



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## WNY Lawmakers Recognize Medal of Honor Recipient David Bellavia

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| ISSUE: **VETERANS, MEDAL OF HONOR**

Today, Western New York lawmakers honored the military service of Army Staff Sgt. David Bellavia in the New York State Capitol. Bellavia, who will be awarded the Medal of Honor next week by President Trump, was recognized for his accomplishments while serving in the U.S. Army. Senators Rob Ortt, Patrick Gallivan, Mike Ranzenhofer, Chris Jacobs, and Assemblyman Steve Hawley adopted a resolution that was read on the chamber floors, recognizing Albion's David Bellavia and his military service.

Bellavia will become the first living Iraq War veteran to receive the nation's highest military decoration. While serving as a squad leader in Operation Phantom Fury, a 2004 American offensive on the western Iraqi City of Fallujah, Staff Sgt. Bellavia saved his entire squad when he cleared a housing block of enemy combatants who had pinned down his unit. Once Staff Sgt. Bellavia secured the safety of his squad, he re-engaged with the enemy combatants, re-entered the house where enemy fire was located, proceeded to kill four enemy insurgents, and wounded a fifth.

Sen. Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda) said, "There's no one more deserving of our nation's highest military honor than David Bellavia – a true American hero. Because of the utmost bravery and heroism David displayed while leading his unit in Iraq, he saved the lives

of those he was tasked with protecting. As Western New Yorkers, we couldn't be more proud to have him as one of our own. And as Americans, we couldn't be more grateful for his service."

Sen. Patrick Gallivan (R,C,I-Elma) said, "Staff Sgt. Bellavia represents the very best of the brave men and women who serve and protect our country. His courageous and heroic actions in the midst of a fierce firefight not only saved the lives of his comrades but make him worthy of our nation's highest military honor. We thank him for his service and for his steadfast commitment to our veterans and those who serve in the military today."

Sen. Mike Ranzenhofer (R,C,I-Amherst) said, "It is truly an honor to recognize David Bellavia for receiving the nation's highest military decoration – the Medal of Honor. David's courage and selfless actions are an example of true heroism. We are truly grateful for his service."

Sen. Chris Jacobs (SD-60) said, "David Bellavia's exploits in the streets of Fallujah are truly awe-inspiring and remind all of us why the American soldier is the strongest in military history and revered by the people he serves. He is an incredibly deserving recipient of the Medal of Honor and I share in the pride his hometown community of Western New York feels."

Assemblyman Steve Hawley (R,C,I-Batavia) said, "Staff Sgt. David Bellavia is a true example of the American courage, bravery and heroics that have forged our great nation and he is beyond deserving of this tremendous honor. His willingness to put the lives and protection of others above himself during the Iraq War's most intense battle is a priceless act of selflessness to which we should all emulate and, for that, he is an American hero. I am honored to recognize Staff Sgt. Bellavia for his service to our nation and thank him for his sacrifices in protecting our country and its citizens."

David Bellavia will be awarded the Medal of Honor on June 25 at the White House.

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