



# Allegheny County Council

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## Legislation Details (With Text)

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Proclamation commending and honoring the selfless actions displayed by *Henry Parham* on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

**WHEREAS**, on June 6, 1944, 75 years ago, *Henry Parham* was among the more than 130,000 American and Allied troops that stormed the beaches of Normandy and France on a mission to take back Europe from control of Nazi Germany; and

**WHEREAS**, *Mr. Parham* was in the third wave of largest amphibious assault in the history of war and spared the worst of the horror the first wave endured; and

**WHEREAS**, for over two months *Mr. Parham* was located on Omaha Beach with the 320<sup>th</sup> Antiaircraft Barrage Balloon Battalion, the only black combat unit to serve at Normandy; and

**WHEREAS**, *Mr. Parham*, of Wilksburg, was 21 years old and working for a bus company in Richmond, Virginia when he was drafted into the Army in 1942. He trained in Tennessee with the 320<sup>th</sup> and shipped out to England in 1943 for more training; and

**WHEREAS**, D-Day was the first combat experience for *Mr. Parham*; and

**WHEREAS**, with the 320<sup>th</sup>, *Mr. Parham's* job was to use helium-filled barrage balloons to defend the beach from attack by German planes; and

**WHEREAS**, after 68 days on the beach, *Mr. Parham's* unit moved on to Sherburne, where it protected General George Patton's Third Army. After Germany's surrender, *Mr. Parham* and the 320<sup>th</sup> were reassigned and began training in Georgia for the duty in the Pacific. *Mr. Parham* was supposed to go to Okinawa; however, his ship broke down and he never left Hawaii. Shortly after Japan surrendered, *Mr. Parham* was able to return to Richmond, and eventually made Pittsburgh his home in 1949; and

**WHEREAS**, *Mr. Parham's* bravery and dedication to his country displayed 75 years ago has resulted in him being awarded several due honors: "Chevalier" of the Legion of Honor, the Legion of Honor is the highest decoration in France and Chevalier is the highest degree of five that can be awarded; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; and World War II Marksman Badge; and

**WHEREAS**, as an active member of the American Legion Post 736 in Pittsburgh, *Mr. Parham* has held numerous positions: Commander, District 32 Deputy, Hospital representative at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, and Memorial Day parade coordinator at Allegheny and St. Mary's cemeteries;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that I, Allegheny County Council Member DeWitt Walton, do hereby commend and honor the selfless actions displayed by *Henry Parham* on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. May his courage displayed there that day, along with the other servicemen present, continue to strength our free nation and give us hope in the future.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto caused the Seal of the County of Allegheny to be affixed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of June 2019.