



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Sydney Cole

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Sydney Cole, born in New York City and raised in Buffalo, epitomizes the strength, bravery and character of a true American hero. The World War II veteran, who served with honor and distinction for both Canadian and American forces, will forever be remembered in the annals of history for his actions, courage and calm under fire.

First Lieutenant Cole flew an artillery observation plane for the 776th Field Artillery Battalion and was actively involved in the Battle of the Bulge. Lt. Cole's life would

dramatically change after the early morning hours of his 126th mission. On January 2, 1945, his plane encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire and was shot down.

Before jumping from the damaged plane, he risked his own life to help his co-pilot evacuate the aircraft first. While parachuting, Lt. Cole was wounded multiple times by enemy gunfire during his descent and landed behind German lines.

Captured by retreating enemy troops and taken to a German prisoner of war camp, Lt. Cole was subjected to life-threatening abuse and malnourishment for over a year. Despite his ill-treated wounds and diminished body weight of only 95 pounds, Lt. Cole was instrumental in maintaining high levels of discipline and morale among his fellow POWs, and served as an inspiration and example of American military conduct while held captive.

Lt. Cole's heroism at the risk of his own life, his dedication to the principles of freedom and his exemplary devotion to duty and country, distinguish him among our greatest citizens in the State of New York and United State of America.

Rising to the rank of Captain, Mr. Cole was discharged from the U.S. Army just after Christmas 1945. He returned to Buffalo where he married his wife, Sybil Richard. The couple had a son, Richard.