



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

## Tedisco Inducts “Veteran’s Veteran” Mechanicville Korean War Combat Veteran into NYS Senate Veterans Hall of Fame

JAMES TEDISCO May 28, 2024

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Senator Jim Tedisco today inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame, Korean War combat veteran Paul O'Keefe of Mechanicville

Senator Tedisco selects for statewide honor Paul O'Keefe of Mechanicville, a U.S. Army Korean War veteran who continues to serve veterans as a chaplain

Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C-Ballston Lake) today inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame, Korean War combat veteran Paul O'Keefe of Mechanicville at a

ceremony at the State Capitol in Albany, NY.

“Paul O’Keefe is truly a ‘Veterans Veteran’ who is beloved in the Capital Region veterans community for his heroic service during the Korean War and all he continues to do as an advocate for veterans and chaplain at many veterans events and ceremonies. Paul is a great patriot in every sense of the word and very deserving of being recognized for his sacrifice and service to our state and nation by being inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame,” said Senator Jim Tedisco.

Private First-Class Paul O’Keefe was drafted into the U.S. Army and attended Basic Training at Camp Atterbury in Indiana and later was stationed in Japan, and Busan, Korea where he served for 7 months at the onset of the Korean War.

While in Korea, Paul served with the 24th Infantry Division (known as the Victory Division) as one of the first U.S. troops called to South Korea to fight with the Republic of Korea’s (R.O.K.) troops.

At the start of the war, the 24th Infantry Division and R.O.K. troops were completely outnumbered, but just battled on and were able to delay the North Korean forces from advancing. The 24th Division, despite overwhelming odds, continued holding off the North Korean invaders, allowing the United Nations to build up its forces to help defend South Korea. The 24th Division suffered 3,735 Americans killed and 7,395 wounded during the Korean War.

Following the Korean War, Paul worked at General Electric Silicones as a lab technician and retired after 33 years. He was married to Marie Cavotta O’Keefe. Paul has 4 children, 8 grandchildren, and 13 great grandchildren.

Paul is currently the Chaplain and active member of the American Legion Post 91. He can be seen at many community events representing Korean War Veterans, as well attending numerous veterans' events throughout the Capital Region, including serving as Chaplain for the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors monthly "Honor Our Deceased Veterans" program and rendering veterans their final salute at cemeteries.

For 65 years, Paul has been a firefighter with the Hemstreet Park Fire Department in Mechanicville, New York where he also served as Chaplain. He regularly speaks to school groups and young people about the service and sacrifice of our veterans and the importance of community service. As President of the Albany Chapter of the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Paul pushed a wheelbarrow from Mechanicville City Hall to Albany City Hall three times raising thousands of dollars!