



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt Announces 2020 Veterans Hall of Fame Nominee

ROBERT G. ORTT May 22, 2020

| ISSUE: **VETERANS HALL OF FAME**



Today, State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I-North Tonawanda) announced Robert Alexander Fire, Private First Class (PFC), U.S. Army, as his nominee for New York State's Veterans Hall of Fame, Class of 2020.

The City of North Tonawanda native was born on November 16, 1920, to Italian immigrants, Guy and Mary Fire. Before entering the service, Robert joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, under President Roosevelt, working at Old Fort Niagara State Park. He would go on to finish his time in the Civilian Conservation Corps in Utah before returning home, marrying

his wife, Mabel, and starting a family.

“Robert Fire exemplifies all that is encompassed when we refer to this era of Americans as ‘our greatest generation,’” said. Sen. Ortt. “He is a man who placed the needs of our nation above his own well-being and sacrificed his safety for the love of his fellow soldier and country. We are eternally grateful for his service and are proud to have him as the 62<sup>nd</sup> Senate District’s representative as this year’s New York State Veterans Hall of Fame nominee.”

In July of 1944, the now father of three would join the U.S Army and serve his nation during the time of its greatest need. In January 1945, PFC Fire was deployed to Europe to fight the Nazis and would serve under the leadership of General George S. Patton in the 28<sup>th</sup> Division of the Third Army. As part of the 109<sup>th</sup> Infantry “The Bloody Buckets,” Company H, PFC Fire fought in the historic “Battle of the Bulge” as a heavy machine gunner.

While serving in Europe, PFC Fire would go on to earn a Bronze Star Medal for volunteering to risk his life and draw sniper fire from an enemy combatant who had his squad pinned down in a European village. Over the course of his service, PFC Fire’s actions also earned him the Infantry Combat Badge, the Sharp Shooter Badge – Rifle, the European-African-Middle East Campaign Medal, and three Bronze Battle Stars for his battles in Ardennes, the Rhineland, and Central Europe. PFC Fire was also awarded the American Campaign Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and finally, from the French Government, the Croix de Guerre.

On October 23, 1945, Robert Fire was discharged from the U.S. Army and returned home to his wife, three children, and a job at the Buffalo Steel Plant. Robert went on to become one of the Buffalo area’s pioneers in the ‘50s, supporting a local youth football clinic and coaching the Buffalo Steelers, a local youth football team. Robert and his wife would go on to have

five additional children, and he would later work and retire from the GM Axel Plant in Buffalo, NY.

In his free time, Robert was a supporter and lifetime member of the American Legion, a member of the Holy Name Society, and steward of the Faith Committee at Saint Andrew's Church. Robert's dedication and love for his country, wife, and children were unwavering.

Robert Fire, a husband, father, and patriot, was laid to rest on November 10, 2000.

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