



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

## SENATOR DEFRANCISCO RECOGNIZES DONALD D. FIDA AS HIS 2015 VETERANS HALL OF FAME HONOREE IN ALBANY

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO May 20, 2015

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State Senator John A. DeFrancisco was extremely pleased to recognize World War II combat veteran and Syracuse resident, Sgt. Donald D. Fida, as his 2015 Veterans' Hall of Fame honoree, during an Albany ceremony in the Legislative Office Building on May 19, 2015.

“Though it is impossible to repay our veterans for all that they have sacrificed and contributed to this nation, the Veterans' Hall of Fame does help to recognize their meritorious service as a fitting expression of gratitude,” said Senator DeFrancisco.

Donald Fida, who was born and raised in Syracuse, enlisted in the United States Army in 1942, becoming a member of the 184th Infantry Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division.

During World War II, Donald Fida fought in five battles, including the invasion of the Japanese-held atoll of Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, on January 31, 1944. Donald Fida, just a teenager at the time, was assigned to the initial landings on Kwajalein.

He helped American forces take control of Kwajalein, and the victory marked the first time American soldiers captured a Japanese-held territory during WWII.

After the Battle for Kwajalein, Donald Fida went on to serve as a scout in the Philippines. It was there that he was attacked, tortured and brutally wounded at the hands of enemy forces. After being rescued by a fellow American soldier, Donald Fida miraculously recovered from his devastating wounds, regained his strength, and proceeded to fight in another battle in April of 1945 -- the Battle of Okinawa.

For his wounds and sacrifices, Sgt. Donald Fida earned the Purple Heart, as well as many other military decorations. He was also promoted to a Sergeant.

Upon returning home to Syracuse from the war in 1945, Donald Fida soon began a long and successful career in the landscaping business. He also married and started a family. Though retired, Donald Fida still remains active, taking part in various veterans events and serving as a guest lecturer at local colleges. Donald Fida also has two adult children, Donna and James, and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

This January, Donald Fida made the long and emotional journey back to the Marshall Islands for the 71st Anniversary of Operation Flintock, the Battle for Kwajalein Atoll, accompanied by his daughter. He was the only 7th Infantry Division veteran to make the anniversary ceremony, since he was the only one who could walk.

“Sgt. Donald Fida’s courageous story of survival and sacrifice during World War II deserves to be permanently recognized by the New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame,” continued Senator DeFrancisco. “I am honored to have such an outstanding individual living in the 50th Senate District and to name him as my 2015 honoree.”

In addition to today’s ceremony, each honoree’s photograph and biography will become part of a special on-line exhibit proclaiming the contributions of these exemplary New York state veterans.

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