

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins



Senator John J. Flanagan



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

2019VETERANE HALLOF FAME



Dear Veterans, Friends and Families:

Welcome to the 2019 Veterans' Hall of Fame Ceremony. For more than a decade, the New York State Senate has proudly honored remarkable veterans from around the state who have distinguished themselves in both military and civilian life; with great admiration and humble hearts we continue this tradition today.

The veterans recognized here have dedicated their lives to the highest cause, and in doing so, we as individuals and a nation have had the promise of living lives altered for the better and greater good. Their bravery and the courage of their convictions has helped shape and sustain our country – one of diverse beauty and unwavering strength.

Many of those here today have contributed extensively to their communities. They are not only veterans, but community organizers, teachers, small business owners, police officers, firefighters, emergency personnel and first responders. Public service is their collective life calling.

We would also like to recognize the family members, friends, and supporters with us today. The daily sacrifices and large hearts within our mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, friends and neighbors – lives that are intertwined with the lives of our veterans – are to be applauded and celebrated.

Thank you all for your laudable service to our great state.

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Temporary President

andrea Stewart - Cousin

and Majority Leader

Senator John J. Flanagan Minority Leader NEW YORK STATE SENATE



2019



VETERANS' HALL OF FAME

PROGRAM

GUEST SPEAKER

Colonel Milton G. Kelly Watervliet Arsenal Commander

SPEAKERS

Senator John J. Flanagan Minority Leader

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Majority Leader & Temporary President

INTRODUCTION OF HONOREES

Morgan McKay

CLOSING REMARKS

Senator John E. Brooks
Chairman, Veterans, Homeland Security
and Military Affairs

NATIONAL ANTHEM

SPECIAL THANKS

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Susan E. Wells
Stars4ourTroops@aol.com





COLONEL MILTON G. KELLY WATERVLIET ARSENAL COMMANDER

Colonel Milton G. Kelly is the 60th Commander of the Watervliet Arsenal. Colonel Kelly is a native of Orlando, Florida, and initially enlisted in the United States Army in February 1987, where he was subsequently assigned to duty in South Korea. He completed four years and four months of active duty as a Sergeant, which included deployment to Operation Desert Shield/Storm.

In 1991, he returned to college and received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida in 1995, distinguished military graduate, with a commission in the Armor Corps, branch detailed Ordnance.

In 1995, Colonel Kelly was assigned to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson, Colorado, where he served as a Tank Platoon Leader, Regimental Maintenance Officer, and SSA Platoon Leader. Upon graduation from the Combined Logistics Officer Captain's Career Course in April 2000, he was assigned to the 1st Armored Division, Division Support Command (DISCOM), where he served as the 501st Forward Support Battalion Maintenance Officer and deployed to Kosovo (KFOR, 2B). Following deployment, he took command of Bravo Company, 501st Forward Support Battalion (FSB) and then after a successful command, served as the Support Operations Officer, where he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In November 2003, Colonel Kelly was assigned to the United States Army Ordnance Center and Schools as an Instructor/Writer. Upon graduation from Command and General Staff College in 2007, he was reassigned to 2nd Infantry Division, 302nd Brigade Support Battalion, Camp Casey, South Korea, and served as Executive Officer, Support Operations Officer and later Brigade S4. In 2010, he was assigned as the BSB Support Operations Observer/Controller/Trainer for Operations Group, Goldminer Team at National Training Center and later served as 916th Support Brigade Executive Officer, Fort Irwin, California. In 2013, he served as Commander, Defense Logistics Agency Distribution Red River, Texas. In 2015, Colonel Kelly was assigned to Research, Development and Engineering Command (RDECOM) Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland as Executive Officer to the Commanding General. In 2017, Colonel Kelly served as the Chief of Staff of the Joint Munitions Command at Rock Island, Illinois.

Colonel Kelly's awards and decorations include: Defense Meritorious Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (4 Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Commendation Medal (2 Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Achievement Medal (6 Oak Leaf Clusters), Presidential Unit Citation Award, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal (Bronze Star), Southwest Asia Medal (2 Bronze Stars), Kosovo Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon (3 awards), NATO Kosovo Medal, Kuwait Liberation of Kuwait Medal, Saudi Arabia Medal for Liberation of Kuwait, and the Parachutist Badge. He is also a recipient of the Order of Samuel Sharpe Award.



"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one Wellon under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.99



NEW YORK STATE SENATE



2019 VETERANS'HALLOF FAME



2019 HONOREES



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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WEITEDWIE PROME

JOHN ROWAN

Sergeant John Rowan is now serving a seventh term as National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) after being re-elected to the post at the organization's 18th National Convention in New Orleans. First elected to VVA's highest office in 2005, Sergeant Rowan has remained active with VVA since the organization's inception in 1978. A founding member and the first president of VVA Chapter 32 in Queens, New York, he has served as the Chairman of VVA's Conference of State Council Presidents, for three terms on the organization's Board of Directors, and as President of VVA's New York State Council.

Sergeant Rowan enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1965 and went to language school where he learned Indonesian and Vietnamese. He served as a linguist in the Air Force's 6990 Security Squadron in Vietnam and at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, providing the Strategic Air Command with intelligence on North Vietnam's SAM sites to protect their bombing missions.

After his honorable discharge from the Air Force, Sergeant Rowan received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Queens College and a Master's degree in Urban Affairs from Hunter College. He retired from city service as an investigator with the City of New York's Comptroller's Office. Prior to his election as National President, Sergeant Rowan served as a VVA veterans' service representative in New York City. He lives in Middle Village, New York, with his wife, Mariann.



JOHN ROWAN IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR.







WILLIS W. SMITH

Staff Sergeant Willis W. Smith gave a lifetime of service to both his country and his community.

Staff Sergeant Smith joined the Army Reserves in 1985 as a Heavy Equipment Operator, eventually transferring to the National Guard, where he would complete numerous state active duty assignments including the recovery of TWA Flight 800.

In 2009, he deployed to Afghanistan, overseeing multiple missions from building barricades, drainage systems and roads, to rebuilding an Afghanistan police station that had been bombed. Staff Sergeant Smith was awarded the NATO Meritorious Award for his leadership, working directly with Afghanistan soldiers on various projects and providing instruction while overcoming the language barrier.

In 2001, Staff Sergeant Smith deployed to Ground Zero to aid in the immediate recovery from the 9/11 terrorist attacks as a member of the 827th Engineer Company. In addition to his 22 years of military service and his civilian career as an ironworker, Staff Sergeant Smith served his community as Deposit Village Trustee and Mayor of Deposit.

As Mayor, his leadership helped the small Deposit community survive and recover from the devastating flood of 2006. Organizing the fire department, village public works, police and EMS to ensure safety and support for community members, Staff Sergeant Smith also arranged for FEMA applications to be taken door-to-door to ensure all applications for disaster assistance were returned to the federal government in record time.

After retiring from the National Guard in 2014, Staff Sergeant Smith returned to local government and was instrumental in the creation of Eastern Broome Emergency Services, which combined EMS services for multiple rural areas by sharing resources, improving coverage and reducing costs.

Staff Sergeant Smith passed away in 2018 at age 50, leaving a legacy of communityminded leadership and service, including 22 years of military service, eight years in local government and 30 years of marriage.



WILLIS W. SMITH IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR FREDERICK J. AKSHAR II







ROBERT BECKER

First Sergeant Robert Becker was born and raised in the Capital Region, where he was a member of the first graduating class of Niskayuna High School in 1959. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 1960-1966 and joined the USMC Reserves in 1966, where he served until his retirement in 1982.

First Sergeant Becker's service to his nation and fellow veterans continued upon his retirement from the Marine Corps, as he became a passionate advocate on behalf of veterans and their families. He is the Executive Legislative Director for the New York State Council of Veterans Organizations, representing more than two dozen veterans' organizations. He is committed and focused on improving the quality of life for all of our nation's veterans.

First Sergeant Becker is a past National Commandant and State Commandant of the Marine Corps League, as well as past Commandant of the Electric City Detachment and the Capt. Wm. Dale O'Brien Detachment. He is the past Commander of American Legion Post 1092 and DAV Chapter 88. He has served as the President of the Schenectady County Veterans Council, where he currently serves as adjutant. He was also the National Marine Corps League Legislative Chairman for 18 years and served as Co-Chairman of the National Marine Corps League's 95th Convention in Buffalo, New York.

He currently serves as the Chairman of the Rotterdam Veterans Committee and is a member of the Fleet Reserve Association, AMVETS, and the Rotterdam Elks. He is also an usher at St. Luke's Church.

First Sergeant Becker has been recognized with numerous awards and commendations, both for his outstanding service and for his continuing advocacy on behalf of his fellow veterans. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the United States Marine Corps. In 2011, he was named State and National Marine of the Year. In 1997, he was awarded the Four Chaplains Humanitarian Award and in 2018, he received the Four Chaplains Brotherhood Award.

First Sergeant Becker has served his nation and fellow veterans admirably, and his efforts have had a tremendous impact and improved the lives of so many veterans throughout the state and nation.



ROBERT BECKER IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR GEORGE A. AMEDORE, JR.







HOWARD ROSE

Sergeant Howard Rose grew up in Fulton, New York, where he graduated from G. Ray Bodley High School in 1966. Just two years later, in June 1968, Sergeant Rose was drafted into the United States Army.

While in the Army, Sergeant Rose trained as a light weapons infantryman in Vietnam. He was also an infantryman who pursued the enemy. During his service, Sergeant Rose served in Charlie Company, 1st of the Fourteenth, 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. He was sent to Division Headquarters to be a combat artist for his last three months of service. Through his military service, Sergeant Rose earned a Combat Infantry Badge, Expert Rifleman, Commendation Medal, and Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Sergeant Rose was discharged from the Army in 1970, and graduated from the State University of New York at Oswego in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Fine Arts. After college, he was a City Firefighter for 20 years in Fulton, from which he retired in 1998. Sergeant Rose also taught in the Fulton School District, the YMCA, Catholic Youth Organization, and eventually started his own sign company, which he had for 40 years until it was sold due to his Agent Orange diagnosis. Sergeant Rose also served as a Town of Volney Councilman from 1989-1993 and then served as their Town Supervisor from 1994-1995.

Sergeant Rose currently lives in Baldwinsville with his wife of 38 years, Christine, and they have four children.



HOWARD ROSE IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR ROBERT E. ANTONACCI II







JEROME L. RICE

Jerome L. Rice is a long-time public servant who served over 22 years in the United States Army before retiring with the rank of First Sergeant. He also served the New York City Department of Corrections for 25 years before retiring as a Captain.

First Sergeant Rice is the past Commander of American Legion Post #1871. Currently he serves as branch president and life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Co-Op City.

In 2010, First Sergeant Rice was selected by the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice to conduct workshops for the Association of Caribbean Heads of Corrections and Prison Services located in Trinidad and Tobago.

His many notable career highlights and awards include being elected to the Riverbay Board of Directors and the Alpha Phi Sigma Phi Nu Chapter of the Criminal Justice Honor Society. First Sergeant Rice has served as president of the Monroe College Toastmasters Club and has received the Equality Charter School Service Award (2018), the AIM High Ambassador Mentorship Award (2017), the NAACP Freedom Fund Award for Community Service (2011), and the Claflin University Alumni Chapter Community Service Award (2010). He is a 9/11 responder and survivor.

First Sergeant Rice continues to be the voice for the voiceless by fighting for both civil and human rights. His commitment to uplifting communities is evident in his work throughout New York City where he educates both city and state elected officials as well as the surrounding communities on issues such as Miranda Rights, security risk groups (gang awareness), senior citizen safety, disaster awareness, racism, and voter education.

In 2008, he received a Master of Business Administration degree from Monroe College, majoring in Business Management. First Sergeant Rice is currently a doctoral student at Walden University in the criminal justice program. Throughout his life, he has been a faithful servant for the Thessalonia Worship Center in the South Bronx.



JEROME L. RICE IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR JAMAAL T. BAILEY







EDDIE FLETCHER

Eddie Fletcher was born on January 28, 1928 in Greensboro, Alabama, the son of the late Eddie and Cealie Fletcher. After graduating from school, Mr. Fletcher immediately went into the Navy, where he first received his basic training in Bainbridge, Maryland. The Navy later sent him to Shoemaker, California, where he was assigned to a troop transport ship as a messenger-man during World War II.

On this ship, Mr. Fletcher traveled thousands of miles to different islands in the Asian-Pacific Region. While at these islands, he and his team would leave the ship to enter war zones and pick up fellow soldiers, injured and sick, to bring them back to the United States to recover. Near the end of World War II, Mr. Fletcher was sent on a second tour to the Battleship Missouri in Norfolk, Virginia, where he served as a cook. At the end of World War II, the Battleship Missouri received orders from Washington, D.C. to go to Tokyo, Japan so the surrender ceremony could be signed on the ship.

Mr. Fletcher decided to stay in the Navy after the end of World War II, where he was reassigned to active duty. He was later discharged from the Navy, and once the Korean War began in the 1950s, he enlisted in the United States Air Force. Mr. Fletcher was an Airman First Class in the supply room for five years and was honorably discharged from the Air Force.

Today, Mr. Fletcher lives in Harlem within the Taft Rehab development. He enjoys traveling to different cities and watching the news. He is a very active 91-year-old veteran who has an unceasing love for his country.



EDDIE FLETCHER IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR BRIAN A. BENJAMIN







PETER C. DEL-DEBBIO

Sergeant First Class Peter C. Del-Debbio is a retired citizen-soldier proudly serving the Bronx community of Throgs Neck and City Island.

Sergeant First Class Del-Debbio served continuously in the United States Army since enlisting in October 1980 until his retirement in October 2005, where he was last assigned to the 773rd Transportation Company at Ft. Totten, Queens. He has served tours stateside, and in Central America, Europe and Southwest Asia. Twice, Sergeant First Class Del-Debbio answered this nation's call, serving in both Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom.

Sergeant First Class Del-Debbio is extremely active in many veterans' organizations in his community: Post Commander of the American Legion Leonard H. Hawkins Post 156 on City Island; Bronx County Commander for all American Legion posts in Bronx County; American Legion VAVS deputy representative at the James J. Peters Bronx VA; 1st District Membership Coordinator for the Bronx and New York County; and finally, he serves on the American Legion Department of New York Membership Task Force Team.

Sergeant First Class Del-Debbio is a retired Supervisor from the New York City Department of Sanitation and served both in Bronx District 9 and 10. Additionally, he worked with the New York City Police Department on patrol and as an investigator in the Organized Crime Control Bureau.

Sergeant First Class Del-Debbio, his wife, Monica, and their son, Anthony, are residents of the Throgs Neck community of the Bronx.



PETER C. DEL-DEBBIO IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR ALESSANDRA BIAGGI







GABE GRENCI

Staff Sergeant Gabe Grenci was born on February 2, 1927 in New Rochelle, New York. His family moved to Long Island when he was a child and he became a member of the first class of students at the Babylon Elementary School in 1933. Upon graduating from Babylon High School in 1945, he was drafted into the United States Army and was stationed in Italy during World War II.

Within one year of service, Staff Sergeant Grenci rapidly rose through the ranks, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant in the Army Personnel Division. He later went on to serve in the Army National Guard for two years and briefly in the United States Navy Reserve prior to receiving his third Honorable Discharge.

In 1948, Staff Sergeant Grenci began his 42-year career at Northrup Grumman, where he proudly worked on the development of the F-14 Tomcat, which played an instrumental role in air combat during the Vietnam War and for subsequent decades.

An active member of his community, Staff Sergeant Grenci has been a member of Babylon American Legion Post #94 for over 75 years, where he can always be counted on to lend a helping hand to his fellow veterans and members of the community.

In all his efforts, Staff Sergeant Grenci is supported by his wife, Josephine, their four children, eleven grandchildren, and a grateful West Islip community!



GABE GRENCI IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR PHIL BOYLE



NEW YORK STATE SENATE



2019 VETERANS'HALLOF FAME



LAWRENCE WIEST

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



LAWRENCE WIEST IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR NEIL D. BRESLIN





PATRICK J. YNGSTROM

Sergeant Patrick J. Yngstrom entered the ranks of the United States Army in 1970. Serving until 1973, he was deployed to Vietnam from 1970-1971. While serving in Vietnam, Sergeant Yngstrom earned a Bronze Star with a V device and an Army Commendation Medal.

Since leaving the service, Sergeant Yngstrom has dedicated his life to helping his brother and sister veterans. He is the former director of the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency, and also sits on the advisory board for the Long Island State Veterans Home. As well as advising Congresswoman Kathleen Rice, Senator Brooks and the Town of Hempstead on veterans issues, Sergeant Yngstrom is currently serving as the veterans liaison to the Arbors assisted living communities.

Sergeant Yngstrom has served as past commander of the Veterans of The Vietnam War for all of New York State. He also serves as commander at American Legion Post #1749 in North Bellmore and is a past commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #2770 on Long Island.

Sergeant Yngstrom lives in North Merrick and has been lovingly married to his wife, Nancy, for 43 years. They have two adult children, Dawn and Daniel, and are the proud grandparents of Abigail, Sofia, and Caroline.



PATRICK J. YNGSTROM IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JOHN E. BROOKS







JEREMY HONEY

Staff Sergeant Jeremy Honey was born, raised and continues to reside in his family home in Suffern, New York. His military career in the United States Army spanned 12 years, beginning in 1968. He served bravely in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970, and was then reassigned to Cambodia. Later, Staff Sergeant Honey served more than three years in the Federal Republic of Germany where he worked to protect West Germany.

Staff Sergeant Honey returned to the United States and continued his military service. He trained officers and other senior sergeants in places such as the United States Military Academy at West Point and at Fort George G. Meade in Maryland.

Following his honorable discharge in 1980, Staff Sergeant Honey continued to serve his nation by working for the federal government. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan named him "Federal Employee of the Year" for his exemplary work with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Throughout the local community, Staff Sergeant Honey is widely respected for the work he does for veterans. He has been the Director of the "Missing in America" House, a home for mentally ill veterans, and is the founder and past Commander of the Disabled American Veterans in Rockland County. Never backing away from assisting veterans in need, Staff Sergeant Honey has spoken at length about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and has personally driven veterans with alcohol or emotional issues to the VA Hospital in Montrose, New York for treatment.

Staff Sergeant Honey is a patriot who has served his country with honor and distinction and has contributed immensely to his community.



JEREMY HONEY IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR DAVID CARLUCCI







EMERY A. PERRY

Emery A. Perry was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and moved to the Bronx at age six. In 1961, he enlisted in the United States Army and was assigned to the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne. After serving two years active duty and two years standby, he received an honorable discharge with a rank of Private First Class.

After receiving his high school diploma from Theodore Roosevelt Evening High School, Private First Class Perry entered the New York City Police Department in 1969, was assigned to the 79th Precinct, and retired in 1989 from the Crime Prevention Division. In 1975, he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from the University of Massachusetts, graduating Magna Cum Laude.

As a resident of the Cambria Heights Community for the past 46 years, he has been involved in several community organizations, including as an Usher at the Sacred Heart Church and a member of The Brothersin-Christ. Private First Class Perry is a former member of the Cambria Heights/Jamaica Linden Lions. Additionally, he has served as past President of the Cambria Heights Block Association and has received several community service awards.

Private First Class Perry is an active member of numerous community organizations: Cambria Heights Civic Association; Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Center; New York City Police Department Council of Retired Guardians; board member of the St. Albans VAVS Living Center; Queens Veterans Advisory Committee; Treasurer of the AMVETS Post 10-13, Inc.; and past Provost Marshall of the AMVETS Department of New York. Presently, he is the 3rd Vice Commander of AMVETS, Department of NY and a member of New York State Senator Leroy Comrie's Veterans Advisory Board.

Private First Class Perry and his wife, Edna, have one daughter, Tonya, and one grandson, Tahir.



EMERY A. PERRY IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR LEROY COMRIE







CHRISTOPHER J. RAGUSO

Master Sergeant Christopher J. Raguso gave his life in service to our nation on March 15, 2018. An HH-60G special missions aviation flight engineer, Master Sergeant Raguso was tragically killed, along with six of his fellow service members, in a military helicopter crash in Iraq. He had been a member of the 106th Rescue Wing, based in Westhampton Beach, since 2001.

In addition to his service to his nation in the National Guard, Master Sergeant Raguso was a devoted professional and volunteer first responder.

As a member of the New York City Fire Department for 13 years, Master Sergeant Raguso served over a decade at Engine 249 in Flatbush and, following his promotion to lieutenant, two years at Battalion 50 in Queens. During his service in the FDNY, he was honored six times for bravery and lifesaving actions.

Locally, Master Sergeant Raguso served his community as a lieutenant of Company 4 of the Commack Fire Department. A volunteer since 2000, Master Sergeant Raguso was a valued member of the department, and essential in new member training. He was unanimously promoted to the rank of honorary fire chief following his passing.

To honor his service to his nation and his community, a 7-mile stretch of Route 25 in Suffolk County has been renamed "Lt. Christopher J. Raguso FDNY-CFD Memorial Highway."

Christopher left behind his wife, Carmela, his parents, John and Laura, and his brother, Marc. Together with Carmela, he is the proud father of Eva and Mila, who will always know that their father has left an indelible legacy in their nation and their hometown.



CHRISTOPHER J. RAGUSO IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JOHN J. FLANAGAN







NORBERT RAPPL

With over 50 years of service to our nation, Major General Norbert Rappl, U.S. Army Reserve, was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant of Artillery from St. Bonaventure University ROTC in 1952. He served on active duty from 1952-1954, in Korea from 1953-1954 and in the United States Army Reserve from 1954-1987. Major General Rappl was Commanding General of the 98th Training Division from 1982-1987.

General Rappl achieved the highest rank a Reservist can attain. He is a graduate of the Army War College, the Harvard Executive Security Program and National War College Defense Strategy Program. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal-highest peacetime award, Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal and the New York State Distinguished Service Medal.

General Rappl is a graduate of the Aquinas Institute in Rochester and was inducted into the St. Bonaventure University Hall of Fame. He is also the recipient of the Rochester Builders Exchange Lifetime Achievement Award, the Lifespan Eli Rudin Second Half Hero Award, and the New York State Concrete Masonry Association Lifetime Achievement Award. General Rappl is a National Concrete Masonry Association Honorary Member, a member of the Order of St. Barbara, and an esteemed Army Reserve Ambassador.



NORBERT RAPPL IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR RICH FUNKE







JERRIE "JAKE" DAVIS

Jerrie "Jake" Davis followed the example of military service set by his father and his uncles, all of whom served in World War II. Mr. Davis enlisted in the United States Army in 1966 upon graduation from Cal-Mum High School. He served 15 months with 1st Logistical Command (MACV) in Vietnam and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

After his Army service, Sergeant Davis worked at Eastman Kodak Company in the Department of Defense division. After 32 years of service, he retired from the company, but returned to work as a contract consultant.

Sergeant Davis has also served his community of Caledonia as an active member and volunteer with the Matthew Cleary American Legion Post 255. Over the past 35 years, he has served as post adjutant and commander. Sergeant Davis has also chaired the Post's membership committee, legion baseball, Flag Day sales and Boys State. He co-chairs the annual Veterans Day dinner, is a member of the Post firing squad and honor guard, and has also served as Livingston County Commander.

In 2007, Sergeant Davis was named 7th District Legionnaire of the Year. He also holds life membership in the American Legion, the VFW, the Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion Past Commanders Club.



JERRIE "JAKE" DAVIS IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR PATRICK M. GALLIVAN







EDWARD G. AULMAN

First Lieutenant Edward G. Aulman graduated from St. John's University in 1968 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. He was commissioned into the United States Marine Corps after his graduation.

First Lieutenant Aulman served in the Vietnam War. During the Gulf War, he sought to rejoin the Marines. He was politely and diplomatically told to "Go home sir and think about it." Since that day, he has steadfastly and consistently been involved with veterans and their issues.

First Lieutenant Aulman has been involved in many veterans' organizations. He has worked for the Nassau County Supervisor and area congressional representative on veterans issues, and is the host of "Veterans News" on Cablevision/Altice, Verizon and local public access networks. Since its inception he has been a member of the mentorship program for the Nassau County Veterans Treatment Court.

First Lieutenant Aulman is a recipient of the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnamese Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, and Combat Action Ribbon. He was married in 1970 at St. Dominic's and lives in Syosset with his wife, Beverly.



EDWARD G. AULMAN IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JAMES F. GAUGHRAN







DRE POPOW

Dre Popow is the founder of the nonprofit organization Veterans Rebuilding Life (VRL). He graduated from FIT with degrees in Art and Design, and was employed as a graphic artist in New York City before enlisting in the Marines following the events of September 11, 2001.

Sergeant Popow served in combat operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and was honorably discharged. Upon returning home, Sergeant Popow began the difficult civilian transition process that all veterans endure. It was during this period that he began losing friends he had served with to suicide. By 2010, Sergeant Popow had lost more friends to suicide than the War itself.

In response, Sergeant Popow used his GI Bill to enroll at New York University, where he studied Nonprofit Development. Soon after, he founded Veterans Rebuilding Life, and authored its objective: To help veterans to rebuild their lives, by helping the victims of war to rebuild their own.

Today, Veterans Rebuilding Life has provided humanitarian assistance to hundreds of young veterans and children that were harmed in the crossfire of war. 100% of all donations made to VRL directly supports the mission. No profit is made by the volunteer staff, comprised of soldiers, social workers, firefighters and first responders.



DRE POPOW IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR MICHAEL GIANARIS







HAROLD BEARD

Always interested in serving his country in the Armed Forces, Staff Sergeant Harold Beard followed in the footsteps of many family members before him along with his mother, father, sister, uncles, and grandfather, and his great-uncle who was also the Congressman of Pennsylvania, Francis Eugene Walter.

A member of the American Legion and The Wounded Warrior Foundation, Staff Sergeant Beard is quoted as saying "Serving in the United States Army to me means being a part of something more than myself while serving the Country that I hold dear to my heart."

Staff Sergeant Beard was deployed twice for a duration of nine months for each tour: Afghanistan (2013-14) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraq (2016-17) in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Following his deployment in Iraq, Staff Sergeant Beard attended the Advanced Leaders Course where he graduated with Distinguished Honors. Due to his work ethic and leadership, Staff Sergeant Beard was promoted quickly and often. He achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant in four years and 10 months.

Staff Sergeant Beard was twice awarded the Army Achievement Medal for his actions in the line of duty while deployed in Afghanistan where he saved the lives of four pilots who were grounded.

Staff Sergeant Beard met Vice President Joe Biden and received a Challenge Coin while graduating from the Air Assault Course in Iraq. He has been awarded numerous medals, including: Army Commendation Medal (3rd Award); Army Achievement Medal (2nd Award); Meritorious Unit Commendation (2nd Award); Army Good Conduct Medal (2nd Award); National Defense Service Medal; Afghanistan Campaign Medal; Global War on Terrorism Medal; Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (2nd Award); Army Service Ribbon; Overseas Service Ribbon (2nd Award); NATO Medal; Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal; Aviation Air Crew Wings; Air Assault Wings; and Army Recruiter Badge.

Staff Sergeant Beard is a patriot who has served his country with honor and distinction.



HAROLD BEARD IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR ANDREW GOUNARDES







WILEY R. JONES II

Sergeant Major Wiley R. Jones II is a veteran of two tours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, one tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn and was deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield.

Since enlisting in the Army in 1988, Sergeant Major Jones has served in a variety of roles with increasing leadership responsibilities, including time as a First Sergeant, where he trained and deployed three Airborne Civil Affairs companies to Iraq and Afghanistan and improved unit readiness by every measure.

Sergeant Major Jones is the recipient of many domestic and international honors, including the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medals, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medals, Army Commendation Medals, Navy Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, South West Asia Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Bronze Hourglass M Device with 3, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with 4, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), Drivers Badge, Mechanics Badge, Combat Action Badge and The Order of Cincinnatus.

Sergeant Major Jones is a 30-year volunteer firefighter with the Maynard Fire Department, member of the Town of Marcy Zoning Board of Appeals, member of American Legion Post 1113, lifetime member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8259 and member of Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 490. He is employed by Ingersoll Rand, where he serves as a Territory Services Operations Leader.

Sergeant Major Jones and his wife, Karen, reside in Marcy and have one daughter,



WILEY R. JONES II IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR JOSEPH A. GRIFFO







ARTHUR L. HANLEY

Arthur L. Hanley, a lifelong resident of New York, served in the United States Army from June 1969 to February 1972. He served in the Americal Division in Vietnam from May 1970 to April 1971 as a Ground Sensor Operator with G2-Target Mission Force based in Chu Lai, RVN. For his service to our nation, Mr. Hanley received the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, New York State Conspicuous Service Cross and National Defense Medal.

The former owner operator of three successful small businesses, he is currently employed by Putnam County as the Deputy Director of the Veterans Service Agency. An Accredited Veteran Service Officer, Mr. Hanley assists his fellow veterans and their dependents in filing claims with the Veterans Administration.

Mr. Hanley has always been involved in the communities where he lives and works. He is a 47-year member of the Katonah Fire Department in which he is a Past Captain and Past member of the Board of Directors, a Past President of the Katonah-Bedford Hills Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and a former member of Brewster Little League Board of Directors where he served as Treasurer. Mr. Hanley also has served as Past President of Lifeline, the parent support group for the Brewster High School NJROTC; a member of the Brewster-Southeast Honor Roll Committee; and member of the committees which brought the Traveling Vietnam Wall to Putnam County in 2011, 2015 and 2018.

He is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), a life member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), a life member of the Americal Division Veterans Association, a member of the American Legion, a member of the Military Order of the Cootie and the Treasurer of the Putnam County Joint Veterans Council.

Mr. Hanley is the outgoing Commander of Brewster VFW Post 672, having served in this position for the last four years. He previously held the position of Post Commander for three years a decade earlier, and he also served as VFW County Commander and VFW District Commander. He was named an All State Post Commander three times, an All American Post Commander and an All State County Commander. His work as editor for the district newsletter *The Sentinel* earned him first place in the VFW National Publication Awards category for District Publications.

Mr. Hanley and his wife of 42 years, Pam, reside in Brewster. They have two sons, Brian (Melissa) and Michael, and three grandchildren, Brendan, Sara and Avery.



ARTHUR L. HANLEY IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR PETER HARCKHAM







DONALD BARTON

First Lieutenant Donald Barton, of Canandaigua, New York – a college junior at the time – joined the Army Air Corps Reserve following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He was called up for navigation and bombardier training and served from April 1942 to December 1945. First Lieutenant Barton served as lead bombardier on 12 of 19 successful B-17 combat missions of the 457th Bomb Group, 369th Bomb Squadron, 8th Air Force, flying out of Peterborough, England.

On his 20th mission, First Lieutenant Barton was the lead bombardier of a 36-plane wing over Augsburg. His plane was shot down by Messerschmitt fighter aircraft on July 19, 1944, and four of the crew members did not survive. First Lieutenant Barton broke both bones in one leg and dislocated his ankle. He was captured by the Germans and held captive for almost a year. For his service, he earned the Air Medal with three clusters, the Purple Heart with two clusters, and the Prisoner of War Medal.

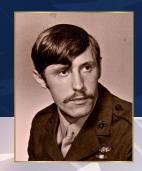
Following his military service, First Lieutenant Barton earned his doctorate in genetics from the University of California Berkeley and then worked as a professor at Cornell University. He served for 22 years as the Director of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva. For 12 years, he performed worldwide consulting on agricultural research management in 17 countries.

Currently, he is a notable community guest speaker for patriotic anniversaries to remember and honor those who served. He has been interviewed for the Library of Congress World War II history series.



DONALD BARTON IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR PAMELA A. HELMING





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VETERANS HALLOFFAME

JOHN EMMETT CONNORS

John Emmett Connors enlisted in 1969 in the United States Navy as a Hospital Corpsman. His work stateside was with the severely wounded from the Republic of Vietnam. Later, Mr. Connors was attached to the Marine Corps where he earned his Air Wings, a rare decoration for a corpsman. He served on two aircraft carriers tending to the sick or injured at sea while looking after the medical needs of his helicopter squadron.

During his four-year enlistment, Mr. Connors cared for numerous troops and worked tirelessly to ensure they received the best medical care and emotional support he could offer. He was highly decorated for his service, receiving a National Defense Medal and Meritorious Mast which recognized his outstanding performance of duty and leadership.

After being honorably discharged from the Navy, Mr. Connors was awarded a scholarship to study at the Art Students League of New York, a dream he had put off so that he could serve. Today, he is a prolific painter known for creating street scenes of New York City and of his hometown, Troy, New York. His large body of work also includes pieces depicting the trauma and triumph of his military experience. Mr. Connors has exhibited his work extensively and has several books about his collections.

Recently, Mr. Connors taught a series of drawing classes at the Manhattan VA. In 2018, he was one of two artists featured in an exhibit entitled "Queer Moods" at the renowned Leslie-Lohman Museum on Prince Street in Manhattan.

Today, in addition to his artistic career, Mr. Connors has continued the important medical work he began during his military service by serving as a caregiver to others.



JOHN EMMETT CONNORS IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN







DANIEL MCMAHON

Specialist Daniel McMahon, a lifelong resident of Grand Island, New York, was drafted into the United States Army on September 26, 1968. He completed basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey before receiving advanced individual training in infantry at Fort Polk, Louisiana, specializing in jungle warfare.

Specialist McMahon was then deployed to Vietnam where he served for one year with the 9th Infantry Division, operating in the 3rd and 4th Cores in the Mekong Delta. Upon leaving Vietnam, he returned to the United States where he completed his active service at Fort Hood, Texas. He was honorably discharged from the Army as a Specialist 4.

During his military career, Specialist McMahon received numerous awards and medals, including the Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star Medal with V device, Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze service stars, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal among others.

Returning home to Grand Island, Specialist McMahon continued serving his nation and fellow veterans when he joined the Charles N. DeGlopper Memorial Veteran of Foreign Wars Post 9249 in 1971. He currently serves as Post Commander, and has served in various leadership roles within the VFW organization, most notably, Erie County Council Commander for two years and present Commander of District 6 VFW Department of New York.

He has also been a member of the Grand Island Fire Company for more than 57 years, and was a member of the original paramedic crew for 26 years and 911 communications supervisor for more than 14 years.

Specialist McMahon and his wife of 46 years, Sue, have two daughters, Bridget and Molly.



DANIEL MCMAHON IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER L. JACOBS







KEITH J. KOSTER

United States Navy veteran and Saratoga Springs resident Keith J. Koster graduated from Shenendehowa High School in 1980 and enlisted in the Navy, serving from May 1982 to April 1988. Mr. Koster went to boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois and trained as an Electronic Warfare Technician in Pensacola, Florida. He was named "Sailor of the Month" before joining his ship, the USS Suribachi (AE-21), at Naval Weapon Station, Earle, New Jersey.

In recognition of his exemplary military service, Mr. Koster received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and two Sea Service Deployment Ribbons before being discharged honorably as a Petty Officer 1st Class (EW1).

A three-time cancer survivor, Mr. Koster recently completed the Centennial Challenge – hiking and summiting all 46 high peaks in New York State with the American Legion Flag – to celebrate the Legion's 100th anniversary. In March 2019, the American Legion's national magazine featured Mr. Koster on its cover in recognition of his incredible accomplishment. An American Legion lifetime member, Mr. Koster serves as Chaplain of American Legion Adirondack Post 70 and is a 2015 graduate of the American Legion College.

Mr. Koster graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science Degree. He enjoys mountaineering and ballroom dancing in his spare time.

This October, Mr. Koster celebrates 34 years of loving marriage to his beautiful wife, Cindy. They have two children and one grandchild.



KEITH J. KOSTER IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR DAPHNE JORDAN







DAVE MARSHALL & DANIEL BREIER

WWII veterans Dave Marshall and Daniel Breier have been friends since meeting at City College more than 60 years ago. Both were drafted into the United States Army in 1943 during the height of the War, but served the nation in two very different parts of the world.

Dave Marshall saw combat as an infantryman and Corporal in the 84th Infantry Division, also known as the "Railsplitters," between 1943 and 1946. He served on the front lines throughout Europe during some of the most intense fighting of the War. Corporal Marshall was deployed to Omaha Beach in November 1944, as well as during the Battle of the Bulge, one of the most deadly and impactful battles in American military history.

Following the surrender of Germany, Corporal Marshall spent the remainder of his time in the service stationed in Reims, France, working with his unit to free prisoners who had been captured by the Nazis and held throughout Europe.

After leaving service in 1946, Corporal Marshall went back to school, earned a degree in Chemistry from City College, then decided to change careers and work for himself, making and selling cosmetics machinery. Corporal Marshall currently lives in Baldwin with his wife, Ester, to whom he has been married since 1949. Together, they have two children and six grandchildren.

Daniel Breier served honorably in both the 87th and 24th Infantries, and rose from Private to Battalion Sergeant Major, the highest rank for an enlisted man.

Major Breier was stationed in both New Guinea and the Philippines. Serving with the 24th Infantry, Major Breier fought during the invasions of Leyte and Mindanao. For his actions in battle on the Philippine Island of Mindoro, Major Breier was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

Major Breier continued to see combat in the Philippines until the surrender of Japan in 1945. Following V-J Day, Major Breier was stationed in occupied Japan and witnessed first-hand the immense defenses that the Japanese army had put in place to fight the U.S. soldiers and the chilling effects that the end of the War had on the Japanese people.

Following the War, Major Breier attended City College through the G.I. Bill, and eventually became a Certified Public Accountant. He resides in Oceanside and has been married to his wife, Zelda, for more than 60 years. Together, they have three children and four grandchildren.



DAVE MARSHALL AND DANIEL BREIER ARE NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR TODD KAMINSKY







WILLIAM W. GARNETT JR.

Private First Class William W. "Sackie" Garnett Jr. was born in Elmont on November 28, 1942 and has remained a lifelong resident, returning to Elmont after his service in the Vietnam War.

Private First Class Garnett attended Sewanhaka High School and was later accepted to lona College on an athletic scholarship. However, due to family obligations, he declined the offer in order to work and assist his family financially. In September 1967, Private First Class Garnett was drafted to serve in the Vietnam War. Although he was offered the option of deferring, Private First Class Garnett declined the option and chose to serve his country.

Private First Class Garnett served in the United States Army 101st Airborne Division. He underwent basic training at Ft. Jackson in South Carolina and AIT at Ft. Pope in Louisiana. Later, he was stationed at Ft. Campbell in Kentucky for jump school training to become airborne, and was deployed to Vietnam in March 1968. Private First Class Garnett was then assigned to the 102nd Division of United States paratroopers, commonly known as the "1st of the old duce" based out of Dongha, Vietnam. Private First Class Garnett was injured in the northernmost part of south Vietnam, flown to Phubai for medical attention, and then flown to the evacuation hospital in Long Bien. Eventually returning stateside to be discharged, he was discharged from the Army in December 1969.

Private First Class Garnett then went on to work for the New York Racing Association for 36 years, starting in March 1970. He later was a liaison between management and NYRA, also assisting with an international exchange student program to train Japan's future racing officials. In 1984, Private First Class Garnett held a forum for the New York Police Department to raise funds for underprivileged children to attend summer camp. Private First Class Garnett was able to gather jockeys to participate in a game against the Police Department's team and raised \$7,000 to send children to summer camp.

Private First Class Garnett married his wife, Joyce Hrupa, on May 15, 1984 and had three wonderful children, Helena, Crystal and William V. Garnett III. Private First Class Garnett currently resides in the Jamaica Square Section of Elmont with his family and is an active member of the community.



WILLIAM W. GARNETT JR. IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR ANNA M. KAPLAN







STEVEN T. BANKO III

Steven T. Banko III was drafted into the United States Army in 1967 to begin his service in Vietnam at the age of 21. He served in Vietnam from 1967 until December 1968, celebrating his 22nd birthday there and marking him the fifth oldest man in a rifle company of 150. Sergeant Banko was wounded while defending his rifle company, Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, in a battle that, over the course of five and a half hours, resulted in an 86% casualty rate.

In late October 1969, he returned to serve his second tour of combat duty, leading a platoon of 40 men. At the end of January 1970, he received his final discharge order and returned home to Buffalo with a Silver Star, earned for combat valor; four Bronze Stars, two of which were awarded for heroism; and four Purple Hearts.

Since returning home, Sergeant Banko has tirelessly advocated on behalf of veterans in Western New York. He was responsible for hosting the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall in Western New York twice, served as President of the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program from 1986-1996 and as Chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Luncheon from 1982-1986, and raised and distributed more than \$50,000 in college scholarships to children of Vietnam veterans.

Sergeant Banko has authored two books, more than two dozen essays in the *Buffalo News*, several dedications and poems featured on Western New York Memorials, and has been a featured speaker at cities throughout the United States.



STEVEN T. BANKO III IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY







BILL MCSHANE

Captain Bill McShane enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in the PLC program in 1961 in a reserve capacity. Discharged as a corporal in 1964 and commissioned as a second lieutenant, he was designated as a naval aviator in 1965 and was deployed to the Caribbean and then Fleet Marine Force Pacific, Vietnam.

As a helicopter aircraft commander, Captain McShane flew daily sorties in support of Marine combat operations in I Corps region stretching from Chu Lai to the DMZ. Following service in Vietnam, he was assigned as a flight instructor at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, California.

His decorations include 35 awards of the Air Medal representing over 700 combat missions, Vietnam Service and Campaign Medals, Vietnam Gallantry Cross and New York State's Conspicuous Service Cross and Service Star.

Captain McShane left active duty in December 1968 and was appointed a special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in February 1969, retiring in December 1992 as a supervisory special agent in the Special Operations Branch. Since retirement, he has held corporate management positions, been an adjunct professor, and is currently an investigator under contract to the Department of Homeland Security.

Recognizing the role military service played in his life, he continues to support our veterans and servicemen and women as President and CEO of the Soldiers', Sailors', Marines', Coast Guard & Airmen's Club, Inc., Chief of Staff for the Veteran Corps of Artillery, past New York Commander of the Military Order of Foreign Wars and Vice President of the Order of Lafayette.

Captain McShane and his wife, Joyce, are the proud parents of two accomplished children and five beautiful grandchildren.



BILL MCSHANE IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER







JOHN DIANA

John Diana of Staten Island is a decorated United States Army Korean War veteran who served from 1952 through 1954, most notably with the 204th Field Artillery in Korea. The 204th's orders were to provide artillery support to various battles, including Pork Chop Hill.

While regrouping, Mr. Diana's unit came under surprise artillery attack and he was literally blown off his tank. Mr. Diana suffered severe burns and damage to his legs and lost over 60% of his hearing. Subsequent to being released from the Army hospital in Seoul, he was reassigned to the duty of battalion commander's driver. These duties included driving personnel carriers and visiting forward areas to pick up the dead and wounded for transport to hospital and morgue locations. The experience of dealing with death and dismemberment on a daily basis still haunts Mr. Diana's memory. After discharge, it was discovered that the cartilage in both legs had been severely damaged and not repaired properly. Mr. Diana underwent extensive surgery to alleviate the pain and moderate the effects of the damage.

Mr. Diana is a most modest and unassuming veteran. For his valor, he received the Purple Heart, three Bronze Stars and various United Nations and Presidential service medals and citations – seven in all. Understandably, Mr. Diana rarely talks about his experiences and contributions to his country, nor does he mention his medals and awards.

Mr. Diana is proud of his service to his country and to the family he loves. He is truly one of the walking wounded who has dealt with the horrors of the battlefield on a daily basis and who cannot forget those images and experiences. It is the contribution of soldiers like John Diana that we must not forget.



JOHN DIANA IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR ANDREW J. LANZA







KEVIN MORIARTY

A lifelong resident of Long Island and Vietnam era veteran, Kevin Moriarty graduated from Longwood High School in 1973 and served in the United States Army Corps of Engineers until December 1981, achieving the rank of Sergeant. His awards and medals include the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious service, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Ribbon for service during the Vietnam War, Non-Commissioned Officers Academy Ribbon (two awards), Foreign Service Ribbon, and two consecutive Good Conduct Medals. Sergeant Moriarty graduated from the U.S. Army Defense Mapping School, the U.S. Army Non-Commissioned Officers Engineer School at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, and was the "Honor Graduate" of the Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Academy in Bad Toltz, Germany.

After leaving the military, Sergeant Moriarty returned to his hometown of Middle Island/Ridge, New York to complete his degree in Industrial Engineering. He has an MBA in general management and earned a PhD in Industrial Engineering at New Jersey Institute of Technology, where he has currently completed all but his dissertation.

Sergeant Moriarty is a full-time faculty member at Stony Brook University's College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, where he has taught the Technological Systems Management program since 1998. He has also held executive management positions on Long Island, as Vice President and General Manager, with companies considered leaders in automation, controls and instrumentation.

Sergeant Moriarty has been a member of The American Legion, Wilson Rich Post, Port Jefferson Station. New York for 34 years.



KEVIN MORIARTY IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR KENNETH P. LAVALLE







HENRY GURNEY

Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Whitehall High School junior Henry Gurney joined the New York State Guard. On his 18th birthday, Mr. Gurney received his draft notice and soon after high school graduation enlisted in the United States Army. He was assigned to the tank corps and trained at Fort Hood, Texas. Four months later, Mr. Gurney was sent to Camp Carson in Colorado and joined the newly activated 71st Infantry Division.

Mr. Gurney participated in the Normandy (D-Day) Invasion, landing at Omaha Beach on June 7, 1944 against intense artillery fire and strafing from the German Air Force. As his unit made their way inland, he was hit by a bullet that penetrated his steel helmet dead center. Remarkably, the bullet veered around his head, exiting the back of the helmet and leaving only a minor flesh wound.

Days later, Mr. Gurney was struck by shrapnel from a high explosive shell that blasted a four-inch hole in his helmet. He was evacuated to England for surgery to remove slivers of steel that had embedded in his skull and was awarded the Purple Heart while in the hospital.

After recovering, Mr. Gurney was assigned to E Company, 104th Infantry Division, 414 Infantry Regiment, and soon found himself fighting through the Battle of the Bulge. A couple of months after returning to battle, and while providing machine gun cover for a strategic withdrawal of troops, Mr. Gurney was shot in the stomach and flown to Paris for surgery.

Mr. Gurney was awarded the Bronze Star for his protective actions and received an Oak Leaf Cluster for his Purple Heart.



HENRY GURNEY IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR ELIZABETH O'C. LITTLE





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ARTHUR GRABINER

Arthur Grabiner is a World War II veteran who proudly served in the United States Navy aboard the USS Laurens APA153, an attack transport ship, in the Pacific Theater of War. Among other campaigns, Mr. Grabiner participated in the Invasion of Lingayen Gulf in northern Luzon in the Philippines and the Battle of Okinawa. For his unwavering service to his country, he attained the rank of Yeoman Second Class and earned the following honors: Asiatic Pacific Medal 2 Stars, Philippine Liberation Ribbon 1 Star, American Theater Medal, and Victory Medal.

Mr. Grabiner is a lifelong New Yorker. He went through the New York City public school system, graduated from Pace College under the GI Bill, and was a practicing Certified Public Accountant for more than 50 years.

Mr. Grabiner has devoted himself to educating youngsters about the sacrifices of Americans who valiantly served in World War II. He has often visited students in New York City schools, Long Island, Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan, describing his personal experiences as an 18-, 19- and 20-year-old sailor serving in the Pacific Theater of War – vivid, firsthand details not found in any history textbook. Mr. Grabiner enthusiastically shares with young students the enduring lessons he learned about courage, perseverance, honor, freedom and patriotism while fighting for and defending the United States of America during World War II.

Married for 46 years to his late beloved wife, Bernice, they raised two wonderful sons, Peter and Douglas. Peter and his lovely wife, Suzanne, have provided Mr. Grabiner with three doting grandchildren, Jacob (Jake), Sela and Ilana.



ARTHUR GRABINER IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JOHN C. LIU







DAVE ROGERS

Born in June 1969 in New York City, Dave Rogers was homeless before starting his 14-year service in the United States Army. Mr. Rogers served in the Army as a member of the Army Reserve AGR Program and the Army National Guard Active Guard Program. He deployed to Desert Storm in 1990, Bosnia in 1997, and as a First Responder at the World Trade Center, where he broke his neck, ending his career.

After leaving the Army, Mr. Rogers spent many years traveling the world before returning to New York and joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). As a Gold Life Legacy Member of the VFW, he has served as Post Commander for VFW Post 2913, is a committee chair for the Department of New York District 1 VFW and is the current County Commander for Suffolk County VFW.

As Commander, Mr. Rogers has worked to improve communications across the VFW in Suffolk County, and develop a stronger presence in the community through social media and networking. He works hard to advocate for veterans by communicating with local elected officials, visiting the VA, calling offices that serve veterans, hosting veteran-related assistance programs, raising awareness through the media, and sitting on veterans advisory boards throughout Suffolk County. Through his efforts, and with the help of VFW Post 2913 members, Mr. Rogers' post has received the All-State and All-American Award for the 2018-2019 Year.

Mr. Rogers holds two Master's degrees and several honors in education, including membership in two national honor societies. Over the years, he has received many awards for his efforts, not just in the military, but also as a veteran, for his dedication to veterans and the community. Mr. Rogers' military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Commendation Medal (4th Award), the Army Achievement Medal (7th Award), the Military Outstanding Volunteer Medal (2nd Award) and Aide to Civil Authority Medal. As a veteran, Mr. Rogers has received awards and proclamations from County Legislators, State Senators, Congressmen, and Mayors. He has been named "Man of the Year" for *The Long Island Advance* and VFW Post 2913.



DAVE ROGERS IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR MONICA R. MARTINEZ







EDWARD W. STONE

Edward W. Stone, also known as Shanghaied Ed, was born on September 4, 1923 in Towanda, Pennsylvania. At age 17, Mr. Stone enlisted in the Navy because of his fascination with Morse code and submarines. In 1941, he was assigned to ammunition ship, "Pyro," and bravely served as a radioman during the Pearl Harbor attacks. Afterward, he did Shore Patrol in California and served the rest of his enlistment as a radioman in Bumper.

Upon completing his service, Mr. Stone attended the Capitol Radio Engineering Institute in Washington, D.C., with the benefit of the G.I. Bill. He graduated in practical radio engineering with a specialization in television on January 13, 1949. General Electric Company employed Mr. Stone, who worked as a test engineer. After moving to Syracuse in 1952, he became a representative for Edward A. Ossman, and then in 1959, founded E.W. Stone Co., Inc.

Mr. Stone belongs to such organizations as Pearl Harbor Survivors, U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc., and many more. His service is noteworthy because "less than 2 percent of United States Navy personnel served in submarines during WWII."

Published in 2015, Mr. Stone's account of the Pearl Harbor attacks on December 8, 1941, have been included in the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project. Mr. Stone received an Honor Flight to Washington, D.C., and has given talks around the nation about his experience. On Veterans Day 2015, Edward W. Stone was honored as Grand Marshal for the New York State Fairgrounds parade.



EDWARD W. STONE IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR RACHEL MAY







DR. MAX S. EAGELFELD

Dr. Max S. Eagelfeld is a veteran of the European Theater in World War II.

Dr. Eagelfeld served as a medic with the United States Army, 12th Armored Division, 82nd Armored Medical Battalion from 1944-1945, which took part in the liberation of the French region of Alsace-Lorraine and Western Germany. For his service, he was awarded the Bronze Star, the Combat Medical Badge, the European Africa Middle East Service Medal, the World War II Victory Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. Dr. Eagelfeld's medical unit received a Meritorious Service Plaque.

After the War, Dr. Eagelfeld served as the 82nd Armored Medical Battalion Unit Representative and was editor of the Battalion's column in the Division Newsletter, the *Hellcat News*, which is still published in 2019.

In 2014, Dr. Eagelfeld was named the 12th Armored Division "Hellcat of the Year," and received a Certificate of Appreciation from the soldiers of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion for service in the 82nd Armored Medical Battalion.

On May 11, 2018, Dr. Eagelfeld received a Knighthood in the French Legion of Honor by the French Consul-General in New York for aiding in the liberation of the Alsace-Lorraine region of France.

Dr. Eagelfeld has lived in New York State for his entire 95 years, and has been a resident of the Town of Mamaroneck with his wife, Naomi, for over 50 years. He has given numerous talks and shared his accounts and stories with schools and military history groups about his experiences during World War II.



DR. MAX S. EAGELFELD IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER







ROSA DAYSHA OTERO-WALSH

Rosa Daysha Otero-Walsh was born in the Bronx in December 1962. Her family moved to Puerto Rico in 1969, where in 1971, she became a Navy Cadet at just nine years old.

In 1974, Ms. Otero-Walsh's family returned to New York City. She enlisted in the New York Nautical Cadet Corps at the Kingsbridge Armory in the Bronx, serving from 1974-1979. On October 29, 1980, she enlisted in the New York Army National Guard, serving at the 369th Headquarters-HQ 1st Bn, 15th Regiment NYG, until her honorable discharge in February 1993 as a Grade E-6 Staff Sergeant.

In 1987, Ms. Otero-Walsh joined the New York Police Department, where she proudly served until 2007. She had the privilege to serve as the immigration officer for various communities, bringing workshops, referrals and translation materials on behalf of the NYPD. Ms. Otero-Walsh retired as Detective Specialist for Community Affairs.

Following her retirement, Ms. Otero-Walsh was hired by the Town of Wallkill Police Department, where she has been happily and passionately working with the community members of Orange County since 2008. She has a great passion for mentoring and educating our community's youth, helping them become good citizens who give back to the less fortunate.

Ms. Otero-Walsh believes that her military background helped prepare her to serve the communities she loves. She treasured her career and proudly and honorably protected, saved, and served the people of her community throughout her career. She married Lawrence A. Walsh and they have eight amazing children, one in heaven, and nine grandchildren.



ROSA DAYSHA OTERO-WALSH IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JEN METZGER







KATHERINE HORTON

Born on October 12 1920, Katherine Horton will be turning 99 years old this year. She and her mother, Georgie Horton, moved to Brooklyn, New York from Sparta, Georgia when Katherine was just eight years old.

Ms. Horton lived in Brooklyn, attended the Girls High School in Brooklyn and worked at Rockland State Hospital and Jersey Contracting Corporation until she enlisted in the United States Navy in December 4, 1944. She worked in the New York Naval Shipyard from 1946 to 1964.

One of the first of three African-American Navy WAVES allowed to study at the Bethesda Maryland Medical Center, Ms. Horton served at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Great Lakes Illinois, and in the Supply Department at the Brooklyn Navy Yard as a clerk/typist. There she worked closely with persons of high-grade, officers, and men from the ships, and for a period of one year, acted as Assistant Secretary, making time cards, typing correspondence, answering telephones, receiving visitors and making reports.

Ms. Horton went on earn her Associates degree in Physical Therapy in 1976, New York State license for massage in 1980 and Bachelor of Science Degree from St. Joseph's College in 1985. In her professional career, she worked as Physical Therapy Assistant at the Veterans Administration and in patient care services rehabilitation medical services at the VA Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York.

In her personal life, Ms. Horton had three children, Sandra, Kevin and Frederick. Kevin served with the U.S. Air Force (Vietnam) and Frederick served in the U.S. Army (Vietnam).



KATHERINE HORTON IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY







GERARD PLACIDE

Gerard Placide is an acclaimed singer, community leader, and veteran from Brooklyn, New York, originally hailing from Trinidad and Tobago. He served as a soldier in the United States Army 3rd Infantry Division at Ft. Stewart, Georgia.

Mr. Placide has had the privilege of singing for the Queen of England in London, President of the United Nations 57th General Assembly, His Excellency Julian Robert Hunte, then-Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Senator John McCain, and Former Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

Mr. Placide has valiantly served not only his country, but also New York State, the City Council and his community, working on community-related projects and singing at key engagements. Mr. Placide also had the privilege of performing for former New York City Mayors Rudolph Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg.

Mr. Placide has received numerous awards, proclamations and commendations from world leaders, not just for his singing, but also for advocating for cross-cultural integration and immigration reform in the United States. He was the first Caribbean national to win the acclaimed title of the McDonald's Gospel Soloist Award, and has received awards and proclamations from the U.S. Army and U.S. Congressman Hank Johnson.



GERARD PLACIDE IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR ZELLNOR Y. MYRIE







PAUL C. "DIGGER" VENDETTI

Born in Elmira, New York in 1926, Paul C. "Digger" Vendetti joined the United States Navy in 1944, before completing high school.

Seaman First Class Vendetti admirably served our nation in the South Pacific during World War II. He was the recipient of numerous military awards including the Asiatic Pacific Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, American Theater Medal, and the Victory Medal.

Honorably discharged from U.S. Navy service in 1946, Seaman Vendetti returned to the Elmira area, settled in Horseheads, and raised a family with his beloved wife of 72 years, Rosemary.

Across all of the 40 years of a dedicated career as a caretaker, Seaman Vendetti, with honor and dignity, proudly tended to the final resting places of thousands of his fellow veterans at the Woodlawn National Cemetery in Elmira.

Seaman Vendetti was a member of American Legion Post #442 and a great fan of the New York Yankees. Family, friends, neighbors, and fellow veterans recall the joy he brought to living with an always-ready sense of humor and an unforgettable laugh.

The Horseheads Central School District presented Seaman Vendetti with a high school diploma during a Veterans Day ceremony in November 2017. "I got a diploma and who knows, maybe I'll use it, maybe I won't," Seaman Vendetti said with a trademark smile on that day. "But I've got one, and I can always say I have one."

Seaman First Class Vendetti was laid to rest in Woodlawn National Cemetery, with Military Honors, on August 30, 2018.



PAUL C. "DIGGER" VENDETTI IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR THOMAS F. O'MARA







ANTHONY P. SANTORO

The only child of Italian immigrants, Alberto and Josephine Santoro, Anthony (Tony) P. Santoro was born on September 30, 1925. In 1944, Mr. Santoro enlisted in the United States Army upon completion of high school. He proudly served with the 10th Armored Division, Company A-Armored Infantry.

In April 1945, while in Heilbronn, Germany, the tank that Mr. Santoro was marching alongside was hit by a German 88-Cannon shell. The explosion threw him into a brick building, and he suffered shrapnel injuries and nerve damage to his back. Mr. Santoro spent a total of seven months between hospitals in Betel, France and Staten Island, New York.

Mr. Santoro received a Purple Heart for the injuries he sustained while deployed, and was medically discharged in November 1945 as a Private 1st Class.

On June 11, 1946, he married Shirley Barr and the two had 14 children together, six of whom served in various branches in the military. Mr. Santoro went on to obtain his private pilot's license in 1952, commercial license in 1953, and in 1954 he obtained his flight instructor's license, logging over 7,000 flight hours.

Mr. Santoro happily retired from the United States Postal Service in 1990 and now resides in Lockport, New York with his wife, Shirley. The two have shared many memories of traveling across the country and now enjoy visits from their many grandchildren, and even a few great grandchildren.



ANTHONY P. SANTORO IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR ROBERT G. ORTT







GAYELLE MARIE FELIX

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Gayelle Marie Felix is a registered nurse and veteran who served the United States Army Reserve as a military nurse. Her military career expanded from 1990 to 1998, where she worked in various clinical settings. Ms. Felix's time in the military as a soldier and nurse was commendable. Her commitment to her work, along with strong leadership and community skills, made it easy for her to pave her way to success.

In addition to her EMT Certification and Practical Nurse license from the United States Army, Fort Sam Houston, Ms. Felix received an Associate's degree in Nursing in 1994 from the Helene Fuld College of Nursing in New York City. In 2001, she graduated Summa Cum Laude from Northwood University with a Baccalaureate degree in Business, majoring in health care management. This allowed her to gain additional expertise in the healthcare field.

During 1990 and 1998, Ms. Felix's reserve unit was activated to serve her role as a military nurse, it was during this time that her passion for being a frontline nurse and caring for critical patients grew even stronger. With even more gusto and drive, she continued to carry out a number of nursing duties in New Jersey, New York City, North Carolina, and Germany. The tough nature of the job and the military environment helped develop Ms. Felix's skills.

She was able to learn how to manage, lead teams and carry out critical tasks with extreme professionalism and meticulousness. Even after leaving the military in 1998, she carried these skills into her life as a civilian. Ms. Felix continued her role as a nurse, working as a traveling registered nurse, specializing in Adult Critical Care Units. She worked for various clinics and hospitals in surgical, neurological, coronary care, cardiothoracic and trauma units.

When she is not in clinical settings, you can find Ms. Felix in her role as the president of her block association in Flatbush, Brooklyn. From winning community action grants, being engaged in neighborhood beautification projects and encouraging the preservation of culture, environment and neighborhood relationships, Ms. Felix has continued to serve her community relentlessly. To optimize her role as Block Association President, she has partnered with community organizations, including the 67th Precinct's Community Affairs, Neighborhood Housing Services, and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Ms. Felix's continuous efforts to promote sustainability and neighborhood improvements have been recognized by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. In recognition of her endeavors, she was awarded the 2018 National Grid Award for Leadership and Sustainability Practices. To continue her contributions to the nursing field, Ms. Felix completed the New York Operations of Emergency Management Services, a CERT program. Along with that, she earned her Baccalaureate degree in Nursing from Florida Southern College in 2018.

Ms. Felix resides in Flatbush, Brooklyn, with her two children and husband of 10 years, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel.



GAYELLE MARIE FELIX IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR KEVIN S. PARKER







HENRY A. BOLUS

Private First Class Henry A. Bolus was educated through the New York City public school system and later attended Brooklyn College. He completed the My Turn program at New York City's Kingsborough Community College, earning a 3.95 GPA and prompting the National Society of Leadership and Success, Sigma Alpha Phi, to invite him to join their fraternity at the Presidential Level.

Private First Class Bolus served in the United States Army during the Korean conflict as a paratrooper with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and the 11th Airborne Division from 1951 to 1955 - Rank, Private First Class.

A valuable community activist, Private First Class Bolus has worked with local units of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America and Brooklyn Canarsie Lions Club, Inc. He serves his community in varied capacities as a member of the following: District 18 Community Board, Board of Directors of Cypress Hills and Canarsie Cemeteries, Canarsie Memorial Day Parade, Knights of Columbus, United Parents Fraternal and Informed Voices of Canarsie, an elected delegate to the New York State Judicial Convention and past president of the 69th Community Council.

In recognition of his exemplary work, Private First Class Bolus received a commendation from Congressman Edolphus Towns, a proclamation from the New York City Council, recognition from Friends United Block Association, an Associate Alumni membership from North Carolina A&T College Alumni, and an Outstanding Community Service Award by the Kings County District Attorney. He is a recipient of New York State Senate Liberty Award.

Married to his loving wife, Josephine Bolus, in 1954, their union produced two children - Michael and Sabrina, three grandchildren and four greatgrandchildren.



HENRY A. BOLUS IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD







TAMMY E. ROSE

Tammy E. Rose served in the United States Army as a Transportation Supervisor (88N). She began her career in the armed forces in Ft. Eustis, Virginia, going on to Ft. Lewis, Washington and completing her tour of duty at the 21st Replacement in Frankfurt, Germany. During her time with the Army, Ms. Rose served alongside many of the leaders who helped deploy those who served in Desert Storm and Bosnia. This time in service allowed Ms. Rose to develop many leadership traits. For her service, she was named Soldier of the Year in 1993.

Following her career in the Army, Ms. Rose founded and served as Executive Director of Jackson Heights Early Learning Center in Jackson Heights and Little Friends in Sunnyside and Corona. She holds dual Master's degrees from St. John's University in School Building Leadership and Bank Street College in Early Childhood leadership.

In addition to serving her country, her state, and countless children throughout her career, Ms. Rose continues to be actively engaged in her local schools. She is a fierce activist and advocate for justice, while organizing her neighbors and the Jackson Heights community.



TAMMY E. ROSE IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JESSICA RAMOS







THOMAS E. FEELEY

Thomas E. Feeley was a Corporal in the United States Marine Corps from 1990-1993, serving in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Afterward, he served as an elite Embassy Marine at the American Embassy Lusaka, Zambia and the Consulate General Munich, Germany.

Following his military service, Corporal Feeley began his federal law enforcement career in 1996 in Miami, Florida. In 1998, he assisted in the opening of the Buffalo Federal Detention Facility in Batavia, New York. After 9-11, he became a Federal Air Marshal in Atlanta, Georgia, serving from 2002-2006. Corporal Feeley was a Course Developer/Instructor and Branch Chief at the Immigration and Customs Academy from 2006-2008, and was then promoted to Assistant Field Office Director in Salt Lake City. In 2017, Corporal Feeley joined the Senior Executive Service and became Buffalo Field Office Director, covering 48 of the 62 counties in New York State.

Corporal Feeley is a recipient of the Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Unit Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal (with two bronze service stars), Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon (with one bronze service star), Marine Security Guard Ribbon, Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia and Kuwait). He also received the Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security's Meritorious Service Silver Medal in 2016. This award recognizes "exceptional individual leadership that is distinguished by achievements of marked significance" and is the second highest award given by the Secretary.

Corporal Feeley is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, LeRoy Rotary, Association of Rochester Police and Area Law Enforcement Retirees and Genesee County Criminal Justice Advisory Council. He is also an active member of the LeRoy Fire Department.

Corporal Feeley resides in LeRoy with his wife, Cory, and two daughters, Adele and Aubree.



THOMAS FEELEY IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER







GLENN DODGE

At 101 years old, Major Glenn Dodge's life can be characterized by decades of service and sacrifice for the betterment of his country, as well as his community.

In 1937, Major Dodge – a resident of Chaumont, New York – earned a degree from Potsdam Normal School. After graduation, he taught classes in a rural schoolhouse on the St. Lawrence River's Grindstone Island until 1941, when he became a member of the United States Army.

Major Dodge served in World War II with the 28th, 317th and 333rd Infantries. His service is highlighted by his roles in fighting in the Battle of the Bulge and securing Odeigne, France. Major Dodge is credited with leading a reconnaissance patrol deep into enemy territory and directing the capture of 18 Germans. From these individuals, he gained information important to future operations.

After active duty, Major Dodge joined the Army Reserve, retiring in 1967 as a Major. His military awards include the pre-Pearl Harbor Atlantic Defense and European Service Awards, Purple Heart, Bronze Star for Valor and the New York State Distinguished Service Medal.

Following his military service, Major Dodge returned to teaching, a career which he retired from in 1973. He is known throughout the North Country as the epitome of a public servant, who throughout the years has dedicated countless hours to a number of organizations.

Perhaps most notable is Major Dodge's service to the Chaumont Volunteer Fire Department. In recognition of all he has done for the organization – and his community – the Department created the "Glenn Dodge Community Service Award" to recognize those who have followed his example to serve others. In 2018, the Village of Sackets Harbor hosted its very first Veterans Day Parade. There, Major Dodge served as Grand Marshal and was recognized by hundreds of local people for his military and community service.

Throughout his 101 years, Major Glenn Dodge has proven himself devoted to his country and his community, demonstrating exactly why those who fought during WWII are referred to as the "The Greatest Generation."



GLENN DODGE IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE







DOUGLAS BREWSTER

Douglas Brewster was born in Harlem and raised in The Bronx – which ingrained in him the tenacity and toughness that is famous among New Yorkers.

Like many brave men and women of this country, the 9/11 attacks on New York City compelled Corporal Brewster to join the United States Army. By March 2003, he was attending basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and by December of that year, he was on his way to Iraq with the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. During that tour, Corporal Brewster's platoon was tasked with raiding and patrolling the dangerous Abu Ghraib section of Baghdad. It was during his first tour that Corporal Brewster was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor, as well as two other Army Commendations for his actions in the battlefield. Corporal Brewster's unit also received Presidential recognition for their actions.

In 2006, Corporal Brewster did a second tour in Baghdad with the 1st Cavalry Division. Once honorably discharged from the military, he continued to pursue his education by attending and graduating from the University of Texas with a Bachelor's degree in American Government and Politics.

Since then, Corporal Brewster has dedicated his life to public service. From 2012 to 2015, he served as a Deputy Chief of Staff in the Texas Capitol. He then moved back to The Bronx, where he joined the Jericho Project as the organization's Veteran Service Coordinator. In this role, Corporal Brewster helps homeless veterans access supportive and affordable housing options as well as connect them to employment opportunities.



DOUGLAS BREWSTER IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR GUSTAVO RIVERA







ROBERT L. "BOB" MORRILL

Robert L. "Bob" Morrill earned his eligibility in the American Legion by four years of honorable service in the United States Army, from 1966 to 1970, in both Germany and the United States. Upon returning home from service, he continued his education under the G.I. Bill, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology School of Printing in 1982.

Following his military service, Mr. Morrill joined the American Legion Yerkes-Couchman-Kettell Post #99 in 1970 and served as Adjutant, Finance Officer and Post Commander. He currently belongs to Cottreal-Warner Post #942, and is a member of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron #1830.

Mr. Morrill was elected Monroe County Commander in 1980, the first Vietnam Era veteran elected to such office. He served as editor of the Monroe County *Legionnaire* newspaper and Membership Chairman, as well as District Historian, Finance Officer, By-Laws Chairman and Seventh District Commander.

Mr. Morrill served on the State-level Department Membership Team, as Department Resolutions Chairman, and as President of the State American Legion Press Association. In 1998, he was elected State (Department) Commander, served as Chairman of four state conventions, and has been a delegate to every State Convention since 1978. He currently serves on the Department Executive Committee.

Nationally, Mr. Morrill has served on the National Economics Commission, Veterans Planning and Coordinating Committee, Policy Coordination and Action Group, the Citizens Flag Alliance, as Chairman of the National Public Relations Commission, the Convention Site Commission and the National Internal Affairs Commission, the National Commander's Advisory Committee, the National American Legion Press Association and the Past Department Commander's Club. In 2003, he traveled to Israel on behalf of the Jewish War Veterans, and to Guam, Okinawa, Taiwan, France and Germany with the American Legion National Commander in 2011-2012.

Mr. Morrill was employed by Eastman Kodak for 23 years and worked for the state headquarters of the American Legion for nine years as Finance Director. He currently serves as a part time security guard. In his spare time, he is an amateur genealogist and is the direct descendent of eight Revolutionary War veterans.

In 1980, Mr. Morrill married the former Mary Lynn Perrotta. They are the proud parents of Robert and Sarah, and grandparents of Irie, Mason and Cameron.



ROBERT L. "BOB" MORRILL IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JOSEPH E. ROBACH







LEE BLACKMON

Sergeant Lee Blackmon enlisted in the United States Marine Corps at age 19 and was deployed to Vietnam, where he served active duty for one year as platoon sergeant, squad and fire team leader. On September 8, 1970, as platoon sergeant with the 1st Marine Division, he was engaged in Operation Pickens Forest, one of many operations to defeat the Vietcong and the North Vietnam Army. Sergeant Blackmon's platoon received enemy fire and he was shot twice.

After being hospitalized and recovering from his wounds, and having reached the rank of Sergeant, he was discharged from the military because of the severity of his injuries. However, he did not give up, instead found other ways to continue serving his country, including through community advocacy.

Sergeant Blackmon is a Purple Heart recipient and a life member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He has received many other awards for his military service such as the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Vietnam Meritorious Civil Action Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Campaign Medal and Vietnam Wound Medal.

Sergeant Blackmon is the immediate past commander of the Rosedale-Laurelton American Legion Post 483. He joined the post in 2001 and has been a member in good standing for 18 years. Sergeant Blackmon was Post Chaplain from 2011 to 2015 before becoming Post Commander from 2015-2016. In his role as Commander, he started a food pantry program to help community members in need and regularly visits schools, speaking to students about the military and holidays honoring service members like Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. Sergeant Blackmon also goes to the St. Albans VA Hospital to engage vets there in recreational activities.

Sergeant Blackmon had the opportunity to televise his story about the Vietnam War in 2012 on Queens Public Television for a documentary called "So Proudly We Hail," and in 2016 on Access Public Television, in "A Vietnam Veteran's Story."



LEE BLACKMON IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR JAMES SANDERS JR.







ALBERT GOLDBERG

Albert Goldberg, a member of the Greatest Generation, said the years have quickly flown by since he saw combat in World War II over 75 years ago. It seems like only yesterday to him.

Mr. Goldberg had wanted to enlist right after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, but his parents objected. A few weeks later, he was drafted at age 19. By age 20, he was fully immersed in WWII where he was a machine gunner.

Mr. Goldberg, who grew up in Bensonhurst, saw much action in the War. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and recalls the many who were taken prisoner and remembers General Patton saying that no more prisoners would be taken.

In 1945, Mr. Goldberg helped liberate two death camps, including Buchenwald, the infamous death camp described as one of the largest concentration camps built by the Nazis. His Army unit was one of the first to enter Buchenwald. "You forget a lot of things over the years, but you never forget something like that...the horror of it all." he recalls.

At Buchenwald, Mr. Goldberg was approached by a young woman speaking a language he did not understand – but he did understand her gestures. The woman frantically beckened him to come with her around the corner of a building. Mr. Goldberg followed her, and was led to a building where dozens of gypsies were being held prisoner. They were grateful to see an American Gl.

Mr. Goldberg received the Legion of Honor Medal, which was given to American GIs by the French government in recognition of their role in liberating France from the Nazis. Despite the award, he does not feel like a hero. Mr. Goldberg believes that if you have a job, you do it.

After the War, Mr. Goldberg returned home, lived with his parents for a year, and worked in the shipping department at the Bulova Watch Company. He eventually took a position with the U.S. Post Office and worked there for over 40 years until his retirement.

Today, Mr. Goldberg enjoys life. He spends time speaking to young students in school, is active in several clubs and enjoys going to dinner once a week with his friend, Maime.



ALBERT GOLDBERG IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR DIANE J. SAVINO







Joe Bello is a native New Yorker, born in Elmhurst, Queens, who enlisted in the United States Navy/Naval Reserves in 1984. He served for 11 years on various commands at sea and on land, including the USS South Carolina (CGN-37), USS Mahlon S. Tisdale (FFG-27) and Reserve Recruiting Duty at Fort Schuyler in the Bronx.

Mr. Bello was honorably discharged in 1995, and during his military service, he received numerous awards, including the National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation and two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals.

After military service, Mr. Bello attended LaGuardia Community College (CUNY) and New York University (NYU), from which he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies. An active and visible advocate within the New York City veterans' community for over 20 years, Mr. Bello is currently the Secretary of the New York City Veteran's Advisory Board, appointed by former Speaker of the City Council Melissa Mark-Viverito and reappointed by current Council Speaker Corey Johnson.

Mr. Bello has worked with various elected officials to assist with and testify on legislation that supports veterans and their families, including expanding membership to the City's Veterans Advisory Board and expanding Veterans Treatment Courts throughout the five boroughs. In 2013, Mr. Bello developed a veteran's platform and briefing paper for all New York City mayoral candidates to better educate them on the needs of New York City's veterans' population.

Mr. Bello is founder of NY MetroVets - an informational site for veterans that shares news and events taking place for veterans, military personnel, and their families in the New York City area. He was also former chair of the City University of New York (CUNY) Veterans Committee and was the Assistant Director of the Veteran Services Office at LaGuardia Community College.

Mr. Bello is married to Vicki Bello (Diaz), a Navy veteran herself, and the Veterans Coordinator for the Theater Development Fund (TDF). They reside in Parkchester in the Bronx.



JOE BELLO IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR LUIS R. SEPÚLVEDA







RYAN LEPORE

Private First Class Ryan Lepore was a freshman at Putnam Valley High School on September 11, 2001 when he made the conscious decision to serve his country. After graduating in 2005, he followed in his brother Richard's footsteps, joining the Army as a 13 Bravo Cannon Crewmember on a M198 Howitzer Cannon. Private First Class Lepore was stationed in Vilseck, Germany with the Second Stryker Cavalry Regiment, and in 2007, he deployed to Iraq for 15 months during "The Surge." Throughout his deployment, Private First Class Lepore went on over 200 missions and was honorably discharged with the rank of Private First Class in 2010.

After returning home, Private First Class Lepore joined VFW Post 391 in Putnam Valley, New York. In 2015, he became Post Commander and is proud to be one of the youngest VFW commanders in the country. Private First Class Lepore's goal is to help Iraq and Afghanistan veterans transition and cope with civilian life. Through his work, he actively encourages the new generation of war heroes who return home to come forward, be recognized and continue to fight for the rights they deserve.

In addition to his work with the VFW, Private First Class Lepore serves his community as the Putnam County Park Ranger. Putnam County has a proud tradition of taking care of its veterans, and Private First Class Lepore is proud to oversee the care of the Veteran's Memorial Park.

Private First Class Lepore's ribbons and decorations include the Expert Drivers Badge, National Defense Service Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Iraqi Freedom Service Medal with Campaign Star.



RYAN LEPORE IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR SUE SERINO







JOHN EVERY

Sergeant John Every of Bloomville, New York, served in the United States Marines from 1948 to 1952. Enlisting as an 18-year-old, Private First Class, Every was assigned to the 3rd Battalion 7th Marines as a mortar gunner.

During the Korean War, Sergeant Every assumed a pivotal role with the 7th Marines, landing at Inchon and fighting to the 38th Parallel. His Unit then made an amphibious landing at Wonsan and engaged in skirmishes with the enemy during the fifty-mile trek to the Chosin Reservoir, where they became surrounded by 120,000 soldiers of the Chinese 9th Army. Over a few short days, Sergeant Every fired over 500 mortar rounds, helping prevent the enemy from overrunning his trapped and vastly outnumbered fellow Marines. Frostbite to both hands and both feet eventually forced his evacuation from the Reservoir.

Sergeant Every's courageous military service earned him a number of honors, including the Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Letter of Commendation Medal w/Combat V, Korean Service Ribbon, United Nations Ribbon, President Syngman Rhee Association Ribbon, New York State Conspicuous Service Cross, and Good Conduct Ribbon.

At home, Sergeant Every is a dedicated community leader, serving as a Town of Kortright Councilman for 25 years, scoutmaster, and county fire marshal. He was chief of the Bloomville Fire Department and captain of the Emergency Squad, retiring after 55 years of exemplary service.

Sergeant Every continues to support his fellow veterans, holding leadership roles with American Legion Post 1379 and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 6292 in Stamford. Currently, he is president of the Northeast Chapter of the Chosin Few.

Sergeant Every has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to his country, his fellow service members and his community. His contributions, both in and out of uniform, are well deserving of our eternal respect and admiration.



JOHN EVERY IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR JAMES L. SEWARD







PETER KURPEAWSKI

Master Sergeant Peter Kurpeawski, a resident of Cornwall, New York, spent 30 years in the United States Army, including two tours in Iraq. He retired with the 10th Mountain Division in 2010.

Master Sergeant Kurpeawski entered United States Basic Training in October 1980 at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and trained as Motor Transport Operator. In May 1981, he was assigned to the 773rd Transportation Company in Fairfield, Connecticut.

In 1986, Master Sergeant Kurpeawski attended Air Assault School in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, with the 101st Airborne. He attended Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Warfare School in 1992 in Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, and Military Police School in 1993, at Rhode Island Military Academy, in Narragansett. In 1994, he transferred to the 812th Military Police Company in Orangeburg, New York. In November 2001, he transferred to the 10th Mountain Division, 10th MP Battalion, in Fort Drum, New York, and was reassigned to the 812th M.P. Company in September 2002.

In January 2003, Master Sergeant Kurpeawski was assigned to the 310th MP Battalion for "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and deployed to Iraq in March 2003, assigned to the 1st Marine Division. In August 2003, he was reassigned to 101st Airborne in Mosul, serving as a Platoon Sergeant. He was reassigned to the 812th MP Company in 2004.

In March 2008, 812th MP Company Master Sergeant Kurpeawski deployed to Iraq, assigned to the 1st Marine Division in Fallujah. He served as 812th MP Company Operations Sergeant, and was redeployed to Mosul in May 2009.

Master Sergeant Kurpeawski was reassigned to the 812th MP in June 2009 before retiring in 2010. He has received many military awards, including two Bronze Stars, a Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal 2nd Award, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal 3rd Award and Air Assault Wings.

Master Sergeant Kurpeawski has been a member of the American Legion Post #353 in Cornwall since 2004 and Commander since 2011. He helped create the Cornwall Medal of Honor Memorial in 2015 and has been involved in the renovation of the Civil War Cannon at Veterans Triangle. He is responsible for all ceremonial events including Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day and Medal of Honor Day.



PETER KURPEAWSKI IS NAMED TO
THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME
BY SENATOR JAMES SKOUFIS





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VETERANS HALOFFAME

WILLIAM H. ROBINSON

Sergeant William "Hannibal" Robinson or "Hannabe" is a Deacon, mentor, trailblazer and a proud veteran of the United States Army. We are proud to present him as Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' Inductee to the 2019 Veterans' Hall of Fame.

Sergeant Robinson was born in Amelia, Virginia in 1923. One of eight, Sergeant Robinson always had a true sense of patriotism and duty, enlisting in the military at age 17.

In 1941, Sergeant Robinson joined the Army and was stationed in Germany during WWII, which allowed him to travel throughout Europe. His units were comprised of approximately 500 men and known as the "Quarter Master Trucking Company." Sergeant Robinson was responsible for driving through active war zones, recovering casualties, transporting wounded soldiers to safety, and other duties as assigned, all while risking his life to save fellow soldiers. Many soldiers were saved due to Sergeant Robinson's skillful driving, attention, and bravery.

For his service, selflessness, and heroism, Sergeant Robinson was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Services Medal and the European, African, Middle East Service Ribbon.

After receiving an honorable discharge in 1945, Sergeant Robinson settled in Greenburgh, New York and married the love of his life, Elise Bank. They were married for 45 years and had six children.

Sergeant Robinson had numerous job positions over the years, but none made him as proud as serving in the Army. In 1973, Sergeant Robinson was sworn into the Greenburgh Police Auxiliary, where he served for 23 years, beaming with pride when wearing his uniform. In 1995, Sergeant Robinson became an ordained Deacon and is an active member of the Union Baptist Church in Greenburgh, where he also serves on the Deacon Board.

Sergeant Robinson resides in White Plains and has 21 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren, and 1 great grandchild.

Sergeant William Robinson is a pillar in the community, his church, and his family. He loves his family and his country, and is extraordinarily proud of his service. Today, we salute Sergeant Robinson and thank him for his service.



WILLIAM H. ROBINSON IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS







SULLIVAN ALOIS

Sullivan Alois of Schenectady is a former Captain in the United States Army who served in combat during the Vietnam War and in the Dominican Republic.

Captain Alois was a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division and was wounded in 1965 while fighting in the Dominican Republic revolution during Operation Power Pack, receiving his first Purple Heart. He served in the Vietnam War from February 1968 to February 1969. For the first six months of his service in Vietnam, Captain Alois was with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. After receiving Special Forces Advanced Operations and Techniques Training, he served the second six months of his deployment in Vietnam as a member of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). As a MACV Mobile Advisory Team Leader, Captain Alois was part of a Special Forces unit that lived with and trained a South Vietnamese rifle company.

Captain Alois received his second Purple Heart while serving in Vietnam. He also received the Combat Infantrymen's Badge, Air Medal for Valor, the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, New York State Cross for Conspicuous Service and Gallantry, and the Vietnam Veterans' Presidential Citation for Outstanding Community Service from President Jimmy Carter.

A lifelong resident of Schenectady, after the Vietnam War, Captain Alois returned home to a career as a science teacher in the Schenectady City School District, including serving as a principal at Schenectady High School. He has traveled to six continents, 55 countries and 48 states.

Captain Alois is married and has three daughters, with a grandchild on the way.



SULLIVAN ALOIS IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR JAMES N. TEDISCO





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VETERANE HALLOF FAME

ROBERT A. NOONAN

Sergeant Robert A. Noonan was born on June 15, 1944 in Flushing, New York. With a desire to give back, Sergeant Noonan joined the Hempstead Volunteer Fire Department in 1962, later enlisting in the United States Marine Corps on October 21, 1964. After graduating Boot Camp at Camp Lejuene, Sergeant Noonan was stationed in Hawaii. Shortly after his arrival in Hawaii, he and his Unit were sent to Vietnam.

Over the course of his Marine Corps career, Sergeant Noonan received numerous honors, including the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnamese Campaign Medal, the Vietnamese Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. After serving in Vietnam, in 1966, Sergeant Noonan graduated from the U.S. Army Intelligence School at Fort Holabird. He finished his service at Camp Lejuene as a member of the HQ Company, HQ Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, and was honorably discharged as a Sergeant on August 29, 1967.

In his post-military career, Sergeant Noonan was an electrician in Local 25 IBEW until his retirement in 2008. He is married to his wife, Linda, and has two children, Robert and Tricia, and three grandchildren, Robert Jr., Ainsley and Mackenzie.



ROBERT A. NOONAN IS NAMED TO THE NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME BY SENATOR KEVIN THOMAS



Why Veterans are Important to our Nation's History and Future

By Elizabeth Claire Palmer

It is a blustery fall day, the air cool and crisp, the otherwise desolate city landscape punctuated by the occasional splash of vibrant foliage. I sit in the passenger seat of the car, the effervescent autumn light filtering across my lap through the open window. As the car comes to a rest before a red light, I catch a glimpse of the vehicle in front of me. An old station wagon, the paint chipped liberally and covered in rust, the bumper is adorned with three weather-worn stickers. The first, barely visible through years of wear, states that the driver had valiantly served in Vietnam. The second, less dilapidated adhesive establishes that he is also the proud parent of a Marine. The third one succinctly proclaims, "If you love your freedom, thank a veteran."

A profound statement...a catalyst for thought.

If not for America's veterans, we all would be living a vastly different reality.

For over two centuries, our veterans have fought tirelessly to protect and preserve the democratic ideals upon which our nation was founded.

William Shakespeare once mused, "What is past is prologue."

That statement is echoed through the many incarnations of America previous decades have seen. As aptly expressed by those patriotic bumper stickers, one era of veterans protects our liberty and passes the torch of service to succeeding generations.

From the young marine in Normandy to the tanker in Kuwait, the ensign at Leyte Gulf to the transport pilot at Khe Sanh, veterans have unfailingly defended our honor, meeting every crisis with poise and perseverance. As the Air Force motto declares, "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer."

Veterans are the authors of our past, the defenders of our present, and the architects of our future. They serve both for those that they hold dear to their hearts, and for those that they have never met. It is a testament to our republic that, according to a national poll, 89 percent of the 2.5 million Iraqi and Afghani veterans would willingly serve again.

Our veterans are directly accountable for the fate of this great nation. By defending our country against adversaries, they help foster an environment conducive to the thinkers and leaders of today and tomorrow. We owe them our rights to vote, express opinions without fear of retribution, pursue educational goals, and practice our faith of choice.

Be it curing cancer, AIDS, and other global health epidemics, or finding solutions to hunger and poverty, we can build a better tomorrow, thanks to the selfless sacrifices of previous generations.

While the past requires reflection, the future entails hope, belief, and courage. Through the course of history, America's veterans have united an ongoing legacy with optimism and immutable valor, spurring our nation's promises to new heights.

Every day an American soldier renounces the guarantee of physical safety, and eschews the comforts of home, to preserve the rights and protect the lives of current and future generations alike.

In the moving words of the late Father Denis Edward O'Brien, United States Marine,

"It is the soldier, not the reporter, Who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet, Who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the organizer, Who gave us the freedom to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, Who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, Who allows the protester to burn the flag."

The veterans' experience is like a prism; the soldier's dedication and sacrifice like a shaft of light refracted back to us in the form of our democratic character. Veterans do not serve for recognition or praise; they wear the uniform because they love America and are proud of what it stands for.

Thanks to them, our nation was created on a firm foundation of freedom and equality. Our present day world, while challenged amid global instability, nonetheless remains steadfastly free.

As for the future? There are no guarantees. But if our legacy is any indication, the likelihood is that America will remain the land of the free, because it has always been the home of the brave.