

NEW YORK STATE SENATE

VETERANS

Hall of Fame



SPONSORED BY SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE
MAY 3, 2012 - FORT DRUM, NEW YORK





Senator Patty Ritchie

May 2012

Dear Friend:

The New York State Veterans Hall of Fame was created to honor past members of the US Armed Forces whose valor, dedication and distinguished service to our nation is only complemented by their continuing service to our communities.

I am pleased to sponsor the Veterans Hall of Fame, and even more pleased to be able to recognize the exemplary individuals who have been nominated for this honor.

This recognition is but a small tribute for the service, sacrifice and commitment you have shown to the residents and communities of Central and Northern New York.

On their behalf, please allow me to extend my gratitude, and welcome you to our celebration of the 2012 Nominees to the Senate Veterans Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "P" and a cursive "atty".

Senator Patty Ritchie

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**Michael
Plummer**
2012 Honoree

Colonel Michael Plummer served in the Army for over 31 years, in various assignments throughout the US and overseas. Most notably, Plummer served in the Vietnam War, as Chief of Staff for the 82nd Airborne in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and oversaw 15,000 soldiers as Assistant Division Commander at Ft. Drum. As part of a planning cell tasked with finding a home for a new light infantry division, Plummer played an important role in bringing the 10th Mountain Division to Northern N.Y. Plummer retired from the Army in 1991. He has received a number of accolades for his service, including the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

Plummer continues to give back to veterans, current soldiers and the community in a number of ways through the “Adopt-a-Platoon” program, a project that encourages people to “adopt” platoons during deployments. Plummer helped make the program a national endeavor by promoting it in Jefferson County.

His continuing efforts on behalf of veterans and his community has earned him honors, including the Association of the Army’s National Biddle Medal, and Watertown’s Shapiro Award.



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2011 Inductees

The Oswego County Battle of the Bulge Veterans



Induction of The Oswego County Battle of the Bulge Veterans in 2012 marked the first time that recognition was awarded to a group of service members, rather than an individual. This historic honor was fitting, considering the special service of this exemplary “band of brothers.”

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The background of the entire page is a dark, close-up view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The stars are prominent in the upper left and lower right corners.

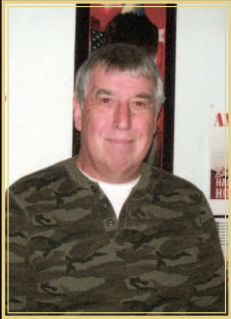
2012
New York State
Veterans Hall of Fame
Nominees

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Timothy Ambrose
2012 Nominee

Timothy Ambrose enlisted in the Air Force in 1967, eventually rising to the rank of Sergeant (E-4). Ambrose completed his service in 1971, but continues to work for past and present members of the military by participating in a number of veterans organizations for more than 40 years. After serving overseas loading munitions on aircraft bound for Vietnam, Ambrose returned to the US, where he developed firefighting skills. He served as Chief of the Black River Fire Department and was named Firefighter of the Year in 1995. As a former member and past president of the Jefferson County Firefighters of the Year, he has helped insure quality emergency services for the people of Northern New York. As a member of the Sons of the American Legion, and the American Legion, Timothy has worked with veterans and their families as the Service Officer. In 2004, he received the "Legion of the Year Award." Over his military career, Ambrose has been recognized for his service through a number of honors, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, the Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Air Force Good Conduct Medal. Ambrose was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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Clarence C. Berry
2012 Nominee

Clarence Berry served in the United States Army for 21 years through WWII, Korea and the Vietnam era, earning the Purple Heart and a variety of other medals and awards. After retiring from the Army in 1966, he began a lifetime of service to Northern New York's veterans as a 33-year member of the American Legion, a 21-year member of the Amvets and a 21-year member of the VFW. Clarence Berry has worked hard to educate the public about the veterans from the region who have heard their nation's call during times of war. He founded the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War to help insure that the 8,000 veterans from St. Lawrence County who fought in that conflict were not forgotten, naming the group after Medal of Honor winner General Newton Martin Curtis, the hero of Fort Fisher. Several years ago, he organized a veterans museum in Ogdensburg, collecting a variety of historical items from veterans and their families. He is the author of "The Perils of Company A," a history of the Ogdensburg soldiers who fought in the Civil War. Clarence Berry was nominated by Robert Flavin.



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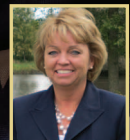


**Michael
Theodore Bice**
2012 Nominee

Jefferson County's Michael Bice is currently a member of the New York Army National Guard in the 27th IBCT. He entered the service in 1990. He has served overseas in training and combat missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Australia and Japan. He has received a number of accolades for his service, including the Kosovo Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the NATO Medal, the Gold German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency and more. He is active in his community through many groups including the 1st 108th Infantry Association of Old Crows, is a life member of his local VFW and American Legion and an exempt member of the Clayton Volunteer Fire Department. In addition to being a member of the National Guard, he also is a sergeant with the New York State Police. Bice was nominated by his wife, Kristi Bice of Watertown.



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Nellie Coakley
2012 Nominee

St. Lawrence County's Nellie Coakley entered military service in 1966. She was trained and then volunteered to serve in Vietnam. While in the country, she treated war casualties. After about a year of service, she returned to the US and continued to treat soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Coakley received a number of awards including the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device. After leaving the service, Coakley earned a Master's degree in counseling and human development. She later became a war and trauma readjustment counselor and coordinated the first federally funded war veterans readjustment program in Northern New York. She has since retired, but remains active in her community. Her awards include: the New York State Senate's Woman of Distinction 2000, the St. Lawrence County League of Women Voter's Award for Outstanding Community Service and Professional Advancement, the Unsung Heroine's Award, the Sol Feinstone Award and many more. Coakley speaks publicly about issues veterans face when they return home from war and is also a member of Canton's VFW.



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Madison Cobb
2012 Nominee

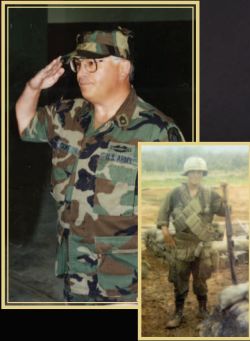
Madison Cobb was one of the brave Army soldiers who survived D-Day, the first day of the invasion of Normandy during World War II. Cobb entered the Army in 1942 at the age of 18. He served as an Army Ranger and eventually rose to the rank of corporal. During the D-Day invasion, Cobb was involved in the assault on Pointe-du-Hoc. The Rangers at Pointe-du-Hoc carried out a mission called “The Suicide Mission.” During it, Cobb was hit by enemy fire and wounded. Cobb completed his service in 1946. He received a number of accolades for his dedication, including the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation, the American Campaign Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the WWII Victory Medal and more. Cobb was nominated by his wife, Arlean Cobb.



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Donald Cooke
2012 Nominee

Former Sgt. First Class Donald Cooke served in the United States Army in the Central Highlands of Vietnam and later in the Army Reserves, earning over 25 medals and awards. Over the years, he has been very active in North Country Veterans Affairs as a member of the Canton VFW, its Color Guard and the Ogdensburg AmVets Post. As a member of the Ogdensburg AmVets, Donald Cooke has been one of its most active members, serving in a host of positions, including Commander. On Christmas Day, Donald Cooke is part of the team of AmVets volunteers who every year helps make sure more than 500 elderly and needy families in the Greater Ogdensburg area receive a free Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, many of them delivered to their homes. He worked on the committee to raise money for Ogdensburg's Desert Storm Monument. He chairs the reunion committee for the former Ogdensburg Army Reserve unit. He serves on the board of the Ogdensburg Veterans Cemetery Association. Last spring, he helped raise the money and co-chaired the effort to help bring the Vietnam Moving Wall to Ogdensburg, educating a new generation about the sacrifices of those who fought in that conflict. Donald Cooke was nominated for the Senate Hall of Fame by Joseph Cosentino, Jerry Peo, Vicky Peo and Larry Caufield.



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Paul Cortright
2012 Nominee

Paul Cortright served in the Army for more than 20 years, and continues to serve his country by dedicating his life to working for veterans. Cortright enlisted in 1958, rising to the rank of Master Sergeant (E-8). Cortright has been recognized for his service with a number of awards and honors, including the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and the National Conduct Medal. Cortright was also honored by his peers in 2002 when he was selected as Legionnaire of the Year for the American Legion, Department of New York. Cortright is a member of a number of veteran organizations, including the American Legion John B. Lyman Post 904, where he served as Post Commander. He also served as Jefferson County Post Commander, Commander of the 5th District American Legion, Department Sgt. at Arms, Department Vice Commander, and Department Commander for the State of New York. Cortright currently resides in Florida, but travels to New York to attend veteran events. He was nominated by Dale Dingman, Awards Chairman of the Jefferson County American Legion.



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Richard Erb, Sr.
2012 Nominee

Richard Erb Sr. served his country as a member of the US Marine Corps for seven years. He served in Korea from 1950 to 1951. He left the service in 1955 as a sergeant. Erb received a number of honors for his service, including the USMC Good Conduct Medal, the China Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korea Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal and the Presidential Unit Commendations Medal Ribbon with two stars among others. Erb is actively involved in his community as a member of the VFW, the American Legion and treasurer of the Fulton Veteran's Council. He was once honored as Fulton's Veteran of the Year. Erb was nominated by Donna Kestner, director of the Oswego County Veteran's Agency.



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Luther Farnsworth

2012 Nominee

For more than 30 years, Luther Farnsworth dedicated his life to the Army. Farnsworth enlisted in 1974, and retired in 2008. His years in the service took him to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. He is a decorated soldier, receiving the Legion of Merit, the Army Commendation Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal Campaign Star, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon and others. Farnsworth is past commander of his local American Legion and Sons of the American Legion. He is currently commander of the American Legion Riders. Farnsworth was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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**Ronald "Joe"
Fields**
2012 Nominee

After entering the US Air Force as a 17-year-old from Lisbon, Ronald "Joe" Fields rose to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant during his 20-year military career, working on a variety of bombers, fighter jets and even America's supersonic SR-71 spy plane that helped keep tabs on US enemies during the Cold War. As a member of one of the bomber crews who waited to hear whether President Kennedy would send them to drop nuclear weapons on Cuba during the 1962 Missile Crisis, Fields demonstrated he was always ready to perform his duties for his country. Mr. Fields has continued serving his country, community and fellow veterans since returning to his hometown. In 1987, he and his wife donated seven acres of land to the Town of Lisbon that allowed the community to provide housing for both senior citizens and disabled residents, a playground, and Little League baseball and soccer fields for children. As the 1996 American Legion's St. Lawrence County Legionnaire of the Year, Ronald Fields has a long and distinguished history of serving the veterans of his community in his efforts with the Heuvelton AmVets, the Disabled Americans Veterans, as Lisbon's American Legion Commander and as St. Lawrence County's American Legion Commander. He was nominated by Diana Teele.



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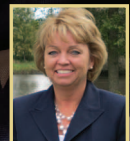


**Rev. Moritz
Fuchs**
2012 Nominee

As a member of the Big Red One, Staff Sgt. Moritz Fuchs helped battle Germany across Europe in both the Huertgen Forest and later in the Marz Mountains during WWII. After being wounded Nov. 19, 1944, when he earned the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, he later was assigned to General Patton's Third Army until the end of the war. When the war ended, he was assigned as the personal bodyguard of US Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson, the chief presiding judge at the Nuremberg war trials. Father Fuchs saw firsthand during those trials the evil embodied in the Nazis and the Third Reich, visiting the concentration camp at Dachau and watching those who were tried for crimes against humanity. After the war, Fr. Fuchs later joined the priesthood, but has continued to serve his fellow veterans both in Hannibal's America Legion Post and as chaplain of Fulton's Veterans of Foreign War Post. He was nominated by Paul Santore.



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**Raymond
Gandia**
2012 Nominee

Friends describe Raymond Gandia as a “soldier’s soldier.” Gandia entered the Army in November 1976. He left the service in 1997 as a Sergeant First Class. During his years in the military he served as an Army Ranger. After Gandia retired from the Army, he continued to serve his country as a training instructor at Ft. Drum. Gandia received numerous honors for his service, including the Bronze Star, the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara, and the Civilian of the Quarter 2008 Fort Drum. He was also an active member of his community. When terrorists attacked on 9/11, Gandia volunteered to go to Ground Zero, with the Natural Bridge Fire Department. Gandia also ran a local youth club and worked as a counselor at Carthage High School. Gandia was nominated by Alexander Miller of Ft. Drum.



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Judy
Gonzalez - Wallace
2012 Nominee

For six years, Judy Gonzalez-Wallace dedicated her life to service in the Army. She entered the service in 1984, eventually being released from active duty as a Specialist. Gonzalez-Wallace is currently Finance Officer of her local American Legion. She is also a member of both the American Legion Auxiliary, and the American Legion Riders. Gonzalez-Wallace was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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Cassandra Gould
2012 Nominee

Cassandra Gould served her country as a member of the Army for more than 22 years. Gould enlisted in 1985 and rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-6). During her time in the military, Gould served in Korea, Panama and Haiti. Gould is the recipient of a number of accolades, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon and the UN Medal. Gould continues to serve as an active participant in veteran's organizations and various other volunteer organizations in her community. She is currently adjutant of her local American Legion, and in the past, has held the title of historian.



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Willie Hairston
2012 Nominee

Willie Hairston served his nation honorably as a member of the Army, and continues to do so through his involvement in veterans organizations. Hairston enlisted in the Army in November of 1979. After nearly 11 years in the service, he retired as a Sergeant First Class (E-7) in September of 1990. Hairston is the recipient of the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Meritorious Unit Citation, the Army Commendation Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with 3 Bronze Service Stars, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and others. Hairston is past commander of his local American Legion. He has also held a number positions with the VFW at both the county and district level. Hairston was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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Jeremiah “Pete” Havens

2012 Nominee

For 32 years, Jeremiah “Pete” Havens has served Northern New York’s Veterans and their families as the New York State Veterans Counselor and as a volunteer with area veterans organizations. As the service officer for the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, AmVets, Vietnam Veterans of Northern New York and the St. Lawrence County VFW Council, he has worked closely with area veterans organizations to serve the North Country veterans community and their families. He has served as a community representative for the veterans in the North Country’s prisons from 1982 to 2000, and as a trustee and president of the board of the Ogdensburg Veterans Cemetery. As a member of the advisory board of both the North Country Veterans Administration Clinic and the VA Medical Center in Syracuse, Pete has worked hard to make sure the region’s veterans have access to quality health care. Over the years, he has been honored by both the State and US Departments of Labor for helping veterans find employment. Among his many awards and honors: Veteran of the Year from the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Veterans Affairs Committee, VFW’s Distinguished Service Award, Community Volunteer of the Year by Riverview Correctional Facility, Veteran of the Year by St. Lawrence County’s Veterans organizations. He was nominated by Lawrence T. Robinson, Jr.



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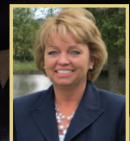


Jeffrey Houghton
2012 Nominee

Jeffrey Houghton enlisted in the Navy in 1959. During his three years of active duty, he rose to the rank of Hospital Corpsman, Third Class. He received the Good Conduct Medal for his service. Houghton is currently active in his local American Legion. In the past, he served as Sergeant-at-arms. He is currently chaplain of the organization. Houghton is also a member of the American Legion Riders. He was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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Stanley Kaminski

2012 Nominee

Stanley Kaminski dedicated 20 years of his life to serving our country through the armed forces. Kaminski served in the military in Somalia, Bosnia and Vietnam, where he was injured. He also served in Desert Storm and Desert Shield. During his time in the Army, Kaminski held many leadership roles, including Command Sergeant Major. Kaminski received a number of honors for his service, including the Purple Heart, multiple campaign medals, and medals of achievement and commendation. Even after he retired from the military, Kaminski continued to do his part to ensure veterans and soldiers received the best service and care possible; working as a civilian employee on Fort Drum, as co-chair of the Fort Drum Retiree Council and as a member of the VFW and American Legion. Kaminski was nominated by Jeremy Marshall.



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Francis Kehoe
2012 Nominee

A member of the US Marine Corps, one of the highlights of Francis Kehoe's career was serving as a guard for President Eisenhower. Kehoe entered the service in 1951. Kehoe served in the Marines for 9 years, and then in the Navy Reserves for 31 years. His highest rank was a Navy Reserve Chief Warrant Officer-4. Kehoe has been active in many veterans organizations since leaving the service. He is a lifetime member of the Fulton VFW Post 569, serving in every position including Commander. He is also actively involved with the Fulton Veterans Council and the American Legion. Kehoe was once selected as Fulton's Veteran of the Year. Kehoe was nominated by Lawrence Macner of the Fulton VFW Post 569.



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Russell Lynch

2012 Nominee

Russell Lynch of Jefferson County spent three years in the Army, serving in Panama and Europe during World War II. He entered the service in 1942, and served until 1945, when he was wounded in action as a sergeant in Germany. Suffering a gunshot wound in the leg, Lynch returned from Europe to New York, where he recovered and was honorably discharged as a disabled veteran. After being discharged, he married and purchased a farm in Antwerp, which he operated for more than 50 years. Lynch received a number of accolades for his sacrifice, including the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal, the WWII Victory Medal, the New York National Guard Conspicuous Service Star Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, 2 Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart and the U.S. Army Combat Infantry Badge. Throughout his lifetime Lynch has played an active role in his community. He is a lifetime member of the Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation, former president of the Rural Letter Carriers Association and a member of the Antwerp Methodist Church. Lynch was nominated by his grandson, Sergeant First Class Christopher Lynch.



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Leo “Paulie” Marc-Aurele, Jr.
2012 Nominee

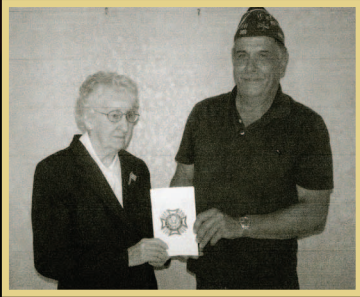
Leo Marc-Aurele, Jr., better known as “Paulie,” served his country honorably in the Navy, and continues to do so through a number of veteran’s programs. During his four years in the Navy, Marc-Aurele served as a Radioman Third Class. Marc-Aurele is currently an officer of his local American Legion. He was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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**Russell
Marsden**
2012 Nominee

Russell Marsden of Oswego County served his country for four years in the Army, and continues to give back today, as commander of his local VFW post. Marsden joined the Army in December 1969. He served as a helicopter crew chief, eventually rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant of the 336 Assault Helicopter, V 3/5 Air Cavalry. Today, Marsden is commander of VFW Post 369 in Mexico. He was nominated by his sister, Johanne Phelps of Florida.



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Charles McConnell
2012 Nominee

Charles McConnell of Jefferson County is a decorated former member of the US Air Force and the Air Force Reserve. He entered the service in 1969. During his career, he served in Korea, Okinawa, and in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. McConnell retired in 1973 as an E6-Technical Sergeant. He later entered the reserves, serving from 1983 to 2001. He received a number of accolades for his service, including the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the Air Force Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Air Force Longevity Service Award, the Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, the Foreign Service Medal and others. McConnell continues to give back to his community today. He has served as a member of the Brownville Volunteer Fire Department for more than 30 years, has been a trustee for the Village of Brownville for more than 27 years, and is a member of the Brownville American Legion. McConnell was nominated by Patrick Connor, the mayor of the Village of Brownville.



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John McGraw
2012 Nominee

Sgt. John McGraw landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day where he helped his fellow soldiers fight their way across the battlefield. As a member of the 348th Engineer Combat Battalion, he helped to personally clear the land mines from the beach with his bayonet, training his men as they cleared the way for the troops. In the following days, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge, helping to throw back the German counter offensive and then in the Battle of the Autobahn, helping the drive across Central Europe, Northern France, Germany and Belgium. After WWII, McGraw reenlisted to serve his country again in the Korean War. After returning to Central New York, he has spent the past 60 years serving the veterans of Oswego County and their families. As Oswego County American Legion Commander, and Past Fulton American Legion Commander, he has served in a variety of positions and was named Fulton Veteran of the Year 2010-11 for his continued service to the veteran community of Central New York. He was nominated by Fulton American Legion Commander John A. Young.



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**Thomas Orrin
Morrison**
2012 Nominee

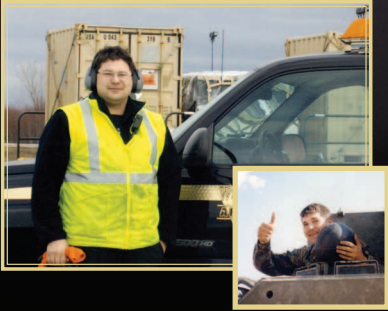
E-6 Thomas Morrison served his nation during the Cold War in the US, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands as an airborne qualified Russian translator, interrogator and intelligence officer. During his career he worked with defectors and helped train forces in the handling of POWs, as well as prepare them for possible capture and interrogation by enemy forces. Since leaving the Army, Morrison has been active in the American Legion. Over the course of his career as a Social Studies teacher, he has inspired numerous students to serve their nation in the Armed Forces. His experience in the military has stretched into a lifetime of patriotism, discipline and an uncompromising work ethic. Throughout his career, he has used his position to teach all of his students to respect those who have served their nation. He was nominated by Maria D. Morrison.



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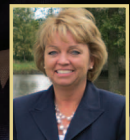


**William James
Nasworthy, Jr.**
2012 Nominee

William James Nasworthy Jr., entered the Army in 1996. He was honorably discharged on disability as a Sergeant in June 2004. He received a number of honors for his years of service, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and the Customer Service Award from Public Works at Ft. Drum, among others. Nasworthy continues to serve his country and his community as an active member of his local VFW.



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Tyler Pickett

2012 Nominee

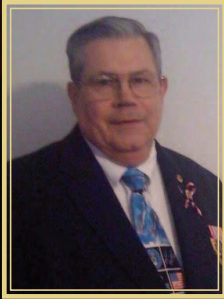
“Deeds, not words.” That was the motto that Staff Sergeant Tyler Pickett’s unit lived by. Friends and fellow soldiers say it was also the mindset that dictated Pickett’s life, until the day he was killed in the line of duty. Pickett enlisted in the Army in 2001. He lost his life while serving in Iraq in 2008, at the age of 28. It was his second tour in Iraq. Pickett also served in Afghanistan. Pickett was the recipient of a number of honors, including the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal with Valor, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and the War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, among others. Pickett was active in his community, as a member of the Corning VFW, the Antwerp American Legion Post 916 and as a supporter of the local fire department. Pickett is survived by his wife and her two children. Pickett was nominated by his wife, and Charlie Miller and Dave Garrish, members of the Antwerp American Legion Post.



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Patrick R. Rourk
2012 Nominee

Retired Chief Master Sgt. Patrick R. Rourk served 24 years in the United States Air Force. During his career, he rose through the ranks to serve as a Security Police Superintendent and Director of Security for the first combined international Army and Air Force senior training and computerized war-gaming facility. He holds six Meritorious Service Medals, among his more than 40 medals and decorations. After his retirement from the military, he began a new career with St. Lawrence County government where he rose to the position of Director of St. Lawrence County's Veterans Services Program. For 17 years, Patrick Rourk assisted thousands of veterans and their families, going to bat for them with state and federal agencies to insure that each received the services and benefits they deserved. Last year, Mr. Rourk was appointed by the National Commander of the American Legion to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. He was appointed by New York State's Governor to the Board of Visitors of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center. Over his career, he has served on the local, state and national level with a variety of veterans service organizations. Patrick Rourk was nominated by St. Lawrence County Veterans Services Director Michael Boprey.



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John E. Rucynski
2012 Nominee

As the seventh Command Sgt. Major of the United States Army Reserve, John E. Rucynski can best be described as the enlisted man's top union rep, standing up for their interests in the Pentagon and at posts around the world. During his stint at the Pentagon, he spent 250 days on the road, serving the 208,000 soldiers of the Army Reserve. Born in Oswego, he began his remarkable career by enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1962, and serving until 1967 at posts in the US and in combat in Vietnam. Between active duty assignments, he served the people of the Empire State with the New York State Police and the Bureau of Criminal Investigations as a Trooper and Investigator, earning three Superintendent commendations for undercover narcotics investigations. After leaving the Marines, he joined the Army Reserves before returning to active duty in 1982 in the Active Guard Reserve. During his 35 year career of military service, he served as commandant of the First US Army NCO Academy, CSM of Task Force Badger in Panama, CSM of the Army Reserve Readiness Training Center and a variety of other positions. As command sergeant major of the Army Reserve, he was the principal senior enlisted soldier and advisor to the Chief of the Army Reserve in the Pentagon for matters relating to enlisted men. During his career, he visited 34 different countries and three territories, advising the Army Reserve and the Department of Defense. He was nominated by Barry Leeman.



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Ronald Sakonyi
2012 Nominee

Ronald Sakonyi served in both the Navy as a Lieutenant, and Army as Captain from 1963 to 1983. In Vietnam, during the Tet Offensive, the fuselage of his aircraft was hit by a 50 mm round. During his service, he received 10 Air Medals, the Navy Achievement Medal, the Vietnam Air Gallantry Cross, Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and Korean Expeditionary Medal. In Vietnam, he provided surface to air missile warning and enemy aircraft warning. On the USS Enterprise, he briefed air crews on threats posed by the North Vietnamese air defense to their missions. As a watch officer in the National Military Intelligence Center in Pentagon, he briefed commanders around the world. He was cited during the Mayaguez incident for his performance. After his military career, he continued his service to veterans and his community, rising to the post of Commander of the Constantia VFW, and 5th District Department of New York VFW; President of the Oswego County Veterans Museum and Heritage Center, Central Square School Board, and Central New York Chapter of the Knights of Columbus, and as Supervisor of the Town of Constantia. Sakonyi, a member of the Oswego County Legislature, has been honored with the Department of NY 5th District Charlie Warner Award, NY State VFW All State Post Commander, NY State School Board Award of Distinction, NY State VFW All State Post Commander, among others. He was nominated by Constantia VFW Commander Wayne H. Confer.



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Joseph Theinert
2012 Nominee

First Lieutenant Joseph Theinert made the ultimate sacrifice to his country. A New York Army National Guard Soldier, Theinert was serving on active duty with the Army's 10th Mountain Division, based at Fort Drum, when he was killed in Afghanistan in 2010 by an I.E.D. at age 24. Theinert volunteered for an Army National Guard program allowing Guard members to serve three years on active duty before returning to a local unit. His awards include the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon. He is expected to be awarded the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Combat Action Badge and the Purple Heart posthumously. Theinert was nominated by Anthony Keating, a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army, and member of the Allen-Giles Post #588 American Legion.



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Gerald F.
“Jerry” Tighe
2012 Nominee

As a chief of boat E-8, Gerald Tighe served 24 years in the Navy’s submarine service on both diesel and later nuclear attack vessels. In the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Arctic and Indian Oceans, Tighe served his nation by monitoring its underwater enemies during the Cold War, helping track and report on their capabilities. While some of his more harrowing moments are still classified, Tighe spent his career overseeing and training a generation of seamen, teaching them the core values of the Navy and the submarine service, earning the Navy Expeditionary Medal (2), Navy Marksmanship Medal, Navy Good Conduct Medal (6), Battle “E” Ribbon (4), Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon (2) Sea Service Ribbon (8), Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon (2), Navy Arctic Service Ribbon (2), Enlisted Submarine Breast Insignia, Tugmaster Insignia, and Deterrent Patrol Insignia. Since leaving the Navy, Tighe has continued to serve his nation, fellow veterans and their families through his service as a member, officer and commander of the Veteran of Foreign Wars. He was nominated by Janet Parody.



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Charles Vansickle, Jr.
2012 Nominee

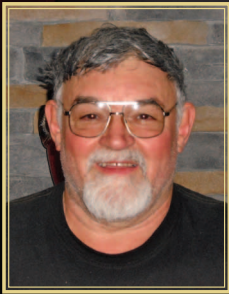
After two periods of service with the Army, Charles Vansickle, Jr. continues to serve his country through a number of veterans organizations. Vansickle served from 1964 to 1972, and then again from 1975 to 1990. He was a Sergeant First Class (E-7). Vansickle was honored for his service with two Overseas Service Bars, a Combat Infantry Badge, the Purple Heart, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Valorous Unit Award, an Overseas Service Ribbon, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal and many others. Vansickle is past commander of his local American Legion, Sons of the American Legion and VFW. Vansickle was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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Michael H. Vaughn
2012 Nominee

Michael H. Vaughn was awarded the Silver Star for his “extraordinary heroism” while serving as a machine gunner aboard an armored cavalry assault vehicle in Vietnam. As a member of K Troop, 311th Armored Cavalry, he was honored for his actions in repelling an attack, aiding the wounded and evacuating them to a landing zone. On July 21, 1967, his force was attacked by Viet Cong rocket, recoilless rifle, automatic weapons and small arms fire. After the left side machine gun was hit and stopped functioning, he provided covering fire to both sides of the track, exposing himself as the insurgents pressed their attack. After his machine gun overheated, he used his personal weapon until all of his ammunition was gone. He then used hand grenades to repel the attack. After the hour long attack, the enemy pulled back in the face of his withering fire. He aided the wounded and evacuated them to a landing zone. When the enemy attacked the landing zone, he again repelled the attack to give the wounded time until they could be evacuated. After returning home, he began a career of volunteer service to his community, as a North Shore Little League coach, a children’s basketball coach, and as an usher for St. Mary’s Church in Cleveland. For 25 years, he has volunteered with North Shore Ambulance, serving 12 years as an EMT and board member. He was nominated by Retired Lt. Col. Sherry M. Kaderli.



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Edward Wallace
2012 Nominee

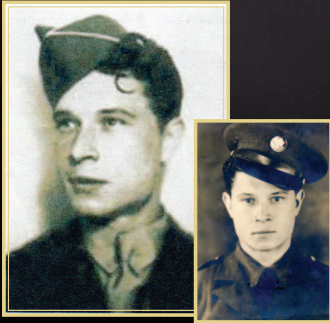
For nearly a quarter of a century, Edward Wallace devoted himself to serving in the Army. Wallace enlisted in August 1986. His years of service took him to Germany, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Hawaii and Afghanistan. He retired in April 2008 as a Sergeant First Class (E-7). For his time in the service, Wallace received a number of honors, including the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and more. He currently is a member of his local American Legion, the Sons of the American Legion and is an American Legion Rider. Wallace was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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**Rischel "Rick"
White**
2012 Nominee

A prisoner of war during WWII, Rischel "Rick" White of Jefferson County is a survivor. White joined the army in 1941, and served as a Technician 5th Grade. In 1944, his division was sent to Europe. White was on the front lines when the Battle of the Bulge began in December of that year. He was twice captured by German SS Panzer troops, and was eventually taken as a prisoner of war. After marching two weeks in sub-zero weather, being bombed and strafed by allied planes while being transported in unmarked boxcars, White endured four months at the POW camp, Stalag IV-B, before being freed by Russian forces. Once released, he was given no food or medical attention, and had to make his way through Germany to reach American troops. After spending more than a year recovering overseas, he was sent back to the US to recuperate. After his honorable discharge in 1946, White continued to serve as a member of the reserves from 1951 to 1953. White has received many honors for his bravery and service, including Bronze Star, WWII Victory Medal, Prisoner of War Medal, American Defense Service Medal, European/African/Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross. White's struggle was also illustrated through a documentary, "Coming Home Alive," which was produced by White's grandson Matthew. White is actively involved in his community through the Don Rounds Post 586 American Legion in Adams. White was nominated by David Brancheau, commander of the legion and his sons, R.D. and Michael White.



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James
Williams, Jr.
2012 Nominee

For two decades, James Williams, Jr. served his country as a member of the Army. Williams enlisted in 1974, and retired in November 1994. Williams was recognized for his years of dedication with a number of accolades, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon and others. Williams is currently Post Commander of his local American Legion. In the past, he served as Vice Commander. He has held numerous offices at the county and district level. Williams was nominated by Cassandra Gould, adjutant at the William C. Dexter American Legion, Post 673.



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**Arthur G.
Wilson, Jr.**
2012 Nominee

Arthur G. Wilson Jr. was named the American Legion's "Legionaire of the Year" in 1993 for his service to Post 69, his community and his fellow veterans. He spent the rest of his life serving his fellow veterans as a member of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans. Born in Queens, he joined the Navy in 1942, serving as a gunner's mate aboard the USS Sederstrom, escorting and protecting ships in the Pacific from Japanese planes and submarines during the Saipan invasion, the Marianas, Tinian, Guam, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, where he witnessed the flag raising on Mount Suribachi on Feb. 23, 1945. He was injured during a kamikaze attack on March 22, 1945. He was recalled to duty in the Korean War and served off the coast of Korea, protecting carrier forces during strikes on enemy forces and providing anti-submarine and plane protection. After the war, he worked at General Motors where he rescued a worker who fell into a vat of molten aluminum. During his career of service to veterans, he helped rename the section of Rt. 37 between Morristown and Ogdensburg as the St. Lawrence County Veterans Memorial Highway, and helped raise the funds to procure two vans to transport North Country veterans to the Syracuse Veterans Administration Hospital. For years, he chaired the American Legion Memorial Day remembrance ceremonies, placing flags on graves and arranging the events. He launched the annual international Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony to honor both US and Canadian veterans killed and buried at sea. He was nominated by his son Thomas A. Wilson.



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