



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

## Ralph Calabrese

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO May 18, 2012



Ralph Calabrese

**Award:** Honoring Our Veterans

**Year:** 2012

Ralph Calabrese is a great American patriot who not only risked his life serving our nation overseas but, upon returning home, continued to dedicate himself to helping other servicemen and women who did the same.

When the Korean War started in 1950, Ralph felt the calling to defend his country in its time of need and enlisted in the Army. He bravely served for two years with the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea. For his valor and meritorious service during the conflict, Ralph received a number of decorations, including a Bronze Service Star, the Korean Service Medal and the Combat Infantry Badge.

After returning home, Ralph remained deeply committed to his fellow veterans and his community. When the Federal Department of Veterans' Affairs recommended closing the Canandaigua VA Medical Center, Ralph galvanized a region-wide effort to keep the hospital in operation. He started a grassroots letter-writing initiative that generated over 100,000 submissions, organized huge community rallies and presented the community's case in support of the Medical Center at the VA's hearings on hospital closings. Ralph's efforts to keep the hospital open have ensured the health and wellbeing of countless veterans.

Ralph has also served as Commander of the Ontario County American Legion and worked to establish a Veterans Advisory Committee to keep elected officials informed on veterans issues.

Ralph lives in Canandaigua, his lifelong hometown, with his wife Carmella. Last year, the Canandaigua Chamber of Commerce named him "Mr. Canandaigua", reflecting his outstanding service to his home community, his fellow servicemen and women and our Nation.