



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Honoring Local Hero “Jiggs” Petrucci on His Long-Awaited Trip to National World War II Memorial

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO September 16, 2011

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**



Nearly 60 years after the end of World War II, the most defining conflict in our Nation's history, the National World War II Memorial was dedicated in Washington D.C. The memorial represents an everlasting testament to the spirit, sacrifice, and commitment of the 16 million Americans who served in the armed forces during the war, the more than 400,000 who died, and the millions who supported the war effort from home.

The National World War II Memorial is a timeless reminder of the sacrifices made by the greatest generation of Americans, soldiers who left their homes and loved ones to go overseas to fight and shed their blood in defense of world freedom. Joseph “Jiggs” Petrucci of Seneca Falls is one of those Americans. This weekend, Jiggs for the first time will fly to Washington to visit the National memorial honoring him and his fellow World War II veterans. He will join other veterans from our region on an all-expenses-paid trip to our Nation’s capitol provided by the Honor Flight Network, a non-profit organization that partners with local veterans groups to accommodate World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans who otherwise would not have a chance to visit their own memorials. Visiting the World War II Memorial has been a longtime dream for Jiggs, and I was proud to work closely with the Rochester branch of the Honor Flight Network to help arrange for him to take part in the trip. As a member of the 592nd Army Air Force Base Unit, Jiggs fought in the campaign to liberate Central Europe from Nazi oppression. In late 1944, the German army launched a massive counteroffensive intended to cut through the Allied forces and reverse the tide of the war in Europe. Jiggs was one of the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who fought in this conflict, which became known as the Battle of the Bulge. The battle saw some of the bloodiest combat in the war and the courage and fortitude of the men who fought back the German offensive was tested against great adversity. After more than a month of fighting, their tireless determination and sacrifice won out and American forces secured a decisive victory. While fighting in the Battle of the Bulge, Jiggs was seriously wounded. For this tremendous sacrifice, he would receive a Purple Heart medal, awarding his bravery and dedication to our Nation. He was also awarded a Bronze Star, given for acts of bravery and meritorious service in combat.

Jiggs has always remained immensely proud of his service to our Country, and I am elated that he will finally get to experience our National memorial to those heroes like himself who answered the call to service in one of mankind's darkest hours. I have had the honor of knowing Jiggs for all my life and have always valued his friendship and good humor. He is a truly community-oriented man and a familiar face to many throughout Seneca County. He is also a highly accomplished golfer. Many in our community may remember a recent news story about him hitting his eighth hole-in-one, a truly incredible achievement.

The young men like Jiggs Petrucci who fought in the Battle of the Bulge and across the globe during World War II were people like you and me. They had families, dreams and hopes for the future. These courageous Americans, when called upon to protect our country, served with honor, dignity and valor.

The National World War II memorial is an important reminder that we must instill in future generations the need to honor and remember those veterans who secured for all Americans our very way of life and the freedoms we cherish. My deepest gratitude goes out to Jiggs Petrucci and to all of our veterans who were willing to defend, and pay the ultimate price in service to our Nation.