

2021-J1661

Senate Resolution No. 1661

BY: Senator BRESLIN

COMMENDING Corporal Robert F. Keenan 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 peace-time, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Corporal Robert F. Keenan 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; he was nominated for this prestigious award by the Reverend Francis A. Kelley Society which diligently works to honor and care for our local everyday heroes and educate the community about their valorous and sacrificial acts both on and off the battlefield; 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, Prior to graduation from Lansingburgh High School, Robert F. Keenan enlisted in the United States Army on March 11, 1943, and

proudly served his country as a member of Company A, Fourth Infantry Division during World War II in the European Theater of Operations from 1943-1945; and

WHEREAS, On June 14, 1944, Corporal Robert F. Keenan and his Division landed on the beach in Normandy, and after being involved in fierce combat with the Germans for the next two months, Corporal Keenan and many of his fellow soldiers were captured by German forces outside of Paris on July 29, 1944; and

WHEREAS, The soldiers were assigned to forced labor at Stalag 7A Camp near Moosburg, Germany, where they were subjected to daily beatings, starvation and were caged in box cars on railroad sidings which were bombed nightly by the Allies; Corporal Robert F. Keenan endured captivity for 301 days until he and his fellow Prisoners of War were liberated by the 45th Division; unfortunately, Corporal Keenan suffered from PTSD for the rest of his life; and

WHEREAS, For his courageous service during World War II, Corporal Robert F. Keenan was awarded the Bronze Star, POW Medal, American Theatre Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Medal with three battle stars, Combat Infantryman Badge, Distinguished Unit Badge, Meritorious Unit Award, Army Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, New York State Conspicuous Service Star, New York State Medal for Merit and the Green Island Veterans Commemoration Medal; and

WHEREAS, Upon his release, Corporal Robert F. Keenan returned to Rensselaer County and settled in Green Island, New York, where he began

his long and distinguished career as a mason/bricklayer and raised his three sons; this meritorious soldier passed away on November 3, 1989, after a battle with cancer; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Corporal Robert F. Keenan 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 Corporal Robert F. Keenan 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 Corporal Robert F. Keenan.