

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) honored an Englewood veteran, Tech Sgt. Jay Fish, for his heroic service during World War II at a recent ceremony on Capitol Hill.

Fish was among nine U.S. Army Air Forces members from the 779th Bomb Squadron, 464th Bomber Group, 15th Air Force presented with Distinguished Flying Crosses for their actions during a mission attacking oil refineries near Ploesti, Romania more than 60 years ago.

“This recognition has been a long time in coming,” said Buchanan. “I thank Tech Sgt. Fish for his heroic and extraordinary service and congratulate him for receiving the accolades he deserves.”

On July, 15, 1944, Fish and his fellow B-24 Liberator crew members successfully armed and released their payload despite encountering heavy anti-aircraft fire that severally damaged the plane and caused the loss of one engine. The day after the mission the crew was shot down over Neusdorf, Austria. One crew member was killed in action and the rest of the crew was held as prisoners of war for the remainder of World War II.

Buchanan was one of several people to attend the ceremony hosted last month by Congressman Bill Young (R-FL 10) who brought the crew’s mission to the attention of Air Force Chief of Staff, General T. Michael Mosely.

Fish was among three surviving crew members who were honored. Six of the honorees received the award posthumously. Other medal recipients are 1st Lt. James E. Jatho, 1st Lt. Edward L. McNally, 2nd Lt. George N. Croft, 2nd Lt. Theodore D. Bell, Tech Sgt. William A. Magill, Staff Sgt. Frank G. Celuck, Staff Sgt. Robert O. Speed, Jr. and Staff Sgt. Daniel P. Toomey.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded service men and women who distinguish themselves by heroism or extraordinary achievement while in flight.