



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Citation

Whereas, seventy years ago, on December 24, 1944, America and its allies had turned the tide of World War II and were on the road to victory in the fight against tyranny and the Axis powers, in what was a destructive and deadly global war that had waged on for more than three years; and

Whereas, on that fateful Christmas Eve, a Belgian troopship named the S.S. Leopoldville was carrying 2,235 American soldiers across the English Channel when it was torpedoed and sunk off the coast of France; and

Whereas, the soldiers, who were members of the 66th Infantry Division, never made it to the battlefield that was their destination – and carry out their mission to serve as reinforcements in the fight known as the “Battle of the Bulge” – as on that night, nearly one-third of the brave young men perished in the icy waters of the English Channel; and

Whereas, of the 802 Americans who died, the largest contingent included the 76 men who called New York State their home, half of whom hailed from the City of New York; and

Whereas, in a horrible war marked by many catastrophic losses and violent atrocities, there was scarce attention given to the sinking of the S.S. Leopoldville and, despite it having been our nation’s third largest naval disaster, the event is unknown to most Americans; and

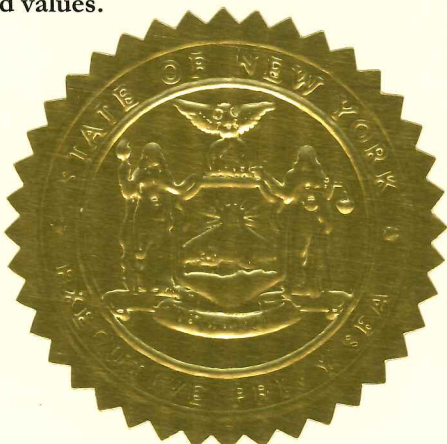
Whereas, adding to the heartache of the families of those men lost at sea was the lack of recognition given to American heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation and to the cause of freedom and democracy; and

Whereas, the souls lost in the sinking of the S.S. Leopoldville represent those of courageous men who willingly went off to fight in a war to preserve freedom, and must never be forgotten; it is fitting that we honor the Americans who perished in the sinking of the S.S. Leopoldville and those who survived, and always remember our service men and women throughout history whose sacrifices enable us, today, to live a life of democracy;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby confer this Special Citation in solemn remembrance of

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE S.S. LEOPOLDVILLE TRAGEDY

with our thoughts and gratitude to those honorable men who proudly served and died in defense of America and its cherished ideals and values.



Governor
December 24, 2014