



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Gallivan Honors Memorial Day By Announcing Veterans' Programs

PATRICK M. GALLIVAN June 1, 2011

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R,C,I – Erie County) announced a series of initiatives today designed to benefit area veterans, current service members and military families. The announcement comes in conjunction with the national observance of Memorial Day.

Senator Gallivan, in cooperation with his Senate colleagues announced the establishment of the Purple Heart “Forever” Stamp to honor all service members wounded or killed-in-action. The first Purple Heart Stamp was issued in 2003, sparked by a letter writing campaign

orchestrated by New York State Senator Bill Larkin (R,C – Orange County) and the Military Order of the Purple Heart. However, as the price of first-class stamps change, a subsequent letter writing campaign must periodically be conducted to keep the Purple Heart Stamp in circulation. Earlier this month the United States Postal Service classified the Purple Heart as a “forever stamp”, meaning it will continue in perpetual circulation, regardless of future postage prices.

“The Purple Heart is a uniquely significant military decoration that nearly two million American men and woman have received for their sacrifices,” said Gallivan. “Every soldier who has earned it, has also earned the right to have their sacrifice -- and the collective sacrifice of the United States’ military community -- forever recognized. I appreciate the U.S. Postal Service’s cooperation on this initiative and their commitment to our fallen service men and women.”

Gallivan’s office will be distributing materials commemorating the event to veterans’ organization throughout the 59th Senate District.

In addition to the Purple Heart Forever Stamp project, Senator Gallivan has also kicked-off his Veterans Casualty Assistance Program.

“As the ‘greatest generation’ ages into their late 80’s, hundreds of World War II veterans pass away every day, and that number doesn’t reflect veterans of the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, or more recent engagements. Upon the death of a loved one, confusion and a sense of unpreparedness are common. Many people don’t realize that honorary and financial services are available to deceased veterans, and I hope this program will help clarify what is available to the families and inform them of their options during a very stressful time,” said Gallivan.

The Casualty Assistance Program's includes an informational book available to veterans' organizations, advocacy groups and individuals about many of the various government programs available to families of the deceased.

Both the Purple Heart "Forever" Stamp initiative and the Veterans Casualty Assistance Programs come on the heels of a spate legislation passed in the Senate this session designed to support American veterans and military personnel.

Some of the more significant measures include:

S.3900 & S.3901, collectively, the two bills protect mourners at military funerals by prohibiting protests within 500 feet, and forcing protest organizers to post a bond and receive a permit in order to conduct a protest within 2500 feet of a military funeral.

S.193, allows certain disabled veterans to purchase a lifetime sportsman license for hunting and fishing at a reduced rate.

S.3337, focuses on improving the care and state support available to aging veterans by creating a panel of gerontology and veterans' issue experts.

S.2900, creates the Campaign Medal for Service to recognize New Yorkers who defended our country and our state during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan War, and the first and second Persian Gulf Wars.

S.2424A, establishes the New York State Veterans Cemetery Act and provides the mechanism for the establishment of a New York State Veterans Cemetery Program.

S.1431, directs the Adjutant General to present a United States flag to the person disposing of the body of a member of the National Guard, Air National Guard or Naval Militia who dies in the service of their state and nation.

S.1728, would create the crime of "Cemetery Desecration of a Veteran" and also allows community service to be provided for desecrated cemeteries as a condition for probation or conditional release.