



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Amity Highway & Bridge Rededicated in Honor of Local Medal of Honor Recipient

CATHARINE YOUNG August 25, 2011

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**AMITY** – On Thursday, Medal of Honor recipient Corporal Jason Dunham was honored by over a hundred family, friends, elected officials, military personnel and veterans during a special road and bridge dedication ceremony spearheaded by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean).

A section of State Route 19 and the bridge that crosses over Interstate 86 in town are now known as the “Corporal Jason Dunham Memorial Highway” and “Corporal Jason Dunham Memorial Bridge” respectively - a designation signed into law by Governor Cuomo in early August.

“Corporal Dunham is a true American hero. This bridge and roadway will not only honor Corporal Dunham for his sacrifices, but also will serve as a reminder to anyone traveling the roadways here that they are living in a free society because of the men and

women who are willing to fight, and sometimes die, to protect our freedoms,” said Senator Young.

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

For his actions, President George W. Bush honored Corporal Dunham with the Medal of Honor Citation, given 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.

Congressman Tom Reed, who in November 2010 attended the commissioning ceremony for the U.S. Navy’s newest warship, the USS Jason Dunham, said, “From the earliest days of our nation’s history to the present, men and women have stepped forward and offered themselves for our nation. I hope that this memorial to Jason Dunham will remind people to reflect on the lives of people like Cpl. Dunham and all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our way of life. We live in a free country today because of them.”

Senator Young said she introduced legislation to rename the road and bridge after being contacted by a constituent. After doing some research and get the blessing of Dunham’s family, Senator Young sought out the aid of Assemblymen Daniel Burling (R,C -Warsaw) and Joseph Giglio (R,C,I-Gowanda), who helped to get the bill passed in the Assembly.

Assemblyman Dan Burling (R,C –Warsaw), himself a US Marine, said, “Today we dedicate this highway and bridge as a fitting tribute to a real American hero who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our nation. I could not be more proud of Jason Dunham and his act of bravery that saved the lives of his fellow Marines. Corporal Dunham acted above and beyond the call of duty, and it is an honor to join with his family and community to recognize his memory and selfless service.”

Assemblyman Joseph M. Giglio (R,I,C-Gowanda) said, “We are here today to celebrate and honor Marine Corporal Jason Dunham by naming a part of New York State Route 19 in his memory. Corporal Dunham was a brave hero whose ultimate sacrifice allows the rest of us to enjoy the freedoms that we cherish today. On behalf of all people of the 149<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, it is a true honor for me to take part in the official dedication of the “Corporal Jason Dunham Memorial Bridge.”

Brian Kelly, Acting Regional Director of the New York State Department of Transportation Region 6, said, “It is fitting that we should remember and honor members of our armed forces for their efforts and sacrifices made for all of us, and that we are all thankful for this. Today we are here to commemorate the particular actions of Corporal Jason Dunham, a courageous example of this type of sacrifice. I am glad that the New York State Department of Transportation can help make this local memorial possible for members of the travelling public to see every day.”

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 in Florida. 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.

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