

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and honoring the life and service of William “Wild Bill” Guarnere.

WHEREAS, William Guarnere, the youngest of 10 children, was born on April 28, 1923 in South Philadelphia to Joseph and Augusta Guarnere; and

WHEREAS, During the Great Depression, William Guarnere joined the Citizens Military Training Camp Program where he spent three years before the Program was cancelled due to the anticipated war in Europe; and

WHEREAS, On August 31, 1942, William Guarnere enlisted in the Army Airborne and started his training in Georgia at Camp Toccoa; and

WHEREAS, William Guarnere was assigned to Easy Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. His first combat jump as a paratrooper was into occupied France the night before D-DAY as part of the mass invasion and earned the nickname “Wild Bill” due to his reckless attitude and strong hatred toward the enemy; and

WHEREAS, William Guarnere earned the rank of sergeant, however, further cementing his nickname of “Wild Bill”, he went against direct orders and opened fire on a German platoon leading to an eventual court martial and demotion to private; and

WHEREAS, In late 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge, while holding the line southwest of Foy, Belgium, a massive artillery onslaught hit his team and their position resulting in the loss of William Guarnere’s right leg and ending his participating in the war; and

WHEREAS, In March of 1945, William Guarnere returned to Philadelphia and became active in numerous veterans organizations and presided over many Easy Company reunions; and

WHEREAS, William Guarnere received the following medals and decorations for his service during World War II: a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars with Oak Leaf Clusters, two Purple Hearts with two Oak Leaf Clusters, a Presidential Unit Citation with one Oak Leaf Cluster, a Good Conduct Medal, European-African -Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three Service Stars and an Arrowhead Device, a World War II Victory Medal, a Croix de Guerre with Palm, a French Liberation Medal, a Combat Infantry Badge, and a Parachutist Badge with two Combat Jump Stars; and

WHEREAS, William “Wild Bill” Guarnere was portrayed for his courage and selfless abandon in combat in the 2001 critically acclaimed HBO miniseries *Band of Brothers*, and became one of Philadelphia’s most recognized and celebrated military heroes, and

WHEREAS, In 2007, his book, *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends: Two WWII Paratroopers from the Original Band of Brothers Tell Their Story*, was published by Berkley Publishing Group; and

WHEREAS, William Guarnere passed away on March 8, 2014, at the age of 90; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes and honors the life and service of William “Wild Bill” Guarnere.

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