



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Sanders Nominates Lee Blackmon for 2019 Veterans' Hall of Fame

JAMES SANDERS JR. May 21, 2019



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) nominated U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Lee Blackmon of Rosedale for induction into the 2019 New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame. Lee Blackmon is the immediate past commander of the Rosedale-Laurelton American Legion Post 483 and a longtime community leader and veterans advocate.

“I am proud to recognize Lee Blackmon for his dedication to serving our country and our community,” said Senator Sanders, who is a Marine Corps veteran. “He has done so much to help so many of us and is well deserving of this honor.”

Each year senators from across the State are asked to select a veteran from their district to be inducted into the NYS Veterans' Hall of Fame. The honor was created to recognize and celebrate outstanding service members from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves both in military and civilian life.

Lee Blackmon joined the Rosedale-Laurelton American Legion Post 483 in 2001 and has been a member in good standing for 18 years. He was Post Chaplain from 2011 to 2015 before becoming Post Commander from 2015-2016. In his role as commander, he started a food pantry program to help community members in need. He regularly visits schools and speaks to students about the military and holidays honoring service members like Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. He also goes to the St. Albans VA Hospital to engage vets there in recreational activities.

Lee Blackmon enlisted in the United States Marine Corps at age 19 and was deployed to Vietnam where he served active duty for one year as platoon sergeant, squad and fire team leader. On September 8, 1970, as platoon sergeant with the 1st Marine Division, he was engaged in Operation Pickens Forest, one of many operations to defeat the Vietcong, and the North Vietnam Army. Lee Blackmon's platoon received enemy fire and he was shot twice.

After being hospitalized and recovering from his wounds, Lee Blackmon, having reached the rank of Sergeant, was discharged from the military because of the severity of his injuries, but did not give up, and instead found other ways to continue serving his country, including through community advocacy.

Lee Blackmon is a Purple Heart recipient and a life member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He has received many other awards for his military service such as the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry,

Vietnam Meritorious Civil Action Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Campaign Medal and Vietnam Wound Medal.

Lee Blackmon had the opportunity to televise his story about the Vietnam War in 2012 on Queens Public Television for a documentary called "So Proudly We Hail" and in 2016, on Access Public Television, in "A Vietnam Veteran's Story."