



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Harold Hyde, Distinguished World War II Veteran, Honored By Senator Young For His Dedication To The Nation

CATHARINE YOUNG June 2, 2016

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



ALLEGANY – A World War II veteran who was an eyewitness to numerous historical events, Radarman 2nd Class Harold Hyde, served his country honorably in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters.

During a private Memorial Day weekend ceremony with his family, Mr. Hyde was recognized by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- 57th District) for his allegiance to the nation, and was

presented with several service medals and ribbons.

“Being able to pay tribute to such an extraordinary man, who bravely and selflessly went off to war when his nation called upon him, is humbling. Veterans like Harold Hyde helped save our country and the world from foes on either side of the oceans. Mr. Hyde served our nation honorably, at a crucial time in the world’s history, and we are all grateful for his efforts,” said Senator Young.

“Men and women at home and abroad contributed immensely during World War II, preserving our way of life and freedom. They truly are worthy of the moniker, ‘The Greatest Generation.’ Without their sacrifices and devotion to country, all would have been lost,” Senator Young said.

In recognition of his devotion to duty, Radarman 2nd Class Harold Stebbins Hyde received the Combat Action Ribbon; the Navy Good Conduct Medal; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, with three bronze service star attachments; the World War II Victory Medal; the Honorable Service Lapel Button; and the U.S. Navy Honorable Discharge Lapel Button.

From the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA), Radarman 2nd Class Hyde received the New York State Medal For Merit.

Harold Stebbins Hyde enlisted in the U.S. Navy on November 22, 1942 and reported for active duty four days later. A 1941 graduate of Westfield Academy, he was just 19 years old and had been employed as a sheet metal worker in the family’s plumbing business.

Seaman Hyde entered recruit training at Sampson Naval Training School and then completed his training at Seneca Lake in Romulus, New York. He graduated from the U.S. Navy’s Radar “A” School at Virginia Beach, Virginia. Trained as a Radarman, Seaman Hyde

was responsible for shipboard radar and electronic warfare equipment. In addition, because Naval vessels entered combat areas, he was specially trained in emergency repair procedures.

Posted to the crew of the *U.S.S. Iowa*, Seaman Hyde was honored as a plankholder and served as a member of the *Iowa's* commissioning crew. The *Iowa* was built at the New York Naval Yard as a "fast battleship," and launched on August 27, 1942. It was the first ship of its class, and as the last lead ship of Navy's battleships the *Iowa* holds the distinction of being the only "fast battleship" to have served in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters during World War II.

Under the command of Capt. John L. McCrea, the *U.S.S. Iowa* initially sailed north to Newfoundland, to counter the threat of the German battleship *Tirpitz*, which was then reportedly operating in Norwegian waters.

After returning to port, Seaman Hyde found himself an eyewitness to history.

The *U.S.S. Iowa* was refueled and special accommodations, including a ceramic bathtub and elevator, were fitted onboard the ship. The ship's next assignment was to deliver President Franklin D. Roosevelt across the Atlantic to Mers El Kébir, Algeria, en route to a critical 1943 meeting in Tehran with Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Britain and Josef Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union.

During the Tehran Conference, the three leaders coordinated their military strategy against Germany and Japan, and made a number of important decisions concerning the post-World War II era. It was from this conference that the foundation was laid for Operation Overlord, the invasion of northern France in June 1944.

On several occasions during the ship's travels, Seaman Hyde found himself within eyeshot of President Roosevelt.

Following the Tehran Conference, President Roosevelt again sailed on the *Iowa* to return to the United States. Prior to leaving the ship, President Roosevelt personally addressed the crew, stating "... from what I have seen and all I have heard, the *Iowa* is a 'happy ship,' and having served in the U.S. Navy for many years, I know – and you know – what that means." He concluded his remarks with "...good luck, and remember that I am with you in spirit, each and every one of you."

The *U.S.S. Iowa* departed the United States two weeks later, on January 2, 1944 for the Pacific Ocean and entered into combat with Task Force 38 during the Marshall Island campaign. The battleship and its crew began 12 straight months of combat, seeing action in the Kwajalein and Eniwetok atolls, the Philippines, Luzon and the Marianas.

On December 18, 1944, the men of the *U.S.S. Iowa* unexpectedly found themselves in the fight of their lives when their battle group was overtaken by Typhoon Cobra. Three destroyers capsized and sank with nearly all crewmen aboard, and nine other ships suffered serious damage. Approximately 790 officers and men were lost or killed, and 80 were injured. Although the *Iowa's* crew escaped serious injury, the ship itself sustained enough damage to require returning to San Francisco, California, for overhaul and repairs.

While in San Francisco, then Petty Officer Hyde was given the opportunity to remain part of the *Iowa's* crew. Instead, he chose to transfer to the recently commissioned *U.S.S. Macon* (CA-132). The *U.S.S. Macon*, a heavy cruiser assigned to the 8th Fleet, was acting as a test ship for the operational development of experimental equipment.

This new assignment was very brief and Radarman 2nd Class Hyde was returned to Sampson Naval Training Center where he was discharged honorably on January 4, 1946, having served three years, one month and 13 days of active duty, with most of that time at sea aboard ships.

After the war, Radarman 2nd Class Harold Hyde returned to Westfield where he resumed his role in the family's business, Hyde Plumbing and Heating.

He operated the business until his retirement at age 65, in 1988. Mr. Hyde married his high school sweetheart, the former Betty Guest and the couple was blessed with two children, Colleen Hyde Martin and the late Daniel Hyde. Mr. and Mrs. Hyde were married for 66 years, before her passing in December 2012.

Mr. Hyde has been active in several civic and veteran organizations, including the Olive Lodge 575 - Free and Accepted Masons, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.