



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Honors Veteran of the Month John "Jack" O'Connor

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(Buffalo, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs announced that Village of Kenmore resident and United States Army veteran John “Jack” O’Connor has been selected as the 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District Veteran of the Month for April 2018.

“Jack O’Connor served his country with great pride and distinction during a very turbulent time in our nation’s history,” said Senator Jacobs. “In the more than 40 years that has passed since the Vietnam War ended, he has applied that same dedication to serving his fellow veterans,” Jacobs added.

O'Connor served in the United States Army in Vietnam from 1968-1970, first with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and then with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Among his many commendations while there, he earned the Bronze Star, the National Defense Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, an Army Commendation Medal and a Combat Infantryman Badge.

After being honorably discharged in 1970, O'Connor spent 30 years as the Director of Medicaid Reform in the Erie County Department of Social Services. During that time, he worked closely with many veterans, particularly homeless veterans, to connect them with a wide variety of services.

O'Connor's post-military career has been highlighted by the significant role he played in establishing the first Veterans Treatment Court in the nation here in Buffalo in 2008. The court aids veterans struggling with addiction and mental illness by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system to programs and services to help them rebuild their lives. O'Connor remains a very active volunteer, serving the court and local veterans today as a mentor coordinator, and it was there that Jacobs presented him with the honor.

"Through his leadership and commitment, Jack O'Connor has worked with Judge Robert Russell to make Buffalo's Veterans Treatment Court a model for others across the country," said Jacobs. "Jack's life and career are shining examples of what this award represents and I am honored to recognize him today," the Senator concluded.