



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

## Rocco V. D'Onofrio

[Betty Little](#)

May 20, 2016

ISSUE:

- [Veterans Hall of Fame](#)



Rocco D'Onofrio was born and raised in Utica, New York. In 1942, at the age of 18, he enlisted in the Army to serve and defend his country. Upon completion of boot camp at Camp Hood, Texas, Sergeant D'Onofrio was then sent to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, where he was trained as a Tank Destroyer.

Following Sergeant D'Onofrio's advanced tank destroyer training, he was assigned to the 20th Tank Destroyer Battalion and went to fight World War II in England. After a brief time there, he was sent to France, where he saw action on Omaha Beach and later saw combat duty at the Battle of the Bulge. It was there he was captured by the Germans, but not before he and his team destroyed their own tank.

Sergeant D'Onofrio was imprisoned by the Germans at a camp on the Elbe River, commonly known as Camp Lilienstein. He escaped from the POW camp twice, was recaptured on his first escape, but made it to allied lines on his second escape and was quickly returned to his unit.

After being honorably discharged from military service, Sergeant D'Onofrio returned to his hometown of Utica, where he and his wife raised two daughters. He worked throughout the North Country for over 48 years as a wine and spirits representative/salesperson, and during his many trips to the Tupper Lake area, fell in love with the region. Sergeant D'Onofrio resides in the Tupper Lake area to this day, and is an active member of both the Edmond Bujold VFW Post 3120 and the Benjamin Churco American Legion Post 220.

Sergeant D'Onofrio displayed a tremendous amount of bravery overseas as a tank destroyer and POW during World War II. His courage and loyalty to his nation are honored and appreciated more than can be expressed.