



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Jamestown Wwii Vet Inducted Into Senate's Veterans' Hall of Fame

CATHARINE YOUNG September 19, 2011

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JAMESTOWN – Jamestown resident Anthony “Tony” J. Costanzo has earned a special place of distinction in recognition of his meritorious military service during WWII and his tireless advocacy on behalf of his fellow veterans.

Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) hosted a special ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Chapter #865 in Jamestown on Friday to induct Tony as a member of the 2011 New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame.

"It is my honor to recognize Tony who has lived a life of service not only to his country but to his community as well. He embodies the definition of a true American hero and is the exact type of individual this Hall of Fame was created to honor," said Senator Young.

"Tony is 91 years young, yet he still commands the firing squad of the Vietnam Veterans post. He dedicates himself to being at veterans' funerals, and taking part in ceremonies to honor our country. He truly is remarkable," she added.

"I would like to thank Senator Young for nominating me for induction into the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame. I have served with so many wonderful people who have all done their part in service to the country they loved. This is a great honor that I share with each of them as well," said Tony Costanzo.

The New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame was created in 2005 to honor and recognize outstanding veterans from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves both in military and civilian life. Their meritorious service to our nation deserves the special recognition that only a Hall of Fame can provide, as a fitting expression of our gratitude and admiration.

In January of 1941, 11 months before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Tony joined the Army's 1st Infantry Division, the "Big Red One," and received his basic training at Fort Jay in New York City.

In November of 1942, his unit entered WWII in North Africa, as part of "Operation Torch", the first American ground campaign against Germany. He fought during the Battle of the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia and against the Vichy French government who had sided with Germany.

After the German Afrika Korps surrendered in May of 1943, Tony's unit moved on to take Sicily as part of "Operation Husky."

On D-Day, June, 6 1944, the 1st Division stormed ashore at Omaha Beach. Soon after landing, Tony and his comrades were fighting for their lives on a strip of beach near Coleville-sur-Mer.

After Normandy, he was assigned back to Italy where he served as an MP until the end of the war.

Tony achieved the rank of Corporal and was awarded three Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart, a Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Rifleman Combat Badge, the American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, the WWII Army of Occupation Medal, the European-African Middle-Eastern Campaign Medal with five bronze campaign stars, the WWII Victory Medal, the Distinguished Unit Citation, the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross with device, the French Croix de Guerre, and and six overseas service bars.

He came home from the war and worked for 40 years in a local furniture shop before retiring.

Today, Tony is a dedicated member of the American Legion, Vice Commander of the color guard for VFW Post #53 and is the Sgt. Major of the firing squad for Vietnam Veterans of America Post #865.

Tony's biography, along with those of other inductees, past and present, can be found on-line at www.nysenate.gov/veterans-hall-of-fame.