kelly and Captain Timothy Deasy; and

WHEREAS, In 1869, Colonel Thomas J. Kelly became the Superintendent of Station F of the New York Post Office; from 1870-1905, he held the position of Audit Clerk for the United States Custom House; and

WHEREAS, For numerous years, Colonel Thomas J. Kelly was active in the Grand Army of the Republic, Alexander Hamilton Chapter 182 in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Thomas J. Kelly married the former Catharine Anastasia Gillogly in 1869, together, the couple raised five children, Julia Helen, Columba Lee Thomas, Frances Mary, Leo Patrick and Kathryn Josephine; they were the loving grandparents of one granddaughter, Dorothy Ella Kelly; and five great-grandchildren, John Alfred, Oliver Amory, Eloise Lorraine, Lawrence Joseph, and Robert Leo; as well as one great-great-grandchild, Erica Beth Veil; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Thomas J. Kelly died at his home at 331 East 119th Street in New York City on February 5, 1908, at the age of 75; 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 his patriotism both at home and abroad, Colonel Thomas J. Kelly demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore, the highest respect of his 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 Colonel Thomas J. Kelly 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 Colonel Thomas J. Kelly.