



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Honors Two Local Veterans For Their Service To Our Nation

CATHARINE YOUNG May 1, 2016

| ISSUE: **VETERANS, WORLD WAR II VETERANS, COLD WAR VETERANS**



CHERRY CREEK - Senior Airman John Wesley Alson Nunemaker, U.S. Air Force, and the late Wesley Alson Nunemaker, U.S. Army, both provided distinguished service to our nation and were honored on Saturday with military decorations.

During a ceremony at the Cherry Creek Library, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) presented Senior Airman Nunemaker with several medals in recognition of his dedicated

years of service for our country. The late Wesley Alson Nunemaker, Senior Airman Nunemaker's father was honored posthumously during the event.

Senator Young and Senior Airman Nunemaker were joined at the ceremony by local officials, family, friends and fellow veterans.

"It is always humbling to be able to pay tribute to the brave men and women who served our nation honorably throughout our history," said Senator Young. "Our veterans defended the values and beliefs we most dear, and their selflessness to pay the ultimate price out of love and loyalty to America is truly laudable.

"Both Senior Airman Nunemaker and his father, Technical Corporal Nunemaker, had a passion for service to others and were willing to travel to all ends of the globe to defend freedom from those who wished to take it away. For their service and sacrifice, they truly deserve the medals presented to them, and we all thank them both for their dedication."

Senior Airman John Nunemaker said, "It was an honor for me to serve my country as an enlisted member of the U.S. Air Force. During my four year tenure, I traveled worldwide to help defend the rights and secure the freedoms of American citizens and U.S. allies. I am grateful to God and country for allowing me to survive and accept these awards."

Mark Nunemaker, the son of the late Wesley Alson Nunemaker, said, "On behalf of my late father, I accept these World War II medals. I posthumously revere the sacrifices of the men and women of this era, who laid the foundation of security and freedom for this great nation."

At the age of 22, Wesley Alson Nunemaker was inducted into the U.S. Army on December 28, 1942.

Trained as a draftsman, Mr. Nunemaker was ordered to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and assigned to the 6th Battalion, Field Artillery Support Detachment. In this important assignment, he illustrated training manuals and developed blueprints, graphs, and maps used as training aids in the tactics, techniques and procedures for the employment of field artillery weapons and radar equipment by Marine and Army artillery personnel. After serving in the U.S. Army for over three years during World War II, he was honorably discharged at the rank of Technician 5, or Technical Corporal.

After his discharge, he became the Director of the Art Institute of Buffalo from 1946 to 1957. In 1958, Mr. Nunemaker joined Bell Aerospace in Wheatfield, where he worked as administrative liaison and Team Leader to German scientists, brought to the United States, under Operation Paper Clip, to design advanced aerospace platforms.

From 1962 to 1973, Mr. Nunemaker worked as a professional sculptor and painter, and his works are display throughout the United States. Finally, he worked as an engineering draftsman and crew leader on alternate energy government projects with Newbrook Manufacturing, Exelco Development from 1974 to 1979.

Recognizing Technical Corporal Wesley Alson Nunemaker's tremendous service, his family was presented with the Good Conduct Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the U.S. Army Marksman Badge with Rifle and Carbine Bars, the Honorable Service Lapel Button, and the New York State Medal For Merit.

Following in the footsteps of his father, John Wesley Alson Nunemaker volunteered for the U.S. Air Force in September 1979, at the age of 19.

After completing basic training, Mr. Nunemaker was sent directly to the 341st Strategic Missile Wing, Malmstrom AFB, Montana, for on-the-job training as a packing specialist.

During this period, the 341st Strategic Missile Wing was equipped with the nuclear armed Minuteman I Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM). The 341st was the command and control organization for all Montana-based ICBMs targeted at the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. Its personnel, Mr. Nunemaker included, worked in a state of constant wartime alert and readiness as a crucial element of our Nation's nuclear deterrence force.

In March 1982, Airman Nunemaker was ordered to the 39th Tactical Group, stationed at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. The 39th Tactical Group conducted air combat and combat support operations, and training on the front lines of NATO. In this assignment, the now Senior Airman Nunemaker was decorated with the Air Force Achievement Medal for meritorious service due to hard work and innovative ideals that contributed to the smooth and timely movement of 21,300 military cargo shipments.

Upon returning to the United States, Senior Airman Nunemaker was assigned to the 354th Transportation Squadron, at Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, South Carolina. He was honorably discharged March 5, 1984, having served more than four-and-a-half years on active duty, including nearly a full year overseas.

Following active duty, Mr. Nunemaker manufactured and tested stunt kits. He also volunteered for United Way and assisted with the cleanups following several hurricanes. He traveled the world as a staunch advocate for human rights. Mr. Nunemaker returned to Western New York and became a distributor for Shaklee Homeopathic Product from 1984 to 1994, and was a free-lance photojournalist. His photographic work was published in 2001.

Recognizing Senior Airman John Wesley Alson Nunemaker's tremendous service, he was presented with the Air Force Achievement Medal, the Air Force Good Conduct Medal, the Air Force Overseas Short Tour Ribbon, the Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon, the Air Force Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, and the New York State Medal For Merit.

“We owe our veterans our profound gratitude, especially to those like Senior Airman John Wesley Alson Nunemaker and the late Technical Corporal Wesley Alson Nunemaker. It was a privilege to take part in this ceremony to honor their courage and dedication. We deeply appreciate both men’s dedication to our country, and also the countless other people worldwide who were touched by their service,” said Senator Young.