



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Hinsdale Veteran Receives Long-Deserved Medals Posthumously

CATHARINE YOUNG November 21, 2011

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PHOTO CAPTION: *Senator Young presented the New York State Medal for Merit and the Conspicuous Service Star posthumously recently to the family of Hinsdale U.S. Navy veteran Loreen Briggs at a special ceremony at the American Legion Post in Hinsdale. Serving aboard a tank landing craft, Petty Officer Briggs participated in some of the most grueling fighting in the Pacific Theater including “Operation Iceberg,” the assault and occupation of Okinawa-Gunto.*

*Pictured from left to right are: Roger & Carol Snyder (son-in-law and daughter), Senator Young and Donna & David Briggs (daughter-in-law and son).*

HINSDALE – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) recently awarded a Hinsdale U.S. Navy veteran's family with the posthumous medals he earned but never received for his bravery and heroism during World War II.

At a special ceremony held at the American Legion in Hinsdale on Saturday, Senator Young presented the New York State Medal for Merit and the Conspicuous Service Star to the family of Gunner's Mate Second Class Loren Briggs.

"Petty Officer Briggs' courage is a credit to himself, the United States Navy, and the entire Hinsdale community. It was an honor to present his family with these long overdue awards, he is truly an inspiration," said Senator Young.

The effort to obtain the medals began in July when Petty Officer Briggs' daughter and son-in-law, Carol and Roger Snyder of Portville, contacted Senator Young's office to request information about their father's military service. During the course of compiling the information and gathering discharge papers, her office discovered that Petty Officer Briggs was entitled to the additional medals.

"When we went to see Senator Young hoping to find out more information about my father's service in the Navy, we never imagined that he may be eligible for this type of recognition. It is better late than never, but I know if anyone deserved these awards it was my father. He was and will always remain a hero in our hearts and it is wonderful for him to be receiving this long-overdue recognition," said Ms. Synder.

Petty Officer Briggs served as a Navy Reservist throughout the war and was inducted into the U.S. Navy at age 17 under the U.S. Navy's V6 inactive reserve training program while still a student at Hinsdale Central School.

In 1943, he completed his basic training at the U.S. Naval Training Station in Sampson, NY and later would receive additional specialized joint Navy/Marine training for assault amphibious forces at Camp Bradford at Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia.

Petty Officer Briggs achieved the rank of Gunner's Mate Second Class and served aboard the USS LST-1022, a tank landing craft ship assigned to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater of War.

He participated in "Operation Iceberg," the last battle of World War II, which involved the capture of Okinawa-Gunto as one battle in the larger operation: the Invasion of Okinawa.

As part of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Amphibious Fleet, Petty Officer Briggs' landing craft joined an invasion landing force that survived withering fire and suicide attacks by Japanese aircraft and a defending force of 110,000 Japanese soldiers. The assault and capture of this strategic island, located 450 miles from Mainland China, earned his ship a Presidential Unit Citation.

Petty Officer Briggs also served aboard the USS Dorchester, a Benewah-class barracks ship.

After serving for two years, seven months and five days, Petty Officer Briggs was discharged from the U.S. Navy on April 20, 1946 at PSC Lido Beach, N.Y.

He returned to Hinsdale following the War and married Ann "Susie" MacWilliams in June 1946. The couple had three children - Carol, David and Nick.

The Medal For Merit is awarded to current New York State residents, or those who were New York State citizens at the time of their service, who served honorably in the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Merchant Marines and whose service was in direct support of combat operations.

The New York State Conspicuous Service Star was created in 1998 to recognize New York residents who served on federal active duty in combat military units which received some type of unit recognition. The medal is available to any New York state resident who can prove their unit earned such an award.