



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Amity Bridge & Highway to Be Renamed After Scio Hero Jason Dunham

CATHARINE YOUNG August 5, 2011

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**AMITY** - Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Marine Corporal Jason Dunham has been honored in a special way with the naming of a bridge and part of State Route 19 near his hometown in his memory, according to state Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean).

Senator Young, who initiated and authored the legislation, said that Governor Cuomo signed the bill on Thursday that renames the stretch of State Route 19 and bridge that crosses over Interstate 86 in Amity in honor of the fallen hero who grew up in Scio. Corporal Dunham's parents, Dan and Deb, still live there.

"This roadway leads directly into Scio, and Jason must have traveled that route thousands of times.

He is missed by many, and the memory of a man who made the ultimate sacrifice for his nation will live on forever in the hearts and minds of the people from the place he called home," Senator Young said.

She said she filed the legislation after being contacted by a constituent who felt that the road should be renamed. After doing some research, Senator Young contacted the Dunham family to get their

blessing.

“The Dunhams always are very humble and gracious. They quietly help many active duty and retired military, and never look for public recognition for themselves. They have been overwhelmed by everyone’s support, and this project is another way to remind the public that all veterans deserve our eternal gratitude for protecting our freedoms and American way of life,” Senator Young said.

“The signage not only will be visible to drivers on State Route 19, but the bridge signs will be on Interstate 86, so travelers through the region also will see them,” Senator Young said.

The Senator commended Assemblymen Daniel Burling (R,C -Warsaw) and Joseph Giglio (R,C,I-Gowanda) for carrying the legislation in their house.

“I asked both of them to participate, and they stepped up to the plate. The road and bridge are located in Assemblyman Burling’s district, while the Dunhams live in Assemblyman Giglio’s district,” Senator Young said.

“Corporal Jason Dunham is a true American hero who faithfully served his country and led by example,” said Assemblyman Burling. “This section of road and bridge will lead directly to his hometown of Scio and will permanently honor his memory.”

“As a fellow Marine, I salute Corporal Dunham for his sacrifice and I am honored to join with Cathy Young and Joe Giglio in this fitting tribute to a soldier who died while protecting his men and our freedom,” he added.

“Marine Corporal Jason Dunham was a decorated officer, a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, and a brave hero to our Country; it is only fitting that we continue to honor Corporal Dunham’s ultimate sacrifice by naming this bridge along New York State Route 19 in his home county as the “Corporal Jason Dunham Memorial Bridge”. It is a truly humbling experience to be part of this honor, and I thank Governor Cuomo for signing this legislation into law,” said Assemblyman Giglio.

In April 2004, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. Marine Corps. Corporal Jason Dunham sacrificed his life by using his helmet to cover a hand grenade dropped by an insurgent. His spontaneous action saved the lives of two fellow Marines.

Corporal Dunham, 22, sustained serious injuries from the blast and died eight days later. He served with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

President George W. Bush honored Corporal Dunham for his actions with the issue of the Medal of Honor Citation posthumously. He was the first Marine Medal of Honor recipient for Operation Iraqi Freedom and the first Marine to receive the medal since the Vietnam War. Senator Young said she was honored to be asked by the Dunham family to join them at the White House for the presentation.

The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government. It is awarded to members of the armed forces for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against any enemy of the United States.

Along with the Medal of Honor, Corporal Dunham earned the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal with the Service Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

On November 13, 2010, the U.S. Navy welcomed its newest warship, the USS Jason Dunham, during a commissioning ceremony at Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Over 4,000 people attended, including Corporal Dunham’s parents, who helped lead the ceremonies.

Corporal Dunham’s dog tags and keylar were placed beneath the mast of the ship, symbolizing his protection over the crew while at sea.

Corporal Dunham was born on November 10, 1981 in Scio, New York - a date significant in that it marks the United States Marine Corps official birthday.

Senator Young said her office is working with the New York State Department of Transportation on scheduling a dedication ceremony to rename the bridge and highway which will take place in the coming weeks.