



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin Malavé Dilan

Charles A. Johnson

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May 16, 2014





Staff Sergeant

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Award: Honoring Our Veterans

Year: 2014

Staff Sergeant Charles A. Johnson is a true American hero, described as a soldier's soldier with a passion to serve his community and country.

Sergeant Johnson was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on July 18, 1950; he is the fourth of twelve children and graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn, New York, at the age of 19. In 1969, he enlisted in the United States Army so that he could protect his fellow citizens. He completed basic and advanced training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, five months later.

Staff Sergeant Johnson served as a squad leader for 160th Signal Brigade, headquartered in Longbin, Vietnam. He served the rest of his eight year tour in Germany, Thailand and Korea. Upon his honorable discharge from active duty, Sergeant Johnson re-enlisted as an Army Reservist and served his country for another 12 years.

According to his Battalion's commander, Sergeant Johnson distinguished himself among 600 soldiers as one of the two top squad leaders. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Good Conduct Medal as well as the Army Service Ribbon and Overseas Service Ribbon.

When Staff Sergeant Johnson retired from active military service, he needed to find how he could help vocalize the needs of the minority soldiers leaving the military, so he joined the Black Veterans of Social Justice and became the lead voice for their Veterans Action Group. The Veterans Action Group assists veterans of color to find a direction in civilian life. Staff Sergeant Johnson is also the Treasurer for the National Association of Black Vets, which provides an array of supportive services geared toward veterans of color.