

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Celebrating the Band of Brothers Family Reunion in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The E Company, 506th Parachute Regiment, 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army, nicknamed “Easy Company,” fought in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria. Its courage and heroism became the subject of Band of Brothers, a best-selling book by Stephen E. Ambrose which inspired an award-winning HBO miniseries; and

WHEREAS, The men of the Easy Company parachuted into Normandy early on the morning of D-Day and destroyed a German battery on Utah Beach; they parachuted into Holland for Operation Market Garden; they held the line in the Battle of the Bulge and led the counterattack; they captured Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest. In short, their service was anything but easy. According to Robyn Post, the Easy Company was “arguably the bravest, toughest, most physically fit, closest-knit group of soldiers the Army has ever produced”; and

WHEREAS, Two of the members of Easy Company, the late Edward “Babe” Heffron and the late William “Wild Bill” Guarnere, hailed from South Philadelphia. Having met only after joining the Army, the two became fast friends and forged a close relationship that would last for the rest of their lives in South Philadelphia after the war. Together with Robyn Post, the two authored a memoir entitled, Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends which featured a foreword by Tom Hanks; and

WHEREAS, William “Wild Bill” Guarnere was a staff sergeant in the Easy Company. He earned his nickname due to his reckless attitude and strong hatred towards the enemy. For example, he went against direct orders and opened fire on a German platoon, leading to an eventual court martial and demotion to private. “Wild Bill” lost his leg in the Battle of the Bulge from German 88 shrapnel while attempting to pull his great friend Joe Toye, who also lost his leg that very same day, from the snow; and

WHEREAS, Edward “Babe” Heffron joined the Easy Company in between D-Day and the company’s entry into Holland. As a replacement assigned to the Easy Company, Heffron was assigned by Guarnere to be a machine gunner despite his smaller stature; and

WHEREAS, City Council has recognized William “Wild Bill” Guarnere and Edward “Babe” Heffron on several occasions, through Resolution No. 010530, “Honoring Edward ‘Babe’ Heffron and Bill Guarnere;” Resolution No. 140192, “Recognizing and honoring the life and service of William ‘Wild Bill’ Guarnere;” and Resolution No. 150104, “Also naming the 2200 Block of Winton Street, between the intersections with Snyder Avenue and Jackson Street, as “Wild Bill Way” in recognition of Bill Guarnere’s pure dedication to fellow man, love for the City of Philadelphia, and his heroism and willingness to sacrifice all for his Country”; and

WHEREAS, On October 4, 2018 through October 7, 2018, the families of the Band of Brothers will convene in Philadelphia for a reunion. The families will visit the home of “Wild Bill” Guarnere and the statues of “Wild Bill” Guarnere and “Babe” Heffron erected in Delaware County and South Philadelphia, respectively; and

WHEREAS, The sacrifices and valor of the Easy Company must never be forgotten, and the City of

Philadelphia is honored to host the families of the brave, selfless men who gave their lives or returned home as heroes having liberated people they had never met; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes and celebrates the Band of Brothers family reunion in Philadelphia.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Wild Bill Guarnere Memorial Fund, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.