



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

Martin C. Connor, Jr.

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Corporal Martin C. Connor was born and raised in Syracuse, New York. At 17 years old, still in high school, he nobly made the decision to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps in October 1943.

From Syracuse, Cpl. Connor traveled to South Carolina to complete his basic training at Parris Island, learning to become a rifleman. He then headed to Camp Pendleton, where he became skilled in the deployment of the 60mm light mortar and the 81mm medium mortar.

Cpl. Connor's battalion ultimately boarded the USS Deuel in Pearl Harbor, left Hawaii on January 27, 1945, and then landed on the western end of Iwo Jima. For more than a month, Cpl. Connor engaged in some of the fiercest fighting in World War II that consisted of artillery and mortar fire each day. Eventually, his battalion helped capture the island, and its airfields, from the Japanese Army. The Battle of Iwo Jima was a pivotal victory for the United States, though Cpl. Connor's battalion, alone, endured 989 casualties. For his valiant service, Cpl. Connor was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal and the American Theater Victory Medal.

After his honorable discharge in May 1946, Cpl. Connor returned home to Syracuse, earned his high school diploma, and graduated from Le Moyne College. He went on to own and operate an insurance company in downtown Syracuse for 65 years. Cpl. Connor is an avid tennis player, hunter and skier who served on the Ski Patrol at Labrador Mountain for more than 50 years. He and his wife, Janet Walsh Connor, raised seven wonderful children together.

Cpl. Connor returned to Iwo Jima in 1970, and on top of Mount Suribachi, he and other U.S. Marines met with some of the Japanese soldiers they once fought. Since then, Connor has helped return countless artifacts that were collected from Japanese bodies on Iwo Jima, including diaries, flags and photos. Cpl. Connor also has authored a manuscript about the battle and the courage and spirit of United States Marines.

Cpl. Connor has devoted himself to service. This outstanding veteran, and resident of Syracuse in the 50th Senate District, is an American patriot who has served his country with honor and distinction and made many contributions to our community.