



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator Valesky Inducts Karl Monson into NYS Senate Veterans Hall of Fame

DAVID J. VALESKY May 20, 2015

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Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) today announced the induction of Lieutenant Colonel Karl W. Monson of Cazenovia into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame in Albany in honor of his service to the nation.

“Lieutenant Colonel Monson fought bravely through some of the worst battles of World War II and quickly rose through the ranks to lead other soldiers during wartime,” Sen. Valesky

said. “He is a true war hero, and I am pleased to be able to honor him as the 53rd Senate District’s 2015 inductee to the Veterans Hall of Fame.”

Lt. Col. Monson was born in 1918. He graduated from Wheaton College and planned to attend medical school but first enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private in June 1941. He was assigned to Seacoast Artillery and was serving in San Diego when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He was sent to Officers Candidate School, and in April 1942 he graduated as a “90-day wonder” with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. In July, he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant and then in August was promoted to Captain in charge of the 602nd Anti Aircraft Artillery (AAA) Battalion.

In October 1943, he was promoted to Major and was charged with the anti-aircraft protection of New York City. In February 1944, his 602nd AAA shipped to England and was assigned the protection of airfields. On June 12, his 602nd AAA landed on Easy Red of Omaha Beach, Normandy. He headed the air defense of Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, continuing through four major battles including the Battle of the Bulge. He was then promoted to Lt. Colonel and assigned to 1st Army V-Corps staff. He was discharged in 1946 from the U.S. Army at Fort Sheridan, Ill.

While stateside in 1943, he married Janna Loeks. Together they raised four children. After the war Lt. Col. Monson waived a scholarship to medical school and instead went to work as general manager at the Perry Knitting Company. In the 1960s Lt. Col. Monson became president of the Atlas Underwear Company, which made men’s underwear for Montgomery Ward, Penney’s, and Sears and the underwear that Neal Armstrong wore when he landed on the moon.

Last year, in recognition of his wartime service in the liberation of France, Lt. Col. Monson was presented the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor from the French government. He lives with his daughter and son-in-law in Cazenovia, N.Y.

The New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame was created in 2005 to honor and recognize outstanding veterans from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves both in military and civilian life. Their meritorious service to our nation deserves the special recognition that only a Hall of Fame can provide, as a fitting expression of our gratitude and admiration.