



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kathleen A. Marchione

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# **Senator Kathy Marchione announces highly decorated U.S. Army Veteran Gary Flaherty as her 2014 inductee for the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame for the 43rd Senate District**

**Mr. Flaherty is the recipient of numerous medals, awards, citations and recognitions for his honorable, faithful and courageous military service, and ongoing commitment to advancing the cause of helping America's veterans**

In advance of Memorial Day – and in recognition of May as “Military Appreciation Month” –Senator Kathleen A. Marchione (R,C-Halfmoon) today announced Gary Flaherty – a proud, 23-year veteran of the United States Army with a distinguished service record – as her 2014 inductee to the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame for the 43rd Senate District. The 43rd Senate District includes parts of Rensselaer, Saratoga and Washington Counties, and all of Columbia County.

A resident of the Town of Canaan in Columbia County, Mr. Flaherty served his country and community with honor, valor and distinction as a member of the United States Army for more than two decades, receiving numerous medals, awards, citations and recognitions for his faithful and courageous military service. Mr. Flaherty's full service profile is available at the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame located on-line at: [www.nysenate.gov/story/gary-1-flaherty](http://www.nysenate.gov/story/gary-1-flaherty).

The New York State Veterans' Hall of Fame was launched in 2005 to help honor and recognize outstanding living veterans. Today, Senator Marchione and her Senate colleagues will honor Mr. Flaherty as the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame inductee for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Senate District, along with all the inductees from the other 62 State Senate Districts, during a special public recognition ceremony.

Mr. Flaherty and the other New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame inductees had their photographs and biographies included as part of a special on-line exhibit proclaiming and honoring their contributions, heroism, service and sacrifice. In September, Senator Marchione will recognize Mr. Flaherty as her inductee, along with all of the honorees from the 43rd Senate District, during a special local ceremony.

“America is the land of the free and home of the brave because of heroes like Gary Flaherty who distinguished himself through his faithful and courageous service in our military and his continued efforts to help advance the cause of America’s veterans. I am honored to announce Gary Flaherty as my 2014 inductee from the 43rd Senate District for the New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame,” Senator Marchione said.

“The fact that Gary and his wife Tammy have placed American Flags at the gravesites of veterans for the past 20 Memorial Days is just one of many examples showcasing his continued, admirable devotion to remembering and honoring all who answered freedom’s call to serve. Gary Flaherty’s impressive record of service is a shining example of why we owe all our veterans such a profound debt of gratitude, along with our eternal respect and admiration,” Senator Marchione said.

“It is an honor to wear our nation’s uniform – and an even greater honor to serve my country and fellow citizens during wartime and peace, and continue the important work of advancing the cause of helping America’s veterans when our heroes return home. Being named by Senator Marchione as the 43rd Senate District’s inductee to the New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame is a distinction and recognition that I genuinely appreciate,” said Mr. Flaherty.

In 2013, Senator Marchione’s inductee from the 43rd Senate District to the New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame was James Haggerty, a distinguished member of the United States Marine Corps, a veteran of the Korean War, and a resident of the Village of Valatie.

**Biography of Gary L. Flaherty, United States Army Veteran and Senator Kathy Marchione’s 2014 New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame Inductee**

**for the 43rd Senate District:**

Gary L. Flaherty served in the United States Army with honor, valor and distinction for over 23 years, rising from the rank of private to the highest enlisted rank in the Army and retiring as Command Sergeant Major. His duty assignments include Germany, Vietnam and Korea. One of his career highlights was serving as a member of the White House Task force on transitioning from a draft Army to the current all volunteer Army.

Mr. Flaherty's many awards and citations include the Legion of Merit; Soldiers Medal for Heroism; Bronze Star; 2 Meritorious Medals; 6 Army Commendation Medals; 2 Army Achievement Medals; 6 Good Conduct Medals; Humanitarian Medal; National Defense Medal; 3 Overseas Medals; 2 Vietnam Service Medals; Vietnam Cross of Gallantry; Vietnam Civic Action Medal; Korean Defense Medal; Gold Recruiter Badge, and New York Conspicuous Medal with 5 devices.

He was cited in 1971 for entering the Draft Board and removing a live hand grenade that Vietnam Protesters had thrown through a window. Due to his outstanding service he received a Direct Commission and upon retiring held dual status as both a Command Sergeant Major and Captain.

Mr. Flaherty is a former Canaan Town Supervisor and is the Past President of the NYS Council of Veterans' Organizations; Jr. and Sr. Vice CDR Rip Van Winkle VFW Council; Quartermaster Canaan VFW; life member of DAV; volunteer for Annual Stand Down (18 years); Committee for Homeless Veterans; life member of the Vietnam Veterans of America; 2nd National VP of the American Military Retiree Assoc.; Legislative Coordinator for the Non-Commissioned Officer Assoc.; member of the Advisory Council to the Albany VA Medical Center; and a Fire Policeman for the Canaan Fire Company.

He walked 100 miles – 57 of them while on crutches – to raise funds to build a monument to military personnel from Clinton County killed in Vietnam. In addition, he was a Veterans Advisor for United States Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Chris Gibson. For the past 20 Memorial Days, Mr. Flaherty and his wife have faithfully placed American Flags on the graves of local veterans.

Mr. Flaherty is currently the Columbia County Director of the VetTrac program to assist returning OEF/OIF veterans. He has been married to his wife Tammy for 26 years and has 5 children and 7 grandchildren.