RESOLUTION NO:  109
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR REVIEW OF MINORITY AWARDS OF MEDAL OF HONOR
WWI
ORIGIN: CONVENTION COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, At the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in what would become known as World War I,
the United States initially pursued a policy of non-intervention; and
WHEREAS, German U-boats sank the RMS Lusitania on May 7, 1915, causing President Woodrow
Wilson to demand an end to unrestricted submarine warfare, to which Germany complied; and
WHEREAS, In 1917, Germany resumed a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, and with the
subsequent sinking of seven U.S. merchant ships by submarine the United States declared war on
Germany; and
WHEREAS, The United States drafted 2.8 million men and by summer 1918 was sending 10,000
fresh soldiers to France every day; and
WHEREAS, General John J. Pershing allowed African-American combat regiments to be used in
French divisions; and
WHEREAS, The 369th Infantry Regiment “Harlem Hellfighters” fought as part of the French 16th
Division, and earned a unit Croix de Guerre for their actions at Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, and
Sechault; and
WHEREAS, While 121 men were awarded the Medal of Honor for actions during WWI, not one
African-American soldier was awarded the Medal of Honor; and
WHEREAS, Only two African-Americans, Freddie Stowers and Henry Johnson, were reviewed and
awarded the Medal of Honor, but not until 73 years and 85 years after their combat actions in 1918;
and
WHEREAS, Few other non-white soldiers, sailors, or Marines were awarded the Medal of Honor
during WWI; and
WHEREAS, While the United States military conducted a review of Medal of Honor minority
awards from WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War and all subsequent wars but no such systematic
review was ever made of minority award of the Medal of Honor during WWI; and
WHEREAS, The United States will remain forever indebted to the bravery, valor, and dedication that
the African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and other minorities displayed during a time of great
national need; and
WHEREAS, The commitment and sacrifice of these veterans demonstrated a highly uncommon and
commendable sense of personal bravery, devotion to comrades, duty, patriotism and honor in the
finest traditions of the Medal of Honor; and
WHEREAS, The United States WWI Centennial Commission supports efforts to authorize a
systematic review of valor medals awarded to minority servicemembers of WWI, who may have
been denied the higher medals due to racial bias; and
WHEREAS, The United States Congress has a proud tradition of recognizing all classes of veterans
who served with uncommon valor; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis,
Minnesota, on August 28, 29, 30, 2018, That The American Legion fully supports legislation to
lift statutes of limitations and other obstacles that may impede proper investigation and
appropriate actions for minority veterans of WWI whose military records and official
descriptions of combat actions fully support consideration for award of the Medal of Honor.