



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

# **Senator Young Posthumously Honors World War II Veteran Donald L. Buchanan**

[Catharine Young](#)

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Donald Buchanan, Jr., Private First Class Buchanan's son, said, "Our father instilled in all of us, a sense of patriotism and an appreciation for our freedoms. We were always proud of our dad and his service to our nation during World War II. We are grateful to have these medals as a reminder of all that he accomplished."

Born in Rushford, New York on December 20, 1919, Private Buchanan was working as a dairy farmer on the family farm when he was inducted into the U.S. Army on July 20, 1942 at the age of 23.

Trained as a light truck driver, Private Buchanan was reassigned to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, where he was part of the initial unit of the newly formed 350th "Battle Mountain," Infantry Regiment of the 88th Division.

The first U.S. Army division comprised entirely of draftees, the 88th Infantry Division, nicknamed the "The Fighting Blue Devils," was under the command of Maj. General John E. Sloan. The division left the U.S. by troop ship on December 4, 1943, arriving in Casablanca, French Morocco for intensive training.

From North Africa, the regiment advanced to Naples, Italy on February 6, 1944, becoming the first all-draftee unit to enter a World War II combat zone. Private Buchanan, as a driver, was part of the convoy that transported the 350th Infantry to Anzio on May 29. The unit immediately went into combat, engaging in a series of skirmishes and battles as the enemy took up defensive positions in Rome. On June 4, the men of the 350th and their 88th Infantry Division counterparts became the first unit of the 5th Army to enter Rome, two days before the Normandy Invasion.

The unit continued northward across the Tiber River, reaching Bassanello where the Regiment underwent rest and training. The men of the 350th Infantry were ordered into defensive positions near Pomerance on July 5, and initiated an attack toward Volterra. Although the enemy presented fierce resistance, the men of the 350th Infantry liberated three cities and reached the Arno River on July 20.

The Regiment joined the rest of the 88th Infantry Division on July 28, braving a brutal enemy counterattack and continued fighting as it made its way to the Po Valley. In the first three months of 1945, the unit defended the Loiano-Livergnano region and then returned to the front. The Po River was crossed on April 24, and the Regiment moved into the Alps where it joined other elements of the 88th Infantry Division and the 103rd Infantry Division, in time for the ending of hostilities on May 2, 1945.

From May 2, 1945 to August 2, 1945, Private Buchanan was part of the Division force responsible for guarding and later repatriating 324,462 prisoners of war. By the end of the war, the men of the 88th Infantry Division had been in combat 344 days, suffering 13,111 casualties.

Private Buchanan departed the European Theater on August 16, 1945 and returned to the United States eight days later. He was discharged, a private first class, on October 11, 1945 from Camp Campbell, Kentucky. He had served two years, 10 months and 27 days on active duty with one year, two months and 20 days overseas, with most of that time in direct combat.

Mr. Buchanan returned to Rushford and resumed his work on the family farm, before purchasing his own 100-acre dairy farm on Rush Creek Road. He married Virginia Irene Pangburn of Cuba, raising nine children. The couple was married 18 years when Mrs. Buchanan preceded her husband in death. He died in 1976.

Recognizing Private First Class Buchanan's tremendous service, his family was presented with the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with Three Bronze Service Stars, the World War II Victory Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Honorable Service Lapel Button, the U.S. Army Sharpshooter Badge with Machine Gun Bar, the U.S. Army Driver and Mechanics Badge. The family was also presented with the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross with Silver Device and the New York State Medal for Merit with four Silver Devices.