

## Hinchey Presents Overdue Military Medals To Local Veterans

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*Monticello, NY* - On the eve of Memorial Day weekend, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today presented overdue military medals to two local veterans and surviving family members of two others. At a ceremony in the Sullivan County Government Center in Monticello, Hinchey presented various medals to: Randolph Peers, III of Monticello, who is a Vietnam War veteran; Bridget Auer of Bloomingburg, New York, sister of the late James Clancy, who was a Vietnam War veteran; Paul Bottaro of Ferndale, who served in Iraq; and Florika Dima of White Lake, the widow of Catalin D. Dima, who served and was killed by enemy mortar fire in Iraq.

"It is an honor for me to present these medals, which represent our country's recognition of exemplarily service, to our local veterans and their families," said Hinchey, who is a Navy veteran. "As our country and military continue to face great challenges around the world, we draw strength and courage from the bravery and honor displayed by Randolph Peers III, James Clancy, Paul Bottaro, and Catalin Dima."

Hinchey presented Peers, who was a Specialist, with the following medals: Bronze Star Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal and Bronze Star Attachment (Quadruple); Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon w/Device (1960); Expert Badge and Auto Rifle Bar; Sharpshooter Badge and Rifle Bar; and Parachutist Badge-Basic. Peers served in the U.S. Army from December 1966 to November 1968. He served in combat in Vietnam for a period of one year during which time he traveled throughout the country with the 101st Airborne Division in the Second of the 319th Field Artillery Brigade.

Bridget Auer accepted the following medals from Hinchey on behalf of her late brother, Master Sergeant James Clancy: Meritorious Service Medal; Air Force Commendation Medal; Air Force Good Conduct Medal; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award; Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon; Air Force NCO PME Graduate; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm. Clancy served in the U.S. Air Force from September 1964 until his retirement from the military in September 1984. "Jimmy" Clancy, who lived in Florida, passed away on July 21, 2006 at age 60 before receiving his medals. He retired as a Master Sergeant with the U.S. Air Force at Patrick Air Force Base.

The congressman presented Bottaro with the Good Conduct Medal and the Iraq Campaign Medal. He previously received other honors, including: Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal (2nd Award); Army Good Conduct Medal; Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (4th Award); National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award); Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal; and Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M Device. Sergeant Bottaro served in the U.S. Army Reserve for 20 years, completing his service in December 2005. He served as an

electrician with the 854th Engineer Battalion (Combat Engineers), based in Kingston, which provided support for the First Army and 225th Brigade in Iraq. Paul served in Iraq for four months and was stationed just outside the City of Kirkuk. Bottaro's service also included activation for a number of other campaigns including the response and cleanup for Hurricane Mitch in 1989, during which time Bottaro served in Massetanango, Guatemala rebuilding a school and port. For the first ten years of his service, he was with the 320th EVAC Hospital at Stewart Air National Guard Base, which was eventually disbanded. During the last ten years of his service, Bottaro was reassigned to the 854th Engineers Unit in Kingston.

Hinchey also presented Florika Dima with the Gold Star Lapel Button in honor of her late husband's tremendous service and sacrifice. Mrs. Dima had previously been awarded a series of other medals including: Purple Heart; Bronze Star; Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Good Conduct Medal; Army Reserve; Component Achievement Medal; National Defense Service Ribbon; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Armed Forces Reserve Medal; and Army Service Ribbon. Sergeant Dima served in the U.S. Army Reserve and was tragically killed in action by enemy mortar fire in Iraq on November 13, 2004. He was assigned to the Army Reserve's 411th Engineer Brigade based at Stewart Airport in New Windsor.

The medals ceremony was open to the public and included the United States Military Academy Color Guard.