

2013-J5398

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion on June 6, 2014

WHEREAS, On June 6, 1944, the military might of the Allies combined for the most extensive aerial and sea borne assault ever planned; the D-Day Invasion at the beaches of Normandy, France changed the direction of World War II, and the history of the twentieth century; planned for over two years by the Allied Forces, the D-Day Invasion was an intricate coordination of the world's greatest military forces, and an exercise in cooperation that marked the turning point of the war, and the world's history; and

WHEREAS, The Allied Invasion of Europe, code-named Operation Overlord, consisted of five infantry divisions, two American, two British, and one Canadian, assigned to beaches code-named, from west to east, Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword; on the first day of the invasion, two American airborne divisions landed behind the western end of the assault area and one British at the eastern, while amphibious armor was to swim ashore with the leading waves; and

WHEREAS, The Americans constituted the United States 1st Army, under Major General Omar Bradley, and the British and Canadians--the British 2nd Army, under General Miles Dempsey; and

WHEREAS, The invasion was supported by more than 13,000 fighter, bomber, and transport aircraft, that, between April 1st and June 5, 1944, flew 200,000 sorties and succeeded in breaking all the bridges across the Seine and Loire rivers to isolate the Normandy Invasion area from the rest of France; and

WHEREAS, The air campaign was designed not only to disrupt German anti-invasion preparations but also to serve as a deception operation, in an attempt to persuade the enemy that the landings would be made in

the Pas-de-Calais area, directly opposite Dover, England, rather than in Normandy; and

WHEREAS, Meanwhile, intensive logistic preparations provided, by May 1944, almost 6,500 ships and landing craft, which would land nearly 200,000 vehicles and 600,000 tons of supplies in the first three weeks of Operation Overlord; and

WHEREAS, June 5, 1944, was fixed as the unalterable date by Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, General Dwight D. Eisenhower on May 17th; as the day approached, and troops began to embark for the crossing, bad weather set in, threatening dangerous landing conditions; after tense debate, a 24-hour delay was decided on, requiring the recall of some ships already at sea; and

WHEREAS, On the morning of June 5th, assured of a weather break, an armada of 3,000 landing craft, 2,500 other ships, and 500 naval vessels began to leave English ports; that night, 822 aircraft, carrying parachutists or towing gliders, roared overhead to the Normandy landing zones; and

WHEREAS, The airborne troops were the D-Day vanguard, and their landings were a heartening success; the American 82nd and 101st airborne divisions, dropping into a deliberately inundated zone at the base of the Cotentin Peninsula, suffered many casualties but nevertheless secured their objective; the British 6th Airborne Division seized its objectives at the eastern end, and its special task force also captured key bridges over the Caen Canal and Orne River; and

WHEREAS, When the seaborne units began to land at dawn on June 6th, the British and Canadians on Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches overcame light opposition, as did the Americans at Utah; the American 1st Division at Omaha Beach, however, confronted the best of the German coast

divisions, and its landing threatened to fail; only dedicated local leadership eventually got the troops inland; and

WHEREAS, On June 7, 1944, the beachhead consisted of three separate

sectors: the British and Canadian between Caen, not taken, and Bayeux; that of the American 5th Corps, between Port-en-Bessin and Saint-Pierre-du-Mont; and that of the American 7th Corps, west of the Vire River behind Utah Beach; and

WHEREAS, The narrow gap between Gold and Omaha at Port-en-Bessin was quickly closed, but it was not until June 12th that the American corps were able to capture Carentan; the beachhead then formed a continuous zone, deepest southwest of Bayeux, where the 5th Corps had driven nearly 15 miles inland; and

WHEREAS, Thanks to the success of the airborne landings, the flanks of the beachhead were firmly held, but efforts to break out of the center were frustrated by fierce German resistance and counterattacks, particularly around Caen in the British-Canadian sector; and

WHEREAS, The Americans were able to break into the base of the Cotentin Peninsula and advance on Cherbourg; the last bastion in the heavily fortified city fell on June 28th, and clearance of the port began at once; the German defense of Normandy had taken a turn for the worse; Saint-Lo fell in the second and third weeks of July, and the success of the American 1st Army's battle of attrition was to lay the basis for the long-awaited breakout; and

WHEREAS, The Normandy campaign was a stunning success; by early September 1944, all but a fraction of France had been liberated, and American and British/Canadian forces occupied Belgium and part of the Netherlands and had reached the German frontier; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when events of such historical consequences are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of the great State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion on June 6, 2014.