



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senators Diane Savino and Andrew Lanza Honor Two Staten Island Veterans WITH New York Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame Induction

ANDREW J LANZA May 19, 2014

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**



Albany, NY- Staten Island Senators Diane J. Savino (DIW-North Shore) Andrew Lanza (RC Mid-Island and South Shore) honored two veterans today with their induction to the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame.

Senator Andrew Lanza posthumously nominated Army Staff Sgt. Michael Ollis to the NY

Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame. At the early age of 24, Ollis bravely gave his life saving another soldier. The award was received by his parents, Linda and Bob.

Senator Diane J. Savino nominated long time Veteran advocate and Vietnam nurse Mary LaManna to the NY Senate Veteran Hall of Fame. Mary was joined by the love of her life, Dennis McLoone, also a Vietnam veteran and family.

Mary P. LaManna, a native Staten Islander, always desired to become a U.S. Army Nurse. Mary entered the Army Student Nurse Program and trained at Elizabeth General School of Nursing. After graduation from this program, Mary received her commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps. Her inspiration for joining the U.S. Army was due in no small way to her father's proud service during World War II. Mary's first duty station was Patterson Army Hospital at Fort Mommouth, New Jersey. After about a year Mary received orders for duty in Vietnam. Brother Anthony was in the Marine Corps and was stationed in Phu Bai, Vietnam in 1968. A year later, Lieutenant LaManna got off the plane in Saigon, Vietnam. She reported to 3rd Field Hospital. Before long she was assigned to the 629th Medical Detachment which was the only hemodialysis unit in South Vietnam. Mary's year in Vietnam gave her invaluable experience and of course, a proud history of having assisted in giving our troops the tender loving care that was so needed when they were wounded and/or sick.

Mary soon returned to her family. Mary worked in many hospitals and held various management and administrative positions. She worked the last 29 years of her career as a Registered Nurse at Richmond University Medical Center (formerly St. Vincent's Hospital).

She continues to serve others by being as active as she can be in many veteran organizations.

Mary was on the Executive Board of the United States Island Veterans Organization for several years. She served as the Grand Marshall of the Memorial Day Parade in 1996. She is a member of North Shore VFW. She is presently the Provost Marshall in AMVETS Post 917. She is the Adjutant in the Catholic War Veterans St. Paul the Apostle Post #1934. She belongs to the Women Veterans of America, the Vietnam Veterans of America Thomas J. Tori Chapter 421 where she served as the first secretary and was on their Executive Board several times. She was Past Commander of the Staten Island Women's Post American Legion. She is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary for sixty years. She served as Richmond County Vice Commander four times and had the honor and privilege to serve as the American Legion County Commander in 2010-2011. She is the second woman to hold this position in the history of Richmond County.

She is presently a member of the Gold Star Post 1365. Mary is very proud to have served her country. Women have served in all wars and conflicts since the American Revolution. Mary encourages women to serve in the military and join the veteran organizations. A veteran is a veteran regardless of their gender. Mary looks forward to many more years of service to her community and the veteran community. Mary shares her life with the love of her life, Dennis McLoone, also a Vietnam veteran.

Mary LaManna commented, "I am truly honored and humbled to be recognized for my work for my fellow veterans, especially to be honored alongside an American hero like Michael Ollis. Thank you to Senators Lanza and Savino for this high honor and everything you both do for our vets."

Senator Diane Savino stated, "Mary and Michael represent the best of what Staten Island and America have to offer, they have sacrificed for and assisted their fellow troops and for that, I am grateful to them, and their families; as is their State and their Nation."

From the time he was a young boy, Michael wanted to be a soldier just like his father and

grandfathers before him. He played “army” in his backyard, joined the Air Force ROTC in high school, and enlisted into the armed services at age 17 following graduation from Petrides High School on Staten Island.

During his seven years in the army, he belonged to the 1st Armor Division, the 101st Airborne Assault Division, and the 10th Mountain Division. He became an Army Ranger, he earned his “wings” and became a paratrooper.

Along the way, Michael was asked to join a prestigious NCO organization known as the “Audie Murphy Club”. Amid fighting a war, Michael studied daily and subsequently passed three boards to become a member of this, by invitation-only, club.

Michael served one tour of duty in Iraq and two tours in Afghanistan. He left for his third deployment in January 2013. He was due home in October of this past year. However, this was not meant to be. On August 28th, the forward operating base in Ghazni, Afghanistan where Michael was stationed was attacked by insurgent forces. In the course of meeting the enemy, Michael stepped in front of a wounded Polish officer in order to protect him from an insurgent wearing a suicide vest. Michael was killed. He was 24 years old.

His heroism has been honored by the Polish government with their highest military award, the Polish Medal of Honor and also the Afghani Star. Among the many awards received posthumously by the United States, Michael has been awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Silver Star and the Audie Murphy Medallion.

“As young men and women, when their nation called, Michael and Mary answered that call, serving their country selflessly,” Senator Lanza said. “Our veterans serve to protect the freedoms that we enjoy as Americans.

This is just one small way our state can say, ‘Thank you’ to our veterans and their families, for the sacrifices they’ve made which help keep us safe and preserve the American way of life.”

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