



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Cold War Veteran Honored for his service by Senator Young

CATHARINE YOUNG May 6, 2013

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**



*Kevin Smeal received five service awards for his time with the United States Air Force*

**OLEAN** – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean) today awarded five service awards to a local Air Force veteran who served a specialized role in supporting our military during the Cold War. Kevin J. Smeal was an airframe repair specialist during the 1980s, and his service and expertise was vital in helping our nation maintain its strategic readiness during the height of the Cold War.

Smeal received the Cold War Recognition Medal and Certificate, the Air Force Small Arms Marksman Ribbon, the Air Force Training Ribbon, the Air Force Strategic Air Command Shield and the Air Force Aircraft Maintenance Badge – Basic. The ceremony took place at Senator Young's office in Olean.

“Veterans like Kevin Smeal played an essential role in supporting our military operations during the Cold War, a period of American history that will be remembered for the military and political tension that existed between our nation and the Soviet Union and its allies. During this arms race with Communist forces, Kevin Smeal's skill and proficiency helped keep our military strong and ready to respond at a moment's notice to threats to our national security,” said Senator Young.

Kevin entered the Air Force Reserve in May 1986, and after reporting for active duty, completed basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. It was here that he earned the Air Force Training Ribbon and the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon. He then transferred to Chanute Air Force Base, in Illinois, for basic aircraft maintenance and airframe repair specialist training.

During his service, Kevin Smeal was assigned to the 416<sup>th</sup> Field Maintenance Squadron, 416<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing at Griffiths Air Force Base in New York. This wing played a pivotal role in the Cold War, conducting strategic bombardment combat readiness and training, flight and air refueling operations on a global scale in direct support of Strategic Air Command operations. Kevin Smeal and the rest of his team worked specifically on the B-52 Stratofortress, a strategic bomber, and the KC-135 Stratotanker, an aerial refueling aircraft.

“The military has given me the strength, confidence and discipline to tackle life's challenges and allow me to continue to make a difference for my fellow Americans. I'd like to thank my family for being there to support me every step of the way, and I'd like to thank Senator

Young for this great honor,” said Kevin Smeal.

Kevin Smeal was recently elected 4<sup>th</sup> Assistant Chief at the Limestone Volunteer Fire Department, where he is an interior firefighter, fighting the blazes on the front lines. Before that, he served as Vice President. He is also an active emergency medical technician with the department.

“Like so many of our veterans, Kevin continues to serve our community even after his military service has ended. Our cities, towns and villages are filled with veterans who either came back home or settled here after being discharged, and they have made such an important and positive impact on our local communities,” added Senator Young.