



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Louis Levi Oakes

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May 15, 2018

ISSUE:

- [Veterans Hall of Fame](#)



Louis Levi Oakes was born on the Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne and is an enrolled member of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe. He is one of 17 Akwesasne Mohawks to be recognized by the U.S. Congress as a Native American Code Talker.

Mr. Oakes registered at the age of 18 for the U.S. Army, and served for six years as a Technician 4th Grade with Company B's 442nd Signal Battalion. He received his training as a code talker, along with other Akwesasne Mohawks, while stationed in Louisiana.

During WWII, the Mohawk language was one of 33 Native languages used to send communications between U.S. forces. The Native American code talkers are known the world over as having the only unbroken military code in history; these messages in WWII were never interpreted by the Japanese. In 2008, Congress passed the Code Talkers Recognition Act to honor every Native American code talker who served in the United States military during WWI or WWII.

TEC 4 Oakes served as a code talker in the South Pacific, New Guinea and Philippines theatres during WWII and was awarded the Silver Star for his service. The Silver Star is the third-highest military combat decoration for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States. TEC 4 Oakes served with distinction and received an honorable discharge on February 15, 1946.

TEC 4 Oakes worked for 30 years as an ironworker in Buffalo, New York and later for the highway department at the Mohawk territory in Akwesasne, New York before retiring.

Currently 95 years old, he is the sole-surviving Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker to receive recognition for valor while engaged in military operations.