



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## "John Stow Vietnam Veterans and MIA Memorial Bridge" Dedicated in Town of North Harmony

CATHARINE YOUNG September 14, 2013

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**



*Bridge Across I-86 Honors Vietnam Veterans and All Soldiers Missing in Action*

STOW - In recognition of the service of Marine Private First Class John L. Stow, and all those soldiers who served in Vietnam or have gone Missing in Action fighting for our country, the State Route 394 bridge crossing Interstate 86 in the Town of North Harmony and hamlet of Stow was today named the "John Stow Vietnam Veterans and MIA Memorial Bridge."

During a ceremony at the Hadley House in Stow, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) and Assemblyman Andrew Goodell (R,C – Chautauqua) joined family, friends, and local officials in unveiling the new sign memorializing native son John Stow, who was killed in Vietnam while serving with the U.S. Marines, on February 13, 1968, at the age of just 18. In addition to Stow, the currently unnamed bridge, which is fittingly located so close to the Veterans Memorial Bridge passing over Chautauqua Lake, will serve as an additional memorial to all American soldiers who served in Vietnam, as well as all those who have gone Missing in Action overseas.

Senator Young and Assemblyman Goodell passed legislation to have the bridge named after being contacted by family members and local officials. Governor Cuomo signed the bill into law this summer.

“Marine PFC John L. Stow made the ultimate sacrifice when he gave his life in Vietnam. He embodies all of those heroic soldiers who dedicated themselves to serving our country in war. This bridge will from now on serve as a perpetual memorial to PFC Stow, all those who served in Vietnam, and every soldier who has gone Missing in Action while protecting our freedoms and liberty. May they never be forgotten,” said Senator Young.

“Private First Class John L. Stow, a native son of North Harmony, is by all definitions a true hero. Though his tour in Vietnam was short, at just 18 years old the dedication and sacrifice he showed on behalf of his fellow Marines embodies the type of heroics that we all should strive to emulate. Now, as we pass over the John Stow Vietnam Veterans and MIA Memorial Bridge, it will serve as a small token of thanks and an ever-present reminder of the cost it takes to keep us free,” said Assemblyman Goodell.

“I am grateful that this bridge, in such close proximity to his home, is being dedicated to John Stow, a Vietnam veteran, and all Vietnam veterans and MIA,” said Sally Carlson, Town of

North Harmony Supervisor.

“I think it’s just great that veterans of the Vietnam War are being recognized with this bridge dedication. They have been ignored for too long and were not treated well when they came home. To be named for John Stow is especially appropriate because before I-86 was constructed he personally walked through that location as a youngster every day,” said Jay Gould, Chairman of the Chautauqua County Legislature.

When PFC Stow went to Vietnam at the age of 18, he was there for only a few short weeks before making the ultimate sacrifice and falling in battle. His life, cut far too short, nevertheless had a profound impact upon his family, fellow Marines, community, and entire nation.

A true hero in every sense and a leader among his fellow Marines, Stow was a model soldier who garnered the admiration and respect of those who knew him. For this reason, it is fitting that this bridge will bear his name as a representative of all his fellow Vietnam veterans, many of whom went Missing in Action and whose ultimate fate remains unknown.

Today, by designating the State Route 394 bridge as the “John Stow Vietnam Veterans and MIA Memorial Bridge,” their sacrifice will receive the recognition it deserves as everyone who passes it will be reminded of those who are to thank for the freedoms we enjoy today.

“John was a real hometown boy who grew up in and loved this community, which our family has lived in for generations. He gave his life and everything he had for us, so it is a great honor and very fitting that this bridge will bear his name and he be recognized in this way,” said Frank Stow, Jr., John’s brother.

“The commitment and sacrifice of men like John Stow is an inspiration for us all. As a nation we owe our Vietnam War veterans a tremendous debt of gratitude for what they went

through, especially those who never came home. They are role models whose selfless service to our country must never be forgotten and this bridge is one way for us to ensure they are always remembered and honored,” said Senator Young.

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