



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Frank Tracz

CATHARINE YOUNG June 1, 2010



Frank Tracz

**Award:** Veterans' Hall of Fame

**Year:** 2010

Private First Class (PFC) Frank Tracz, 684 East State Street, Olean, NY, is a U.S. Army combat-decorated veteran of the Battle of the Bulge. A telephone lineman with the 106th Infantry Division, (the Golden Lions), PFC Tracz's Division received the full brunt of the German Fifth and Sixth Panzer Divisions on December 16, 1944, during the initial German assault of the Battle of the Bulge or the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign. From this battle alone, the Division suffered 417 killed in action, 1,278 wounded in action, 53 died from their wounds, and 6,697 were taken prisoner.

Although decimated, the stubborn defense made by these 106th Infantry Division soldiers is

credited with ruining the German timetable for reaching Antwerp and thus dooming the Bulge offensive for the Germans. Of those taken prisoner of war, only 6,500 were returned to American control. The remainder of those captured, who remained unaccounted for, were listed as missing in action. By V-E Day, the division had been in combat only 63 days and had received the Distinguished Unit Citation for its valiant service.

PFC Tracz was one of those soldiers captured on December 19, 1944. For five months, he was held at Stalag 9B before being liberated in April 1945. When he was discharged in November of that same year, he came home to Olean and returned to the restaurant business. Until 1974, he operated Tracy's Restaurant on East State Street, Olean, with his father, Vincent. Married to the former Ann Cleo McGavisk, the couple raised three children: Karen, Susan and Terry. They have five grandchildren. For his service in World War II, Frank Tracz earned the Bronze Star Medal, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Prisoner of War Medal, the European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three bronze campaign stars, the American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the Sharpshooter Medal with rifle bar, and the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross.