



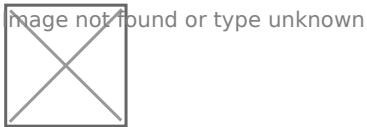
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## **Senator Young Taps Local Vet for "Hall of Fame" Honor**

Catharine Young

December 12, 2005



State Senator Cathy Young (R,I,C - Olean) today announced the induction of George V. Baker from Great Valley, a highly decorated U.S. Army World War II veteran and former prisoner of war, as one of the first members of the newly established New York State Veterans Hall of Fame.

The first-of-its-kind online Hall of Fame is designed to pay tribute to New Yorkers whose gallantry in the U.S. Armed Forces is complemented by their service to the community and significant accomplishments as a civilian.

"On Veterans Day, we pause to honor the brave men and women who serve our nation and protect our freedom as members of the military," said Senator Young. "The Senate Veterans Hall of Fame pays tribute to all who serve, but also singles out for special recognition those whose sacrifices and service have helped make our nation and our communities better places to live."

The inaugural class of Senate Veterans Hall of Fame inductees includes more than 25 veterans from across the state who continue to serve with distinction as leading members of their communities, including Senator Young's designee, Private George Baker of Great Valley.

While serving with the 361st Infantry Regiment, 91st Infantry Division, Fifth Army, Private Baker was part of a combat force that pushed the enemy back 150 miles during intensive fighting to Leghorn, Italy. There, the enemy was entrenched in an attempt to defend the approaches of what was then the third largest seaport in Italy.

As part of Task Force Williamson, Mr. Baker and his unit clawed their way through mountainous terrain to liberate Leghorn all the while fighting off several days of stiff enemy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire.

Although the operation was ultimately successful, Mr. Baker was captured July 28, 1944 at Pisa, Italy during an enemy counter attack. He endured nine months of extreme hardship as a prisoner of war. The brave soldier was one of 2,000 prisoners force-marched north into Germany by the enemy as they fled ahead of the Fifth Army. He was freed April 14, 1945 by advance elements of General George Patton's Third Army.

Senator Young announced that she plans to designate a new Hall of Fame inductee each Veterans Day.

For more information on the Veterans Hall of Fame, and Private Baker, log onto the Vet Hall of Fame website [HERE](#).