



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Michael H. Ollis

ANDREW J. LANZA May 16, 2014



Staff Sergeant

Staff Sergeant Michael H. Ollis

**Award:** Supporting New York's Heroes

**Year:** 2014

From the time he was a young boy, Michael H. Ollis wanted to be a soldier, just like his father and grandfathers before him. Michael played "army" in his backyard, joined the Air Force ROTC in high school, and following graduation from Staten Island's Petrides High School, enlisted into the armed services at age 17.

During his seven years in the Army, Mr. Ollis belonged to the 1st Armor Division, the 101st Airborne Assault Division and the 10th Mountain Division. He was always ready for a challenge. With the goal of always becoming a better soldier, Mr. Ollis went through a grueling three month period of training, ultimately becoming an Army Ranger. Following this accomplishment, he earned his "wings" and became a paratrooper. Along the way, Mr. Ollis was asked to join a prestigious NCO organization known as the "Audie Murphy Club." Amid fighting a war, he studied daily, and subsequently passed three boards to become a member of this byinvitationonly Club.

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

Mr. Ollis' heroism has been honored by the Polish government with their highest military award, the Polish Medal of Honor, as well as the Afghani Star. Among the many awards received posthumously by the United States, Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis has been honored

with the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Silver Star and the Audie Murphy Medallion.