



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

## **Senator Borrello Joined by Clemens Family, Friends and Community to Dedicate the 'Staff Sgt. Shawn M. Clemens Memorial Highway'**

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ST. BONAVENTURE, NY – The courage and sacrifices of an Allegany native who gave his life while serving with great distinction in the Global War on Terrorism were honored today with the dedication of the “Staff Sgt. Shawn M. Clemens Memorial Highway.”

Sen. George Borrello and Assemblyman Joseph M. Giglio, sponsors of the legislation enacting the designation, were joined at St. Bonaventure University’s Walsh Auditorium by Staff Sgt. Clemens’ family, friends and members of the community to commemorate the contributions of the Bronze Star recipient.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Shawn M. Clemens, 28, was killed in action by an explosion on Jan. 29, 2004, while on patrol in the Afghan Village of Dehe Hendu as his unit was securing a large cache of weapons they had uncovered.

“Staff Sgt. Clemens served his country with honor and distinction. Now Route 417 in his hometown will stand as a testament to his commitment and selflessness to our great nation,” Sen. Borrello said. “As a young college student, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he excelled as a leader, graduating from the Army’s elite Sniper School and rising to the rank of staff sergeant.

“He served with valor and distinction and ultimately gave his life in defense of freedom. That kind of heroism deserves to be recognized, not only by us, but by those who follow us. That’s why this dedication is so important. This highway will now serve as a permanent tribute to Staff Sgt. Clemens.

“While we can never fully repay the debt we owe to Staff Sgt. Clemens and his family, we can vow to always remember what he did for us and honor his sacrifice.”

Staff Sgt. Clemens is the son of William and Candace Clemens of Allegany and the brother of Kristen Keenan and Michelle Rauluk. At the time of his death, he was married to April Robbins Clemens and had a three-year-old son, Gavin, and a stepdaughter, Alexis Clark.

“It was an honor to sponsor this legislation in the Assembly. The renaming of Route 417 in the Town of Allegany as the Staff Sgt. Shawn M. Clemens Memorial Highway is a symbol of our deep gratitude for the sacrifices made by this young soldier and his family,” said Assemblyman Giglio. “We can never truly repay the debt we owe to Staff Sgt. Clemens, who fought so bravely for the freedom of others, but we will do everything we can to honor his memory.”

Staff Sgt. Clemens grew up in Allegany and graduated from Allegany Central School in 1993. At Allegany, he was a varsity athlete in football, wrestling and baseball. He was also an avid hunter, fisherman and outdoorsman.

He attended Alfred State College before enlisting in the U.S. Army. During eight years of service, Staff Sgt. Clemens graduated from basic training and airborne training at Ft. Benning, GA., and Jungle Expert Advanced Training in Panama. He was first assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment at Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, GA. Upon graduation from U.S. Army Sniper School, he was assigned as an infantry team and squad leader to Bravo Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division in Fort Drum.

During his military service, Staff Sgt. Clemens was twice awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, he also received the Parachutist Badge, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, two Army Commendation Medals, three Army Achievement Medals, the Good Conduct Medal with bronze knot clasp, National Defense Service Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon with “2” Device, U.S. Army Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal – Kosovo Operation, U.S. Army Expert Rifleman Badge, the Valorous Unit Award and the Superior Unit Award.

“Staff Sgt. Clemens devoted his life to serving his country. He embodied the ideals of honor, duty and courage, which exemplify the men and women who serve in our country’s armed forces,” Sen. Borrello said. “Growing up, Staff Sgt. Clemens traveled this road many times with his family. Naming this highway in his honor is a fitting tribute to his service and sacrifice. I want to thank Assemblyman Giglio for sponsoring this legislation in the Assembly and Gov. Hochul for signing it into law.

“I also want to thank St. Bonaventure University for hosting today’s event and the New York State Department of Transportation for partnering with us to make this dedication possible and for their ongoing commitment to honoring our veterans through memorial re-namings across the state.”

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