



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

John McHugh, Sr.

TONY AVELLA May 16, 2014



Corporal

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**Award:** Honoring Our Veterans

**Year:** 2014

John McHugh, Sr. is a first generation Irish American, born on March 6, 1924 in Union City, New Jersey, to Catherine Martin and John McHugh.

While attending St. Joseph's grammar school, it was discovered that John had a beautiful Irish tenor voice; to this day, he is asked to sing "Danny Boy" on special family occasions. John and his mother moved to the South Bronx after he graduated from St Joseph's. During his high school years, he sang on two radio stations – the Irish Echo on Sunday nights and the Jim Haden Show in Brooklyn on Saturday afternoons. Upon his graduation from Morris High School in the Bronx, John was drafted into the Army.

After completing basic training at Fort McClelland in Alabama, John was shipped out of New York on the Queen Elizabeth to the United Kingdom. From the replacement depot, he was placed into the First Infantry Division and fought in World War II, risking his life at the Battle of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge.

During his tour of duty, John was the recipient of the following medals and awards: the Silver Star for gallantry in action; The Bronze Star for meritorious service, The European Theater of Operations ribbon which contains: silver arrow head for Normandy invasion; four bronze stars which indicate the major battles he was in: St Lo Breakthrough, Filet Gap, Hurtgen Forest, Battle of the Bulge; two Presidential unit citations for Crucifi x Hill and Hurtgen Forest; the combat infantry badge and the Fort Eger – given by Belgium for action there during the war.

John was honorably discharged from the military as an Army Corporal in 1945, seven months after World War II ended in Europe. Three months after he returned home, on August 16,

1947, he married his childhood sweetheart, Rosie McGee.

John started working with the Transit Authority as a change clerk, then as a conductor, and ending up as a motorman. He retired after 30 years to work as a private investigator and polygraph operator with IBI Security. At age 90, John still works for them, fulltime, Monday through Friday from 7-3.

John and Rosie have three children – John, Brian and Tim. They moved to Whitestone in 1955, where they continue to reside today, and where they are regularly visited by their sons, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren.