



# VETERANS

★★★ HALL OF FAME ★★★

## WILLIAM J.J. FORTE

William J.J. Forte served in the United States Army and achieved the rank of Sergeant First Class.

Mr. Forte dedicated over twenty years of his life to active military service, including deployments in Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada and Operation Desert Storm in the Middle East, where he served with the 353rd Civil Affairs Command of the Special Operations Support Command.

Joining the Army shortly after turning 17 in 1971, Mr. Forte completed basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Determined to serve his country in the Vietnam War, he volunteered himself multiple times; however, due to his age, he was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division in Germany and later to the Army headquarters in Heidelberg. Mr. Forte excelled in various capacities during his military career, serving at West Point in the 1st Battalion 1st Infantry and the 528th Engineer Detachment, and making two additional deployments to Germany.

He earned nearly 20 awards, including the Legion of Merit, three Meritorious Service Medals, three Army Commendation Medals, seven Good Conduct Medals, and the National Defense Service Medal, among many other recognitions for his service and conduct.

Mr. Forte is widely recognized as a stalwart advocate for veterans in Kingston and across Ulster County, and he was named Kingston Veterans Association Veteran of the Year in 2009. He currently serves as Chair of the Kingston Veterans Association — a role he has held for 19 years.

He initiated Kingston's first-ever Hometown Hero Program, erecting over 1,000 banners citywide. Additionally, he orchestrated Kingston's first exhibition of the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall and the 2021 presentation of a half-scale replica of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Mr. Forte also helps maintain the Mt. Zion African American Burial Ground at his own expense — a site where many veterans dating back to the Civil War are buried. His advocacy also extends to organizing meaningful tributes like Public Recognition Dinners, local Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, and events honoring the service of Korean and Gulf War veterans.

Mr. Forte lives in Kingston with his family. His son, Sergeant First Class William F. Forte 5th, carries on his father's legacy of military service and currently serves as a Senior Army Noncommissioned Officer at the Presidential Retreat at Camp David, Maryland.



WILLIAM J.J. FORTE WAS SELECTED AS A  
2024 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BY  
**SENATOR MICHELLE HINCHEY.**

2024