



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins' Legislation Honoring New York Veterans Signed Into Law

SENATOR MARTINS November 30, 2016

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced that legislation he sponsored to honor the heroic contributions of New Yorkers to America's victory in World War I has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The new law creates a statewide World War I 100th anniversary commemoration commission to help honor the role New York State and New Yorkers played in the war.

"No other state gave more to America's victory in World War I than New York.

Approximately 10 percent of the American fighting force came from New York and over 13,000 New Yorkers made the ultimate sacrifice, more than any other state. As we approach the centennial anniversary of America's entry into World War I, there is no more fitting way to honor and remember these heroes than teaching the present generations about their actions. I thank Governor Cuomo for working with us to pay tribute to the brave New Yorkers who answered the call to serve in the First World War," said Senator Martins.

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I. New Yorkers played a pivotal role in the conflict and the Allied forces' ultimate victory in 1918. Ten percent of all the American military personnel in World War I came from New York. Over 13,000 New Yorkers died in service to their country during the conflict. New York was home

to the 369th Infantry Regiment, known as the “Harlem Hellfighters,” the first African-American regiment to serve with the American Expeditionary Forces, and the 69th Infantry Regiment, known as the “Fighting 69th,” which included a Medal of Honor recipient and many others who distinguished themselves with their selfless acts of heroism.

New York State’s World War I 100th anniversary commemoration commission is tasked with:

- Planning, developing, and promoting commemorative programs;
- Assisting with efforts to develop or enhance educational institutions, sites, and museums related to World War I for educational, recreational, and tourism purposes; and
- Encouraging private organizations, local governments, and state agencies to organize and participate in activities commemorating the World War I centennial.

The Commission must present its action plan to the Governor and the Legislature no later than June 30, 2017.

The federal government has established a similar national World War I Centennial Commission, as have a number of other states, including Virginia, Georgia, and Ohio, to highlight the contributions of their citizens. New York City also created its own World War I Centennial Committee.