

2017-J5602

Senate Resolution No. 5602

BY: Senator BRESLIN

HONORING Private John James Callahan, Jr.
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 honor Private John
James Callahan, Jr. 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, John James Callahan, Jr. was born on July 5, 1898, in Troy,
New York, to John James, Sr. and Elizabeth Callahan; as a boy, he was a
congregant of St. Francis Church, and a member of both the Alter Boys'

Society of that church, and the vested choir; and

WHEREAS, John James Callahan, Jr. graduated from School 14, and later attended Troy High School, where he completed his sophomore year; and

WHEREAS, Less than 10 days after the United States joined its allies, Britain, France and Russia, and entered World War I, on April 6, 1917, John James Callahan, Jr. enlisted with the United States Marine Corps on April 14, 1917; he was sent to the Marine Barracks in Philadelphia on April 18, 1917, where he was awarded a medal for expert marksmanship; he became a member of the 55th Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Division; and

WHEREAS, Private John James Callahan and his company arrived in the Village of Marigny en Orxois located in northern France on June 1, 1918, and positioned themselves on a hill at left flank from Belleau Wood; this commenced the Battle of Belleau Wood which occurred during the German Spring Offensive in World War I; the bloody battle, which lasted from June 1-26, 1918, claimed more lives of the United States Marine Corps than it did in its entire history to that point; and

WHEREAS, Private John James Callahan, Jr. occupied various trenches, many of which were on the front line; on June 3rd and 4th, the Germans attacked the position where he was stationed, and the regiment stopped the German advance; this would be the farthest the Germans would come to taking Paris in 1918; and

WHEREAS, According to a comrade, on June 11th, Private John Callahan Jr. bravely left the trench he was in to attack the German position; he was shot in the stomach by the enemy and initially reported he was fine and continued to charge into the woods, but soon he was not able to

continue, his wounds were more serious than he let on to his fellow Marines; and

WHEREAS, Private John James Callahan, Jr. was instructed by his comrade to wait for medics; he was bandaged and brought to the military hospital in the field; the comrade reported the next night he too was brought in with his own injuries, and that is when he heard Private John James Callahan, Jr. had succumbed to his wounds on June 11, 1918; and

WHEREAS, Six months later, World War I would end on November 11, 1918; the German advances were without a doubt halted at the Battle of Belleau Wood due to the bravery and courage of Marines such as Private John James Callahan, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Private John James Callahan, Jr. was just 17 years-old when he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and tragically, was the first Marine to die in World War I from Troy, New York; he was buried in the orchard of a military cemetery, Chateau de L'Ange gardien, in France; after the war, his body was returned to the United States where he belongs; and

WHEREAS, An American Legion Post was named after Private John James Callahan, Jr. following the war, but that has since closed due to the passing of all World War I veterans; 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, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad,

Private John James Callahan, Jr. demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, The banner of freedom will always wave over our beloved New York and all of America, the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave; 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 Private John James Callahan, Jr. 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 Private John James Callahan, Jr.