



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Official designation of '6994th Security Squadron Memorial Highway' set for Thursday: Portion of I-86 will honor service of flight crews and support personnel of Vietnam-era Air Force squadron

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 20, 2017

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We're proud to remember, honor and pay tribute to their service and bravery. We hope that the designation of the "6994th Security Squadron Memorial Highway" will stand as an expression of our nation's enduring gratitude and respect.

Elmira, N.Y., April 20—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Chris Friend (R,C,I-Big Flats) joined state Department of Transportation (DOT) Assistant Commissioner Patrick Meredith, local veterans and other area leaders to officially unveil the DOT signage that will designate a four-mile stretch of I-86 in Chemung County as the "6994th Security Squadron Memorial Highway."

O'Mara and Friend said that an approximately four-mile stretch of I-86 in Chemung County, from Exit 54 (Ithaca/Horseheads) to Exit 56 (Elmira/Jerusalem Hill), will receive the DOT designation.

The official DOT designation ceremony was held at the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center in Horseheads.

Thursday's ceremony followed last fall's enactment of a new law (**S5582/A9664, Chapter 366 of the Laws of 2016**) sponsored by O'Mara and Friend at the request of Joseph Giammichele of Horseheads, who served with the 6994th and is currently one of its alumni officers.

Giammichele said, "The members of the unit were very skilled and willing to do what was necessary to complete the mission. As a result, more Distinguished Flying Crosses (DFCs) were received by members of the unit than other Air Force units serving in Vietnam. Numerous members of the unit voluntarily served more than one tour of duty in Vietnam."

In a joint statement, O'Mara and Friend said, "The flight crews and support personnel of the 6994th Squadron served our nation throughout the Vietnam War admirably and with amazing courage. We're proud to remember, honor and pay tribute to their service and bravery. We hope that the designation of the '6994th Security Squadron Memorial Highway' will stand as an expression of our nation's enduring gratitude and respect."

New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Matthew J. Driscoll said, “On behalf of Governor Andrew Cuomo, the New York State Department of Transportation is honored to be able to pay this tribute to the 6994th Security Squadron.”

According to the 6994th Security Squadron website, “The 6994th Security Squadron served in Southeast Asia from 1966 thru 1974. The air crews, with the support of our ground crews, flew in unarmed WWII vintage EC-47 aircraft and earned the motto, ‘Unarmed, Alone, and Unafraid.’ This Air Force Squadron was responsible for locating and identifying the enemy using airborne radio direction finding (ARDF) techniques and collecting intelligence information in support of ground combat commanders. As a result of their work, many attacks on friendly forces were mitigated and it has been reported that up to 95% of the B-52 attacks in Vietnam were based in part on information collected by the squadron. This squadron is still the most highly decorated squadron in the history of the current 25th Air Force and all of its predecessor organizations.”

You can read more about the Squadron on the group’s website at: <http://www.6994th.com>.