



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

# Tedisco Honors Malta Vietnam War Veteran

Senator Jim Tedisco

December 22, 2021



Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C-Glenville) today presented a New York State Senate Proclamation to U.S. Army Vietnam War Veteran Roger Lefco of Malta, who has been

a strong and effective voice for veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from their time in our armed forces.

First assigned to a highly-classified Army Security unit with the highest security clearance outside the Pentagon, Mr. Lefco was stationed in Okinawa, but volunteered to go to Vietnam rather than accept a transfer to England.

While serving in Vietnam, he hauled ammunition and gasoline during extremely dangerous convoy missions. In 1965, he made 65-mile-long trips to and from Phu Bai and Da Nang, which took a day each way because of enemy threats and bombed out bridges.

Roger has suffered from hearing problems from exploding mortars and was exposed to Agent Orange. He also had a gun pointed directly at his head during his deployment, with one of Mr. Lefco's PTSD stressors coming from a mission from Da Nang to Phu Bai.

Upon returning home, Roger worked for several years with the New York telephone company in Albany.

Thanks to Roger's dedicated and outstanding advocacy, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) changed its guidelines for applying for PTSD benefits in 2010, to no longer require veterans to prove that a specific stressor related to a hostile military act because of their illness. This was a major victory for veterans as it was difficult especially for those who served decades ago to get vital mental health coverage for PTSD treatment. Thanks to Roger, under the new rules, service members can receive benefits if a VA doctor diagnoses them with PTSD and the veterans symptoms relate to the claimed stressor.

"As I've said before, the Vietnam War was not a popular conflict at the time and those that served did not get the parades, thanks and appreciation they deserved. We can disagree about the merits and politics of a given military strategy and engagement but we should always agree that those who serve deserve our love, respect and gratitude. The heartfelt recognition for the service of all those who fought in Vietnam has been long overdue. Thank you Roger Lefco and may God Bless the sacrifice and service of the 2.7 million Americans who served during Vietnam!" said Senator Jim Tedisco.