



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Cecilia Tkaczyk

## Robert Tarpinian

CECILIA TKACZYK May 17, 2014



Seaman 1st Class

Seaman 1st Class Robert Tarpinian

**Award:** Honoring Our Veterans

**Year:** 2014

Seaman 1st Class Robert Tarpinian was one of the first men on the beaches of Normandy during the D-Day invasion. He was wounded in action during the battle, and was awarded the Purple Heart Medal, as well as numerous other decorations.

It was his involvement in “Exercise Tiger” that nearly cost Robert Tarpinian his life. One of the least known and secretive battles of WW II, Exercise Tiger was a scaled down test run for the Normandy Invasion, but due to the operational missteps of the British military, German E-boats were able to sink and damage three United States vessels, killing about 740 U.S. service personnel and wounding many others.

Although his ship was badly damaged, Robert escaped injury. Just a few days later, however, he was on Omaha Beach for the invasion of Normandy. While assisting a wounded officer, Robert was hit by 18 pieces of shrapnel after a German shell hit a nearby railroad track. Although he recovered from his wounds, he still carries those 18 pieces of shrapnel in his body.

Having served with distinction and great courage, Robert has focused on honoring U.S. servicemen who gave their lives for their country. He was an ardent supporter of the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C., which opened in 2004, and is now particularly interested in seeing the story of “Exercise Tiger” receive wider recognition – so that those Americans who were lost are honored.

Robert and his wife of 60 years, Margaret, are fixtures at area veterans’ events and are staunch supporters of their nation and its patriots.