



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

20  **19**
VETERANS' HALL OF FAME

HENRY GURNEY

Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Whitehall High School junior Henry Gurney joined the New York State Guard. On his 18th birthday, Mr. Gurney received his draft notice and soon after high school graduation enlisted in the United States Army. He was assigned to the tank corps and trained at Fort Hood, Texas. Four months later, Mr. Gurney was sent to Camp Carson in Colorado and joined the newly activated 71st Infantry Division.

Mr. Gurney participated in the Normandy (D-Day) Invasion, landing at Omaha Beach on June 7, 1944 against intense artillery fire and strafing from the German Air Force. As his unit made their way inland, he was hit by a bullet that penetrated his steel helmet dead center. Remarkably, the bullet veered around his head, exiting the back of the helmet and leaving only a minor flesh wound.

Days later, Mr. Gurney was struck by shrapnel from a high explosive shell that blasted a four-inch hole in his helmet. He was evacuated to England for surgery to remove slivers of steel that had embedded in his skull and was awarded the Purple Heart while in the hospital.

After recovering, Mr. Gurney was assigned to E Company, 104th Infantry Division, 414 Infantry Regiment, and soon found himself fighting through the Battle of the Bulge. A couple of months after returning to battle, and while providing machine gun cover for a strategic withdrawal of troops, Mr. Gurney was shot in the stomach and flown to Paris for surgery.

Mr. Gurney was awarded the Bronze Star for his protective actions and received an Oak Leaf Cluster for his Purple Heart.



**HENRY GURNEY IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR ELIZABETH O'C. LITTLE**

