

2021-K441

Assembly Resolution No. 441

BY: M. of A. Cusick

COMMEMORATING the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of
the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend events which symbolize the historical, social and cultural development of this great State and embody the spirit of the principles upon which this Nation was founded; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, November 11, 2021, marks the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, New York Congressman and World War I veteran, Hamilton Fish Jr. prepared legislation in December of 1920, providing for the internment of one unknown soldier in Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the legislation was "to bring home the body of an unknown American warrior who in himself represents no section, creed or race in the late war and who typifies however, the soul of America and the supreme sacrifice of her heroic dead"; and

WHEREAS, The remains of an unknown service from World War I were returned from France and on November 11, 1921, were carried in a procession through Washington, D.C. to Arlington National Cemetery where a state funeral was held before the remains were interred in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; and

WHEREAS, The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is decorated with three wreaths on each side panel (north and south), on the front (east), three figures represent Peace, Victory and Valor; the back (West) feature the inscription "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God"; and

WHEREAS, Starting in 1937, the guards at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier became a 24/7 presence, standing watch over the Unknown Soldier at all times; and

WHEREAS, The 3rd Infantry Regiment known as "The Old Guard" was designated as the Army's official ceremonial unit on April 6, 1948; and

WHEREAS, Each element of the Tomb's Guard routine has meaning; the Guard marches 21 steps down the black mat behind the Tomb, turns and faces east for 21 seconds, turns and faces north for 21 seconds, and then takes 21 steps down the mat; next, the guard executes a sharp "shoulder-arms" movement to place his/her weapon on the shoulder closest the visitors, signifying that he/she stands between the Tomb and any possible threat; the number 21 symbolizes the highest symbolic military honor that can be bestowed, the 21-gun salute; and

WHEREAS, In August 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved the selection and internment of the remains of unknown service members for both World War II and Korea; the remains arrived in Washington, D.C. on May 28, 1958, and lay in state in the United States Capitol before they

were interred in crypts beside the World War I sarcophagus; and

WHEREAS, On Memorial Day in 1984, President Ronald Reagan presided over the internment ceremony for the remains of the unknown service member from the Vietnam War, but the remains were subsequently positively identified using DNA testing and exhumed; the crypt designated for the Vietnam War Unknown remains vacant and was rededicated to honor all missing service members from the Vietnam War; and WHEREAS, According to the United States Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, more than 81,700 Americans remain missing in action from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and the Gulf War and other conflicts; 75% of the losses are located in the Indo-Pacific and over 41,000 are presumed lost at sea; and

WHEREAS, Of those missing, more than 6,400 are from New York State, including 5,793 from World War II, 507 from the Korean War, 103 from the Vietnam War, and 7 from the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved with great respect and reverent esteem, and on behalf of all the citizens of the Empire State to honor World War I hero and Congressman Hamilton Fish Jr., the drafter of legislation calling for the creation of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; and

WHEREAS, Through its avowed commitment to those who served in the cause of America's Freedom, The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier does so unselfishly advance that spirit of united purpose and shared concern which is the unalterable manifestation of our American experience; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,

and to honor members of "The Old Guard" who stand watch over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Adjutant General of New York, Raymond F. Shields, Jr.; and Deputy Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Services, Joel Evans.