



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## A Time To Honor Our Veterans

JAMES L. SEWARD November 4, 2010

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On Veterans Day, Americans should pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by our veterans. Whether combat veterans or Cold War veterans, all who served need to be given proper praise for a job well done. Our veterans have faced hardships that a non-veteran could never fully understand. Some have faced death in defending our nation's freedom. Veterans possess the core American values of loyalty, duty, respect, honor, selfless service, personal courage and integrity.

We need to teach our children the true meaning of Veterans Day and the best way to do so is for adults to set a good example. We must keep the torch of memory alive and never forget the sacrifices of our veterans. We must get American military history back into the classroom and the home. The youth of today have to learn about the heroes of yesterday.

All veterans, whether combat veterans, combat-era veterans or Cold War veterans have had their lives altered by their time in the service. Prior to entering the service, some soldiers had never left their home community, yet while in the service they may have visited places throughout the United States or overseas. Some may have never have had the opportunity to live, work and play with other ethnic groups. These life experiences are what make veterans unique and better members of their communities.

We all lead busy lives and so it is natural to overlook the meaning of the service of our veterans. They did their job so well that our nation feels safe and secure from a very dangerous world. Veterans deserve to know that we appreciate their service. We must let our veterans know that we truly believe America is better because of their service and sacrifice. Take the time to thank a veteran, not just on Veterans Day, but any day that you get the chance to meet a veteran.

This past year I was afforded a wonderful opportunity to pay special tribute to our homegrown veterans through the establishment of the [New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame](#). The hall of fame was created to honor and recognize outstanding veterans from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves both in military and civilian life. Their meritorious service to our nation deserves the special recognition that only a hall of fame can provide, as a fitting expression of our gratitude and admiration.

Nominees from across the state traveled to the Capitol for a special induction ceremony on the floor of the state senate. Among those gathered was my inductee from the 51st senate

district – Chester A. Scerra of Richfield.

Sergeant Chester A. Scerra served in the U.S. Army during World War II. As a member of the 390th Paratroop Battalion of the 98th Infantry Division, Scerra made 29 jumps, assisting in various demolition efforts, disabling enemy bridges and communication. His unit was a forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and played a major role in intelligence gathering as part of mission Walla Walla in Italy. For his role in liberating Italy, Scerra was awarded the Italian Cross of War Merit.

Chester is a true American hero. He risked his life to help secure the freedoms and liberties we enjoy each day and is well deserving of inclusion in the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame. You can read more about Sergeant Scerra and the rest of the inaugural class of hall of fame inductees [on-line](#).

Veterans Day is the time we recall the courageous legacy of soldiers who fought in our nation's wars, from the War of Independence to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Today our soldiers, men and women, are carrying on a legacy of valor and service that soldiers before them established throughout our nation's history. Our country was made safe by their sacrifices.

On November 11 let's remember our veterans and their service to our country

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