



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Honors Veteran of the Month H. John Markulis

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(Buffalo, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs announced today that Town of Hamburg resident H. John Markulis has been selected as the 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District Veteran of the Month for September 2019. Retired Colonel Markulis, a United States Air Force veteran and the second of three generations to serve in the military, was presented with a proclamation from Jacobs marking the occasion at a ceremony at the Orchard Park Veterans Memorial.

“Over the course of his twenty-six years of service in the United States Air Force, Colonel Markulis participated in two of the most significant moments of the Viet Nam War, and he has held high ranking positions of international influence in the Pentagon,” said Senator Jacobs. “Through it all, he has served with great distinction, protecting his fellow citizens and promoting democracy around the world.”

Markulis entered the Air Force in 1969 and after pilot training school in 1970, he was assigned as an aircraft commander to fly the WC-130 for the 53<sup>rd</sup> Weather Reconnaissance Squadron known as the “hurricane hunters” who were based in Puerto Rico and Mississippi. In 1974, he was assigned as an AC-130 aircraft commander with the 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron in Thailand.

In 1975, Mr. Markulis participated in two of the more iconic and memorable moments of the Viet Nam War. In April of that year, he assisted in freeing the American personnel from the United States Embassy in Saigon, an operation that was captured on film, producing some of the most memorable photos in American military history. One month later, he participated in the rescuing of the USS Mayaguez in what would be the final battle of the Viet Nam War.

After returning stateside, Markulis served in a number of posts while rising through the ranks of the Air Force including Commander of the 437<sup>th</sup> Field Maintenance Squadron at Charleston Air Force Base and Executive Officer of the Military Airlift Command’s 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron.

After graduating from the Armed Forces Staff College in 1982 Markulis received his first Pentagon assignment with headquarters U.S. Air Force, Policy and Management Division, Directorate of International Programs. He served as air staff action officer for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and handled congressional and aeronautic issues pertaining to international security assistance programs. After a series of Asia-Pacific assignments, Colonel Markulis

became Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of the Iceland Defense Force and Deputy Commander of Iceland through NATO.

By the time of his retirement in 1995, Colonel Markulis was a senior pilot with combat experience who had accumulated more than 2,500 flying hours. His distinguished career was marked with the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, a Combat Readiness Medal and Humanitarian Service Medal.

The Markulis family's service to their country preceded the Colonel as his father Henryk was a bombardier and navigator in combat during World War II, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1982. His son Mark is keeping the Markulis legacy of service alive as a medical technician at the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve Base. A Past Commander of the Orchard Park Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6247, he has also been an active member of the Orchard Park American Legion Post 567 for fifty-years.

"Colonel John Markulis' lifetime of service to his country and community is a wonderful example of what the 60th Senate District Veteran of the Month award represents," said Jacobs. "He is a very deserving recipient and it is a privilege for me to recognize him today," the Senator concluded.

Senator Jacobs established the Veteran of the Month program in 2017 to recognize and say thank you to veterans who served honorably and then continued to make a significant impact through their community service or commitment to fellow veterans.