

# Maloney Presents Posthumous Purple Heart

On Monday, November 24, at the Long Island City Library, Congressmember Carolyn Maloney (D-Queens, Manhattan) presented a posthumous Purple Heart to the family of Joseph DiPierno, a World War II veteran and lifelong resident of Queens who passed away in April 2005. Jim Tsaveras, grandson of the WWII veteran, accepted the award on his grandfather's behalf.

"Staff Sergeant Joseph DiPierno served his country with bravery and pride and I am truly honored to present his family with one of our nation's greatest honors, the Purple Heart," said Maloney. "Mr. DiPierno was a devoted family man, an avid sports fan, a talented baseball player, a lifelong resident of Queens, and a decorated war hero. I thank Jim Tsaveras and Mr. DiPierno's other family members for allowing me to share this wonderful day with them."

DiPierno was injured in a mine explosion on January 7, 1945 near Metz, France. His fellow service members, including Joseph Hanson, who attended the ceremony, credit DiPierno with saving their lives that day. However, because DiPierno's wounds were treated in the field, rather than at a hospital, the Army Air Force had no record of his injuries. Unlike his more seriously wounded comrades, DiPierno was not awarded the

Purple Heart.

Following Mr. DiPierno's death, Tsaveras discovered that his grandfather was injured during the war and that the other soldiers hurt in the attack were all awarded Purple Hearts. With the help of Hanson and Hanson's son Jerry, Tsaveras was able to document his grandfather's injuries and secure the Purple Heart his grandfather had earned.

During his Army Air Force career, DiPierno received the Silver Star and the Bronze Star, among many other awards.

Maloney was a Grand Marshal at this year's New York City Veterans Day Parade. She led a successful fight to save the 23rd Street Veteran's Administration Hospital from being closed or consolidated by the VA.

Most recently Maloney worked with her House colleagues to approve the largest increase in funding for the VA in the agency's history; strongly supported the new GI bill to give veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars the same educational benefits as WW II veterans; and participated in hearings aimed at improving health care for wounded veterans and soldiers. Maloney's bill to allow veterans to use VA loans to purchase co-operative apartments, the Veterans Housing Fairness Act, was signed into law on December 22, 2006.



Congressmember Carolyn Maloney (far. r.) presenting DiPierno family member with Staff Sergeant Joseph DiPierno's posthumous Purple Heart while other family members look on. Photo of the late DiPierno and his many decorations.



During her tenure in the New York City Council, she passed legislation that established the Korean War memorial here in New York, the first of its kind in the nation. Maloney also fought to open a

veterans' shelter in East Harlem, an effort for which she was recognized with the Military Order of the Purple Heart, For Meritorious and Conspicuous Service for Veterans.

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