

2021-J1307

Senate Resolution No. 1307

BY: Senator JORDAN

COMMENDING Donald M. Johnston 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, 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 peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Donald M. Johnston 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, Born on April 22, 1918, to Barson and Grace Powell Johnston in Mellenville, New York, Donald Milton Johnston attended Philmont Elementary and High School, graduating in June of 1935; prior to his enlistment he worked as a mechanic; and

WHEREAS, Donald M. Johnston began his illustrious military service with the United States Army on August 8, 1942 in Albany, New York, as a 2nd Lieutenant; he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in May of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Assigned to the 8th Air Force, 303 Bomber Group (Hells Angels), 360 Squadron as a B-17G pilot in the ETO, 1st Lieutenant Donald M. Johnston was stationed at Molesworth, England and flew 36 missions over France and Germany; and

WHEREAS, After flying the B-17 named "Iza Vailable Too" on a bombing mission of a railway station in Berlin, 1st Lieutenant Donald M. Johnston received flak damage causing a fire on his engine; at approximately 300 feet over the runway, the number four engine became a ball of fire; as he cleared the runway onto the grass side, his main concern was injuring any of his crew as they cleared the burning aircraft; alone he departed through the cockpit side widow to the left wing; and

WHEREAS, A truly remarkable soldier, 1st Lieutenant Donald M. Johnston returned to the states and was assigned to the 563rd AAF Base Unit; he was honorably discharged on November 14, 1945 at Drew Field, Florida; and

WHEREAS, For his courageous service during World War II, 1st Lieutenant Donald M. Johnston was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal w/3 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal and the EAME Campaign Medal; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service, Donald M. Johnston returned home and was employed at B.W. Johnston Construction Company; he later served as the Maintenance Supervisor at Taconic Hills Ockawamick Central School where he retired in 1984; and

WHEREAS, Active in his community, Donald M. Johnston was a lifetime member of Philmont Rod and Gun Club, a member of the American Legion Post No. 252, Commissioner of Mellenville Fire District and a member of the Philmont Santa Claus Club; and

WHEREAS, Donald M. Johnston died on February 2, 2009, at the age of 91, and is interred at Sacred Heart Cemetery in Philmont, New York; left to cherish his memory are his three children, Marcia, Mary and Michael, eight grandchildren and several 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 risked their lives for their beloved Nation; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Donald M. Johnston 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 commend Donald M. Johnston 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 Donald M. Johnston.