



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Honors Veteran of the Month Dennis Smilinich

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(Tonawanda, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs announced that City of Tonawanda resident and retired U.S. Army veteran Dennis Smilinich has been selected as the 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District Veteran of the Month for December 2017. Jacobs made the announcement and presented Smilinich with a proclamation at a meeting of the Tonawanda’s American Legion Post 264.

“A recipient of the Bronze Star and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Dennis served with great valor in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Vietnam,” said Senator Jacobs. “That same courage and

commitment has marked his service to his community since his retirement from active duty almost thirty years ago, making him an ideal choice for this honor.”

Smilinich began his twenty-one year career in the Army in January of 1969. While with the 101<sup>st</sup> he served as a paratrooper and a “tunnel rat”, a moniker given to infantrymen who performed very dangerous underground search and destroy missions. When he retired in 1990, he held the rank of First Sergeant in the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York.

In his post-military life, Dennis has been an outstanding leader in the Veteran community. He is a Past Commander of the Erie County American Legion and the Tonawanda’s American Legion Post 264. A life member of the Disabled American Veterans, he is also a member of the Vietnam Veterans Chapter #77 where he serves as Chair of the “Remembering Vietnam Memorial Committee”. In that role, he was instrumental in bringing a combat helicopter to Veterans Park in the city. He also serves as Vice Chairman of the Twin Cities Veterans Council that organizes Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies.

Smilinich is an active volunteer with numerous youth, charity and community organizations, including Tonawanda Football Booster Club, Tonawanda 2020 and Lindsay’s Legacy.

“I am very pleased to recognize Dennis for his exceptional service to his country and his leadership in serving his community,” Jacobs concluded.