



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey Inducts Hyde Park WWII Veteran Ralph Osterhoudt Sr. into 2023 NYS Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame

MICHELLE HINCHEY January 18, 2024



Over 100 Gather as Hinchey Honors 97-Year-Old WWII Hero Ralph Osterhoudt Sr. in Hyde Park Ceremony For a Lifetime of Service to His Country and Community

Veteran Ralph Osterhoudt Sr. Among the First 30 Liberators of Auschwitz and Survivor of the Battle of the Bulge

**HYDE PARK, NY** – In a poignant ceremony in Hyde Park on Saturday, January 13, Senator Michelle Hinchey honored esteemed World War II Veteran Ralph Osterhoudt Sr., whom she has nominated for induction into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame. The

ceremony, held at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, brought together over 100 family members, local veterans, community members, and elected officials to pay tribute to Mr. Osterhoudt's outstanding legacy of military service and community leadership.

The New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame, established in 2005, is a prestigious honor recognizing remarkable veterans from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves in both their military and civilian endeavors. The ceremony, led by Hinchey, featured several leaders of the Dutchess County veteran community and government officials who provided remarks in tribute to Ralph, including Mike Athanas, Commander of the Hyde Park American Legion Post #1303; Dutchess County American Legion Commander Dan Morea; Mike Speed, Marine Corps Veteran and co-founder of the veteran non-profit Mended Swords; Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino; and Hyde Park Town Historian Carney Rhinevault.

**Senator Michelle Hinchey said,** "World War II Veteran Ralph Osterhoudt Sr. is an American Hero who has lived a life defined by purpose, selflessness, humanity, and an unrelenting commitment to being a good citizen of both the world and his community. Ralph deployed overseas as a mere teenager to help liberate Europe from Nazi rule, and he returned to Dutchess County as a man who has – throughout his lifetime – exemplified a level of service that transcends the call of duty. It is my privilege to recognize such an extraordinary veteran of the Greatest Generation, loved so deeply by his community, and to have the honor of inducting him into the NYS Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame."

Ralph J. Osterhoudt, Sr., a revered World War II Veteran, and lifelong Staatsburg resident, is known for his military service and enduring support for his fellow veterans in Dutchess County and across New York State.

Drafted into the U.S. Army just two weeks shy of his high school graduation from F.D.R. High School in Hyde Park, Ralph served in the 575th Field Artillery Battalion. His remarkable military service included being among the first 30 liberators of Auschwitz and surviving the Battle of the Bulge, where his unit played a pivotal role in destroying Nazi bridges, ammunition, and fuel supplies.

Ralph's commitment to his fellow veterans and their families has extended well beyond his time in the military. In 2022, Ralph played an important role within a coalition of veterans and leaders from all levels of government who fought passionately against the closure of Castle Point VA Medical Center in Wappingers Falls. After months of collective advocacy, the VA finally halted its plan, protecting healthcare services for nearly 7,000 veterans in the Hudson Valley. As an active member of the American Legion Post #1303, Ralph continues to honor local veterans by participating in Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. Additionally, in his role as a Senior Board Member for the military charity Mended Swords, Ralph works to ensure that the sacrifices of veterans and their families are always remembered.

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