



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara honors local veteran with induction into Veterans' Hall of Fame

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 24, 2012

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**



Elmira, N.Y., May 24—When the late Cornelius “Connie” Milliken, the long-time chairman of the Chemung County Legislature who passed away this April, contacted State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) early last year to nominate his friend and fellow public servant J. Arthur “Archie” Kieffer for the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame, Milliken wrote, “J. Arthur ‘Archie’ Kieffer is the definition of what it is to be an American – a role model to all

serving his country, his family, and his community. He truly believes that government deserves respect and dignity.”

This week O’Mara and his state Senate colleagues acted on Milliken’s nomination and welcomed Kieffer, a World War II combat veteran and well-known figure in Chemung County government who currently serves as the Chemung County historian, into the Senate Veterans Hall of Fame.

The Senate established its online Veterans Hall of Fame in 2005 and, including this year, approximately 185 veterans have been inducted. It’s designed to honor New York veterans whose service in the United States Armed Forces is accompanied by service to the community and accomplishments as a civilian, and includes veterans representing Senate districts from throughout New York State.

[\[View the entire Senate Veterans Hall of Fame\]](#)

Kieffer was among 55 veterans, representing state legislative districts from across New York, who joined the Hall this year. He wasn’t able to attend this week’s induction ceremony in Albany, so O’Mara held a local ceremony this afternoon at the Chemung Valley History Museum in Elmira.

“Archie Kieffer represents the kind of citizen our Veterans Hall of Fame is intended to honor and Connie Milliken’s nomination said it best – service to country, family and community,” said O’Mara. ‘It’s a privilege to recognize Archie Kieffer’s military and civilian service, and to say thank you for all that he’s done and continues to do for Chemung County. I hope it will be an especially meaningful and fitting tribute, as we approach this Memorial Day, that Archie’s nomination was put forth by his good friend and an equally great citizen, Connie Milliken.”

O'Mara was joined at today's tribute to Kieffer by Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli and members of the Chemung County Historical Society's Board of Trustees.

Kieffer proudly served his nation in the United States Army during the Second World War as a member of the Army Air Corps in Italy as a B-24 Aerial Gunner with the 459th Bombardment Group, 756th Bomb Squadron. He participated in battles for the North Apennines, Po Valley, Rhineland and Central Europe and was awarded the Air Medal, Good Conduct Medal and the European Service Ribbon with 4 Campaign Stars.

While in the military, Kieffer was also an Army Dog Trainer. Upon his discharge from the Army in 1945, he held the rank of Sergeant.

Following his return to Chemung County shortly after the war, Kieffer became a Master Mason and subsequently worked on and supervised the construction and repair of many buildings throughout Chemung County. His public service in Chemung County began in 1966 with the Building and Grounds Department. As the department's Superintendent, Kieffer personally designed and guided the renovation of many of the county's public buildings, including the Hazlett Building and Park Station, with an eye to the future, attention to detail and love of country.

Kieffer's service to Chemung County continues to this day as Chemung County Historian – a position from which he proudly and diligently chronicles and preserves local history for future generations. He has authored four books on Chemung County and, in 2011, received the prestigious "Franklin D. Roosevelt Local Government Historian Professional Achievement Award" from the Association of Public Historians of New York State.

Always an active citizen, Kieffer has been and remains a revered member of many community and civic organizations.

[see the attached article below from the May 25th Corning *Leader*]