



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, NYS Senate colleagues induct Steuben County native into Veterans' Hall of Fame

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 27, 2025

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"It is a great honor to induct Scott Ward into the Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame to ensure that his service to our nation and his commitment to area communities will always be remembered," said Senator O'Mara.

Scott Ward served our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan with bravery, distinction, and excellence. Then he returned home to Steuben County where he has dedicated his life's work to service in agriculture, education, and stronger communities.

Albany, N.Y., May 27—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) today announced that **Steuben County native Scott Ward, a highly decorated United States Army veteran and a well-**

known mainstay of numerous local organizations and initiatives, is being inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame.

Ward was commissioned through the ROTC program at Cornell University in 1988. He served in the Army as an Infantry Platoon Leader, Light Armored Cavalry Troop Commander, Infantry Brigade Liaison Officer, Basic Combat Training Company Commander, and Battalion/Brigade Operations Officer, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (LTC). He is the recipient of numerous prestigious military awards, including the Bronze Star Medal (OLC), Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Air Assault Badge, Airborne Badge, Meritorious Service Medal (OLC), Army Commendation Medal (OLC), and the Army Achievement Medal (2OLC).

Ward and his wife Kari own and operate Windydale Farm in Avoca. He is a member of the Bath Central School District Board of Education and Vice President of the Steuben County Farm Bureau.

O'Mara selected Ward to represent his 58th Senate District and join approximately 60 other veterans from throughout New York State being inducted into the Hall of Fame this year. State senators can select one inductee annually to represent their respective legislative districts. The Senate established its online Veterans' Hall of Fame in 2005. The Hall salutes New York veterans for their service in the United States Armed Forces and their civilian accomplishments.

A statewide Hall of Fame induction ceremony was held Tuesday morning in the Legislative Office Building in Albany. Ward was unable to attend the Albany ceremony and will be recognized by O'Mara during a local ceremony at a later date.

O'Mara said, "It is a great honor to induct Scott Ward into the Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame to ensure that his service to our nation and his commitment to area communities will always

be remembered. I remain grateful that the New York State Senate provides this opportunity to salute the service of local veterans who have also devoted their civilian lives and made difference-making contributions to local communities. Scott Ward served our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan with bravery, distinction, and excellence. Then he returned home to Steuben County where he has dedicated his life's work to service in agriculture, education, and stronger communities. Scott has positively impacted so many lives and I am proud, through the Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame, to express our collective gratitude and respect."

Ward's full Hall of Fame biography follows:

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Scott M. Ward, United States Army (Ret), a native of Steuben County, New York, was commissioned through the ROTC program at Cornell University in 1988. He has served as an Infantry Platoon Leader, Light Armored Cavalry Troop Commander, Infantry Brigade Liaison Officer, Basic Combat Training Company Commander, and Battalion/Brigade Operations Officer.

In his first combat deployment, Mr. Ward served as a Senior Military Advisor of a Military Transition Team (MiTT) with the Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF) in Fallujah, Iraq during 2004-2005.

After transitioning out of Iraq, Mr. Ward returned stateside and was recruited for a Battalion Executive Officer position by the incoming commander of the new Regional Training Center East at Fort Dix, New Jersey. He supervised combat service support personnel to prepare soldiers for mobilization to Iraq and Afghanistan. During his tenure, more than 4,500 soldiers underwent training.

From 2009-2012, Mr. Ward served as Installation Mobilization Officer at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. While there, he was given the additional duty of Deputy Director of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security of the installation. He was recruited to serve as the Officer in Charge of the South Carolina Agribusiness Development Team 3-49 in Helmand Province, Afghanistan during 2013.

Mr. Ward is the recipient of numerous prestigious military awards, including the Bronze Star Medal (OLC), Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Air Assault Badge, Airborne Badge, Meritorious Service Medal (OLC), Army Commendation Medal (OLC) and the Army Achievement Medal (2OLC).

After returning home to Steuben County, Mr. Ward has continued a life of service as a member of the Bath Central School Board, Vice President of the Steuben County Farm Bureau, Board of Directors of

American Legion Charles E. Westcott Post 0173, and member of the Safety and Security Team at Victory Highway Wesleyan Church. He is a well-known agriculture education promoter for area schools, a GST BOCES agriculture advisor, and a member of Congressman Nick Langworthy's agriculture advisory committee.

He and his wife, Kari, have three children, sons Bradley (Gabrielle), Christopher (Alexandra) and daughter, Danielle (Chase) Howard. They currently own and operate Windydale Farm in Avoca, NY.

O'Mara's previous Veterans' Hall of Fame inductees are:

- > Philip C. Smith, a highly decorated Korean War combat veteran and well-known figure in Schuyler County government and veterans' affairs;
- > J. Arthur "Archie" Kieffer, a World War II combat veteran and a widely admired fixture in Chemung County government as the Chemung County historian;
- > Painted Post Mayor and World War II combat veteran Roswell L. "Roz" Crozier, Jr.;
- > Anthony J. "Tony" Specchio, Sr., a distinguished Korean War veteran and widely respected for his long-standing and active service to veterans and government in Watkins Glen and throughout Schuyler County;
- > P. Earle Gleason, a lifelong Yates County resident and longtime director of the Yates County Veterans' Service Agency;
- > Warren A. Thompson, a lifelong Steuben County resident and farmer, and a stalwart in the county's civic and veterans affairs;
- > Paul C. "Digger" Vendetti of Elmira, a World War II United States Navy veteran and longtime caretaker at Woodlawn National Cemetery;
- > Richard T. "Dick" Gillespie of Penn Yan, a veteran of World War II;

> Dennis Dennis L. "Denny" Wolfe, Sr. of Chemung County, a Vietnam War veteran and founder of the Vietnam War Museum in Elmira; and

> Merle John Tobias, a Hornell native and graduate of Alfred State College, who served in the United States Army during the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and throughout the Persian Gulf War.

Other area veterans who are Hall of Fame members are Frank C. "Fritz" Pesesky, a veteran of World War II and former director of the Chemung County Veterans Service Office (2005); William K. Kastner, a Vietnam veteran and longtime director of the Steuben County Veterans Service Agency (2006); and Robert Laskaris, a highly decorated combat veteran and well-known figure in Chemung County veterans' affairs (2008).