



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Bolivar Army Veteran Receives Korean Defense Service Medal and Cold War Recognition Certificate

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BOLIVAR – Specialist 5 Thomas Jordan had no idea he deserved medals for his service in the Army until he spoke with long-time friend and recent medal recipient Boatswain’s Mate (BM), Third Class Daniel Little.

“Dan Little, who already received medals from Senator Young, was in the Navy and said something about the Korean Defense Medal. He thought I might be eligible to receive it, told me to send my DD-214 to the Senator’s office and they would research it. That’s how it all began,” Spec. 5 Jordan said.

“I would have never pursued the medal if it hadn’t been for Dan. He started it, and that’s how this all took place,” he added.

During a ceremony at the Kenyon Andrus American Legion Post on Friday, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) presented Spec. 5 Jordan with the Korean Defense Service Medal and a Cold War Recognition Certificate.

“Spec. 5 Jordan committed a total of three years, eight months, and 21 days of active service in the United States Army, and it is a incredible privilege for me to present this medal and certificate to him. Our veterans deserve the utmost respect and I am grateful for the opportunity to thank Spec. 5 Jordan for his courage, drive and dedication,” Senator Young said.

Petty Officer Little added, "I know Tom sacrificed a lot, and I'm proud of him, and the fact he's willing to be at this ceremony. Since my ceremony, people have mentioned the impact they saw it had on my grandchildren. I think it will be the same with Tom. I've known him for so long, and he's a good fella. We've kept our noses clean, and I'm glad for him. This is well-deserved."

Spec. 5 Jordan enlisted in the Army on April 14, 1967, just two months before his graduation from Portville Central School. He said he joined the Army because he wanted to be in the same branch in which his father served.

"My grandparents had 13 children, and nine were in the military," Spec. 5 Jordan said. "My father and his brothers were in the service. It's a military family and I wanted to be a part of that. That's it in a nutshell. We're die-hard military."

After completing basic training in Fort Dix, N.J., Thomas Jordan traveled to Fort Belvoir, Virginia to study engineering. He then became a combat engineer and a heavy equipment engine mechanic.

Spec. 5 Jordan's unit originally had orders to go to Vietnam. However, Korean capture of the U.S.S. Pueblo on January 23, 1968 changed the course of action. The Army split the unit, deployed half of the group to Vietnam, and sent the other section to Korea to respond to the ship's capture.

After spending over three years in the Army, Spec. 5 Jordan and his wife Susan returned to Western New York where they raised three children, Jeff, Heidi and Kimberly. They also have two grandchildren, Emma and Chloe.

In June of 1971, Spec. 5 Jordan accepted employment with American Olean Tile, where he worked for 35 years. He then became a substitute teacher at Bolivar-Richburg Central School, which led to his current position in special education, where he has been for five years.

During the ceremony, Spec. 5 Jordan received the federal Cold War Recognition Certificate that is given to members of the armed forces and qualified federal government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the United States any time during the Cold War, which is defined as a period lasting from September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991.

Senator Young also presented Spec. 5 Jordan with a Korean Defense Service Medal, which is given as recognition for military service in the Republic of Korea and the surrounding waters after July 28, 1954 and ending on such a future date as determined by the Secretary of Defense

For Spec. 5 Jordan, Petty Officer Little, and Commander Gerald Bonney, the medal ceremony is significant for them, as well as all other veterans.

“It means a lot to me, being in a commander’s position in the Legion, to be able to honor Tom in this way and to have the service here so the Legion and community can see what’s going on,” Commander Bonney said. “It’s really great to see they’re still alive and are able to be honored like that. I’m really happy that Senator Young is involved with the needs of veterans. That’s a plus to me too.”

Petty Officer Little said, “I think this medal presentation is great because it’s well-deserved. It’s nice that someone listens, and I hope this ceremony an encouragement to others and that they check into their medal eligibility.”

Spec. 5 Jordan added, “A veteran is a veteran no matter where you serve. I don’t want to be in the limelight and have others not in the limelight. Everyone is equal, whether you served in Vietnam or Afghanistan. You are all equal, and I try to stress that with all my friends, regardless of whether they were in combat.”

“I don’t know how to express myself because this is all new to me. I would have never pursued the medal if it hadn’t been for Dan. I just want to say ‘thank you,’” he said.

Veterans with questions about medals or other issues should call Senator Young’s office at (800) 707-0058 or email cyoung@nysenate.gov.

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