

2013-J2905

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Charles Nesbitt, a member of the 57th Assault Helicopter Company upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross for his extraordinary achievement in an aerial flight during the Vietnam War

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, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to commend those who have served in times of active conflict, as well as to those who have served in times of peace; 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, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Charles Nesbitt, a member of the 57th Assault Helicopter Company upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross for his extraordinary achievement in an aerial flight during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, A former New York State Assemblyman, Charles Nesbitt's medal was awarded for heroism while participating in aerial flight that occurred on November 14, 1968, while on a mission in extracting a United States Army Special Forces team out of Laos; the task was supposed to be routine, until one helicopter unexpectedly crashed into the jungle; and

WHEREAS, Amid enemy fire, Charles Nesbitt and a second helicopter moved in to pick up the downed crew; believing they had everyone on

board, the aircraft lifted off, but soon realized one man was missing;
and

WHEREAS, After depositing their rescued soldiers at a secret outpost, Charles Nesbitt and the other helicopter flew back to the crash site; he hovered his Huey in the treetops, trying to see the jungle floor; now running low on fuel, he made the decision to make one final pass directly over the downed aircraft, where they spotted the wounded soldier lying on the ground; and

WHEREAS, Trees being more than 100 feet tall and broken bamboo stumps all over the ground prevented the helicopter from landing; Charles Nesbitt and the other helicopter would have to return to base for fuel along with a specially trained Special Forces Bright Light Team to extract the wounded soldier with a McGuire rig; and

WHEREAS, Arriving back at the crash site, one helicopter unloaded the Special Forces team while Charles Nesbitt hovered over the wounded soldier, receiving enemy gunfire; he called for cover from the escorting Cougars, whose mini-guns scattered the enemy and slowed the North Vietnamese Army's rate of fire; and

WHEREAS, The rescue team had not yet arrived, however, and the enemy was near the crash site, in a position to kill or capture the wounded soldier, when Charles Nesbitt made the decision to lower his helicopter into the landing zone, hearing bullets going off around them as they began the descent; however, it was too risky trying to cut through the canopy, and Charles Nesbitt was forced to hover back up to the top of the canopy, while his crewmen fired their M60 machine guns at anyone who moved near the downed aircraft; and

WHEREAS, When the rescue team finally arrived, they fastened the wounded soldier into the McGuire rig and Charles Nesbitt began his ascent, with the gunships firing constantly to disengage the enemy; and

WHEREAS, Charles Nesbitt mentioned that getting to an area of elephant grass where they could lower and recover the wounded soldier into the

aircraft took slow and precise flying; after the rescue, 20 year-old Charles Nesbitt had been flying more than nine hours, three and one-half of them under enemy fire, and his helicopter was nearly out of fuel; and WHEREAS, A true asset to society, Charles Nesbitt is worthy of the Distinguished Flying Cross; 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 Charles Nesbitt, a member of the 57th Assault Helicopter Company upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross for his extraordinary achievement in an aerial flight during the Vietnam War; and be it further RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Charles Nesbitt.