



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Jamestown World War II Veteran Anthony Costanzo Awarded French Legion of Honor Medal

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Senator Catharine M. Young presents the French Legion of Honor Medal to Anthony "Tony" Costanzo.

JAMESTOWN – Anthony “Tony” Costanzo, United States Army (Ret.), who courageously served as a member of the First Infantry Division known as the “Big Red One” in some of the first American battles in the North African and European Theaters during World War II, recently received his decoration as a member of France’s Légion d’honneur, or Legion of Honor.

Costanzo was honored for his service to his country at a ceremony on Friday, December 19, 2014, at the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #865 Post in Jamestown. During the ceremony he was joined by his girlfriend, Margaret Barr, his sons Joseph and Sam, as well as many friends and family.

“During a time when nations across the globe needed someone to defend them, Anthony Costanzo stepped forward and selflessly sacrificed for his country and others. The bravery he demonstrated over the course of battles across Europe and North Africa is inspiring and truly heroic,” said Senator Young. “For his effort, the French government has installed Anthony as a member of the Legion of Honor and I join them in expressing our gratitude and thanks. Today, more than ever, it is important that younger generations are aware of the monumental effort made by Anthony and others who heeded the call to action. I know the residents of our community will join me in extending our congratulations and thanks to Anthony for his efforts to protect our freedom and liberty.”

Costanzo enlisted into the U.S. Army in January 1941. During the war he served in Europe and North Africa, including “Operation Torch” in North Africa in November of 1942, where he served as part of the first American ground campaign against Germany. In February 1943, he fought in the Battle of the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, including against the Vichy French government who had sided with Germany.

Following the surrender of Afrika Korps in May 1943, his unit moved to take Sicily as part of “Operation Husky.” On June 6, 1944, Costanzo and The Big Red One stormed Omaha Beach as part of the D-Day Invasion, fighting on a strip of the beach near Coleville-sur-Mer. After Normandy, he was assigned back to Italy as an MP until the end of the war.

As a result of his service to the nation, Costanzo received several medals and commendations, including a Bronze Stars, the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, the Marksmanship Badge with M1 Rifle Bar, an American Defense Service Medal, an American Campaign Medal, a World War II Army of Occupation Medal, a European-African Middle-Eastern Campaign Medal, a World War II Victory Medal, a Distinguished Unit Citation, a New York State Conspicuous Service Cross with device, and a French Croix de Guerre. In 2011, he was inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame

Upon returning home to Jamestown he worked for 40 years in a local furniture shop before retiring. Anthony is a dedicated member of the American Legion, previously serving as Vice-Commander of the color guard for VFW Post #53 and as the Sgt. Major of the firing squad for Vietnam Veterans of America Post #865.

“Our veterans deserve the utmost respect, and I was glad to honor Corp. Costanzo and take part in this moving ceremony to pay tribute to his courage, dedication and years of service to our country,” concluded Sen. Young.