



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy and Local Gold Star Mothers Lead Cheektowaga's Independence Day Parade

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY July 4, 2014

| ISSUE: **MILITARY AFFAIRS, MILITARY, TROOPS, VETERANS**



*Kennedy selected to serve as parade's grand marshal, asks local Gold Star mothers to share the honor.*

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. – In recognition of the sacrifices made by so many brave Western New Yorkers while serving in our nation's armed forces, Senator Tim Kennedy invited local Gold Star mothers to join him in leading Cheektowaga's Independence Day parade today.

When Senator Kennedy was selected to serve as grand marshal for the parade, he wanted to share the honor with area residents who deserve our deepest gratitude for the sacrifices their families made to keep our nation strong and free. He asked local Gold Star mothers, who lost children in service to our nation, to share the grand marshal honors with him.

“As we celebrate the birth of our nation this Independence Day, let’s remember the countless courageous Western New Yorkers who have served valiantly to protect and preserve this great country. Sadly, many never returned home, making the ultimate sacrifice and leaving behind families that loved them dearly,” said Senator Tim Kennedy. “Few truly understand the immense sacrifices made to defend our country like our Gold Star mothers, who lost sons and daughters in service to our nation.

“I was honored to have this chance to walk alongside Gold Star mothers from Western New York who have given so much and work so hard to support military families. We remember and honor their brave children, and we thank them for their sacrifices and for their ongoing work to help families enduring similar pain,” Kennedy added. “We must never forget the sacrifices of America’s military families who bear the immeasurable daily stress of waiting for their child, spouse or parent to come home safe.”

Holly Baker, president of the local chapter of American Gold Star Mothers, said, “We were so excited that Senator Kennedy invited us to serve as grand marshals with him because it’s an opportunity to remind everyone of the sacrifices that so many families have made for our nation. What all of us truly want is for everyone to remember and never forget how our nation secured and protected our independence which is through the service and sacrifices of not just our children, but also the children of so many mothers all through our history.”

Holly Baker’s son Brian Baker, a U.S. Army specialist in the 10th Mountain Division, was killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom on November 7, 2004. Mrs. Baker lives in Springville and

now serves as the president of the American Gold Star Mothers South Buffalo Chapter No. 26, which covers the eight counties of Western New York.

Also joining Senator Kennedy and Mrs. Baker to serve as grand marshals today were Gold Star mothers Ann Davis of Cheektowaga, Cathleen MacFarlane of Lockport and Marleen Janiszski of Cheektowaga.

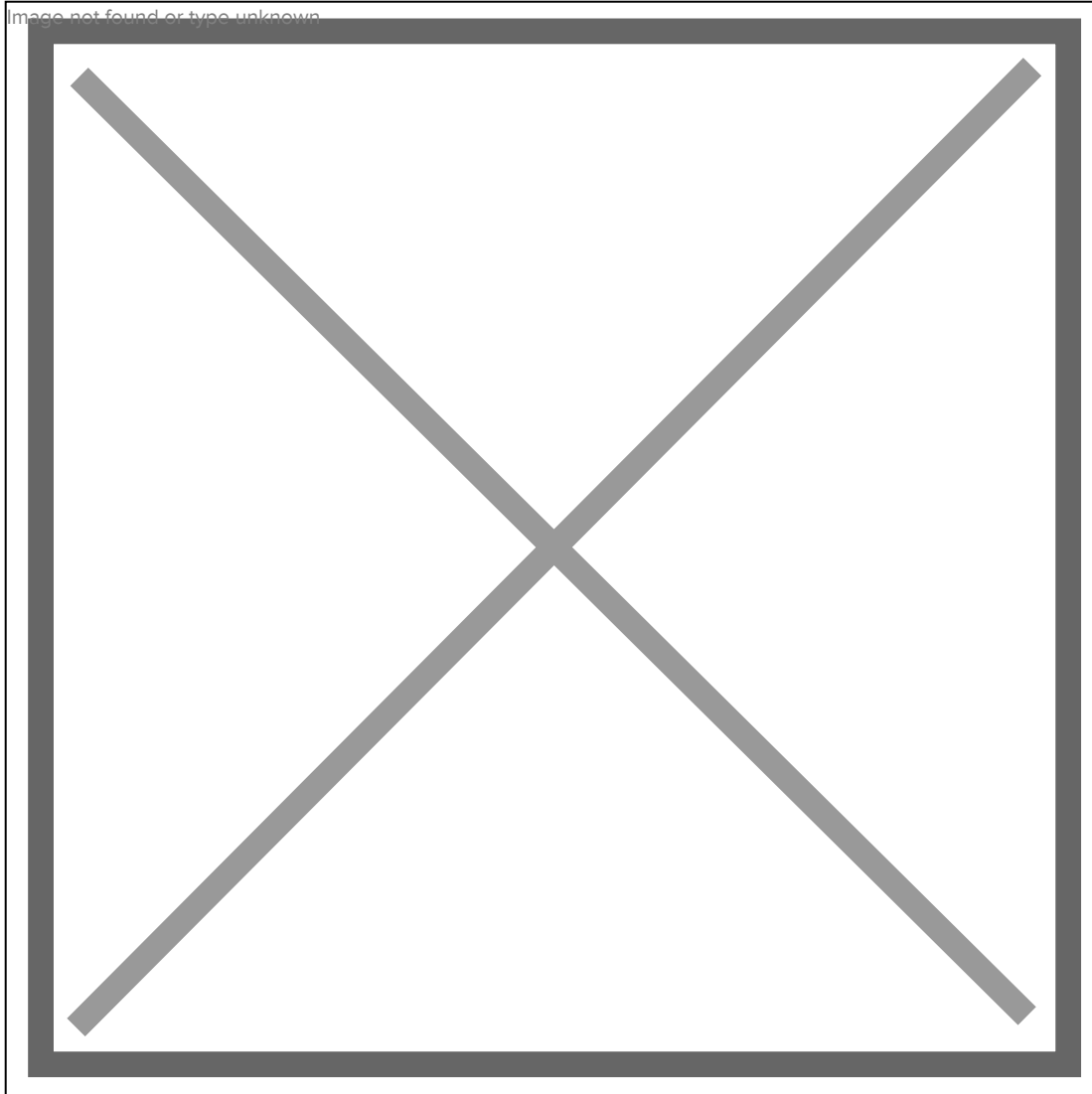
Ann Davis's son Nathaniel C. Jones was a seaman apprentice in the U.S. Navy. He was killed in a turret explosion aboard the USS Iowa (BB-61), which claimed the lives of 47 crewmen on April 19, 1989.

Cathleen MacFarlane's son Albert Jex was a specialist in the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division. He was killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom on February 9, 2009.

Marleen Janiszski's son Philip Witkowski served in the U.S. Army's 37th Field Artillery Regiment. He died on May 1, 2004 in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. He achieved the rank of sergeant.

American Gold Star Mothers is a nationwide organization of mothers whose sons or daughters served and died in the United States Armed Forces so that our world might be a better place to live for our neighbors across the country and around the globe. New York State has the most American Gold Star Mothers of any state in the U.S.

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Senator Kennedy also thanked the Cheektowaga Patriotic Commission for again doing incredible work in organizing the town's Independence Day festivities. Following the parade today, food and beverages are available at Town Park, while the band Special Delivery performs until 5:30 p.m. followed by The Strangers who play from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. A fireworks display takes place at dusk.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*