



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

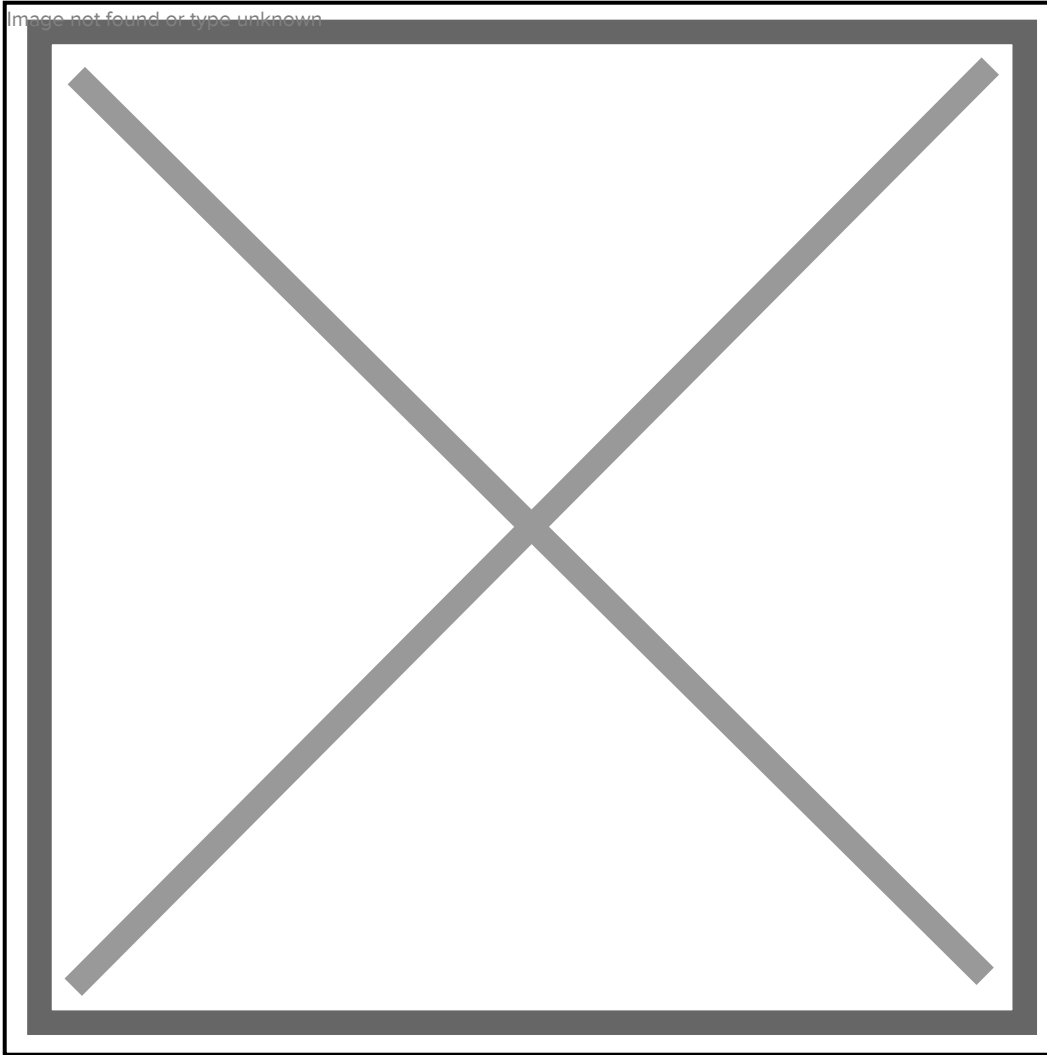
John J. Flanagan

## Senator Flanagan and Congressman Bishop Welcome Home Wounded Hero

JOHN J. FLANAGAN July 19, 2011

| ISSUE: **MILITARY AFFAIRS**





Senator John J. Flanagan (2nd Senate District) and Congressman Tim Bishop (1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District) recently traveled to the home of Ronnie Brandafino to welcome the United States Marine home to Nesconset. Corporal Brandafino was visiting his family following months of treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for injuries he sustained during a helicopter accident while training in Hawaii.

Senator Flanagan and Congressman Bishop were invited to the home of Ronnie's father, Frank Brandafino, at the invitation of Ronnie's aunt Suzanne Brandafino-Bennett of Kings Park.

In March, Corporal Brandafino, who served as a member of the Marine Corps for five years with two deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, was with three other crew members when the CH-53 Sea Stallion they were in experienced mechanical difficulties during a training exercise in Hawaii. As the helicopter started to go down, Corporal Brandafino acted quickly to make sure that each of his fellow crewmembers had the necessary gear for survival.

After the helicopter crashed into the Kaneohe Bay in Hawaii and the crew was thrown into the water, Corporal Brandafino successfully retrieved flares from his uniform to alert the search and rescue

team. His efforts were successful in bringing assistance and, subsequently, saving the lives of two of his crew members.

Corporal Brandafino has been receiving treatment for his injuries since the accident and will be returning to Walter Reed shortly to continue his rehabilitation. Senator Flanagan and Congressman Bishop wanted to make sure he returned to his treatment knowing his community was supporting him and were grateful for his service to the United States of America.

"America owes a debt to America's veterans that can never be repaid," said Congressman Bishop, who presented Corporal Brandafino with a United States flag that was flown over the United States Capitol. "It was an honor to meet Corporal Brandafino and his family to express my thanks for his heroic service wish him a speedy and full recovery."

"It is not every day that you can meet a true American hero and it was truly an honor to spend some time with Corporal Brandafino. I want to thank his entire family for their hospitality and for inviting us to share in his short time home. He is a fine young man who has served all of us very well and I look forward to when he can come home to Long Island for good," stated Senator Flanagan, who presented the Nesconset resident with the New York State Liberty Medal, which was created in 2000 to recognize individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers.

**Senator Flanagan Presents Corporal Brandafino With An Angel Food Cake To Welcome Him Home To Nesconset**