



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle Nominates Yaphank's Eugene Smith to Senate Veteran's Hall of Fame.

KENNETH P. LAVALLE June 13, 2011

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New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle has nominated Yaphank Vietnam War veteran Eugene 'Gene' Smith to the New York State Senate Veteran's Hall of Fame. Smith will be inducted with veterans from throughout New York State at a Capitol ceremony on Tuesday, June 14.

“Eugene Smith is deserving of a place among New York State’s elite veterans for heroic and gallant service to his country during the Vietnam War,” said LaValle.

Smith, LaValle said, was awarded numerous commendations and medals for his service including three Purple Hearts, a Combat Infantry Badge, the Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Combat Medal, Air Medals and a Bronze Star.

Smith graduated from Farmingdale College in 1967, worked briefly for Dorne & Margolin Aviation designing antennas for war-bound Bell Helicopters and shortly thereafter, in 1968, he was drafted and sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for basic training. Basic was followed by stints at Fort Polk, Louisiana and Fort Benning, Georgia for advanced training. He left training with a rank of corporal E-4.

Smith was sent to Vietnam in November 1968 as a member of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry whose mission was to find, fix, and destroy the enemy through fire and maneuver; and to provide combat, combat support and combat service support in coordinated operations as an integral member of a combined arms team.

Smith was wounded in action on February 10, 1969 and then twice in the same day on March 21, 1969. He also suffered what he calls “minimal shrapnel wounds” in the same months.

Smith mustered out of service in 1969 as Staff Sergeant E-6 and went back to college. He received a degree from Stony Brook University and later started Gene's Four Season's Landscaping and Nursery Inc. in Yaphank, New York and Riverview Marine Service in Catskill, New York.

Smith and his wife Pat recently sold 100 acres of land in the core pine barrens region of Long Island to New York State so that it could be forever preserved.

A devoted advocate for veterans, Smith has a non for profit to help veterans with housing and independent living.

Smith is currently helping a World War II veteran rebuild his home after it was lost to fire.

A video of Senator LaValle's nomination can be seen here: <http://bit.ly/kenVet>

Photos of Gene: <http://bit.ly/geneAlbum>