



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Montauk's Walter George Drago Selected as NYS Veterans' Hall of Fame Inductee

KENNETH P. LAVALLE May 15, 2013



Montauk's Lt. Col. Walter George Drago has been selected by New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle for induction into the New York State Veterans' Hall of Fame. Drago will join veterans from across the State at an Albany induction ceremony on May 21.

In 1968, Drago enlisted in the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Flight Program and graduated with honors as a Warrant Officer 1 Army Aviator and was selected to fly the Grumman OV-1 Mohawk. Drago was deployed to Viet Nam in March 1970 where within a year he flew more than 220 combat missions in support of the U.S. and the Allied Forces across Southeast Asia.

While in Viet Nam, Drago was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer 2 and awarded the following decorations:

The Distinguished Fly Cross for Heroism

Bronze Star Medal

Air Medals (13)

Army Commendation Medal

Viet Nam Gallantry Cross

Civil Action Medal.

Drago was released from active duty in 1972 and completed his education. He later moved to Atlanta and joined the Georgia Army National Guard. For the next 15 years, he continued to fly the OV-1 in support of the U.S. Army. While there, he received his Battlefield Commission. In 1988, he was transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve as a Master Aviator and Captain. He was then promoted to Major and assigned to the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, retiring as Lt. Col. USAR in 2002.

Drago was hired as pilot by Fed Ex in 1974 and rose through the ranks to Captain while flying round the world. Drago retired from Fed Ex in 2006.

Since 2010, Lt. Col. Drago has been active with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, assigned as Pilot in support of USCG missions. He continues to volunteer for the USMA.

“Lt. Col. Drago demonstrated extraordinary courage and commitment in his service to our nation,” said Senator LaValle. “The New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame is a fitting tribute that demonstrates the respect and gratitude of the First Senatorial District and all New Yorkers for his patriotism and sacrifice.”