

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



Dear Veteran,

One of my greatest honors as State Senator is to recognize the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Congratulations on your nomination to my annual Veterans Recognition Program,

which recognizes your extraordinary achievements in both military and civilian life.

As the daughter of a U.S. Air Force veteran and the mother-in-law of a West Point graduate who served as a U.S. Army Green Beret, I am eternally grateful for the commitment and sacrifice of our veterans and military families.

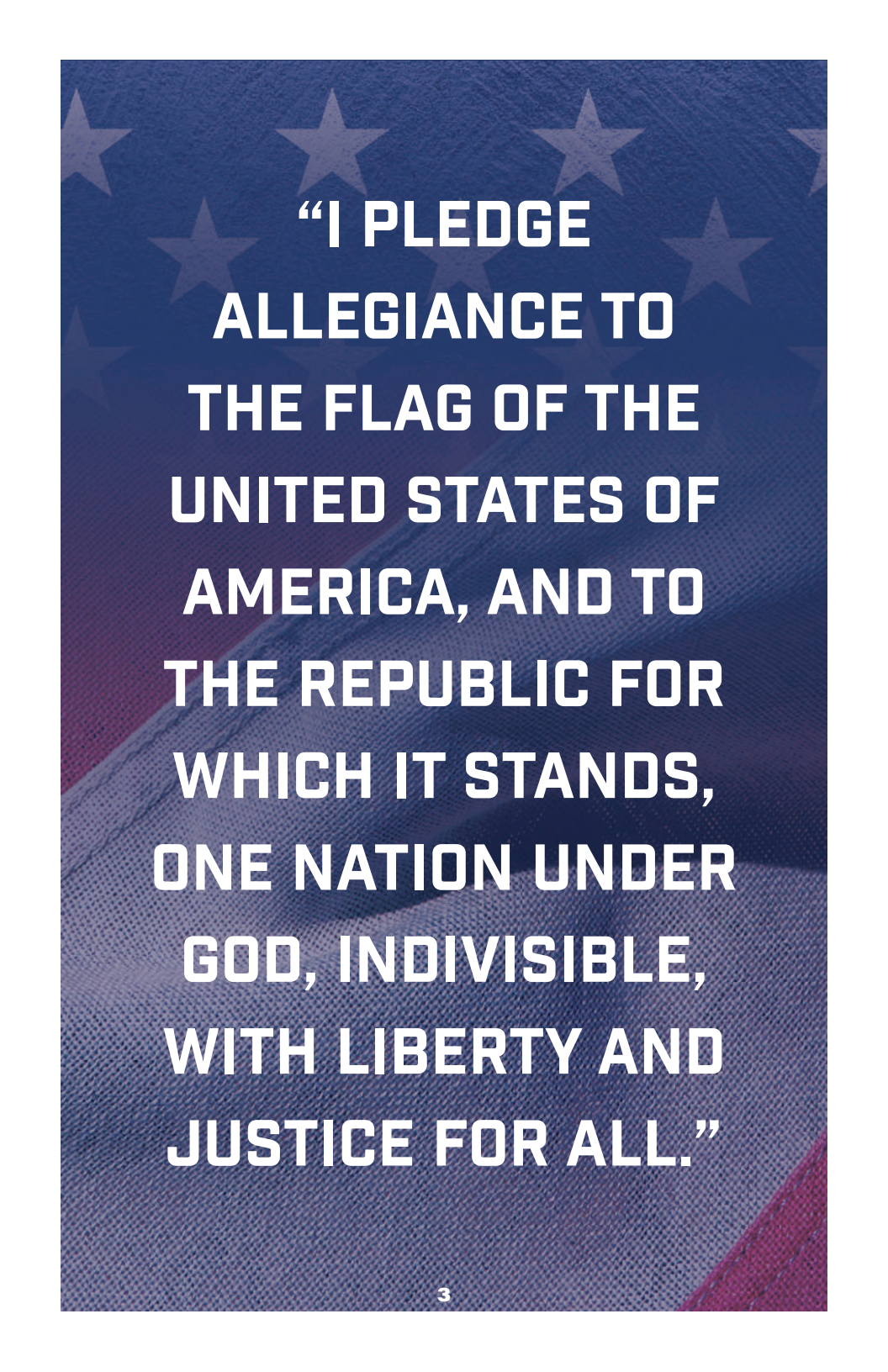
The proud Americans of the 54th District are indebted to you for your honorable service and outstanding contributions to our country, State, and the communities we call home. May God bless you and your family and the United States of America.

With respect and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pam".

Pamela A. Helming
Senator, 54th District



The background of the image is a close-up, slightly blurred view of the American flag. The blue field with white stars is prominent in the upper half, while the red and white stripes are visible in the lower half. The text is overlaid on this background.

**“I PLEDGE
ALLEGIANCE TO
THE FLAG OF THE
UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA, AND TO
THE REPUBLIC FOR
WHICH IT STANDS,
ONE NATION UNDER
GOD, INDIVISIBLE,
WITH LIBERTY AND
JUSTICE FOR ALL.”**

OUR FORCES

ARMY

The largest and oldest service in the U.S. military, the Army provides the ground forces that protect the United States.

MARINE CORPS

A component of the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps maintains amphibious and ground units for contingency and combat operations.

NAVY

On, above and below the water, the Navy is America's forward-deployed force and is a major deterrent to aggression around the world.

OUR FORCES

AIR FORCE

The Air Force provides a rapid, flexible, and lethal air and space capability that can deliver forces anywhere in the world within hours.

COAST GUARD

The Coast Guard provides law and maritime safety enforcement, marine and environmental protection and military naval support. Part of the Department of Homeland Security during peacetime, the Coast Guard operates under the Navy during times of war.

SPACE FORCE

The Space Force organizes, trains, and equips space forces in order to protect the U.S. and allied interests in space and provide space capabilities to the joint force.

NATIONAL GUARD

Comprised of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard, the National Guard is a versatile force, supporting combat missions, domestic emergencies, humanitarian efforts, homeland security operations and more.

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NOMINEES

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



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VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



JOHN HARVEY CONNELLY

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
7 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY

RICHARD B. MILNE
Monroe County Legislator and
Village of Honeoye Falls Mayor

What inspired you to join the military?

In 1960, after graduating from Aviation Mechanic School and unable to afford college, I met with a USAF recruiter, took the entry exam, and enlisted. I trained at Lackland AFB and Chanute AFB for Aircraft Instrument Repair. Best decision I made.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

In April 1961, I received my first airbase assignment after Tech School. We flew to Greenland. From my window seat, I saw only snow, a few aircraft, and buildings built on big blocks. A large sign read: "Welcome to Thule Greenland, the top of the world." One of those elevated buildings became my home for the next year. On the tarmac were about 10 F-101 Voodoos, 6 F-102 Delta Daggers, a few C-41 cargo planes, and several rescue helicopters. These were the aircraft I serviced with my instrument training.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Communicating with men and women from different backgrounds made for interesting conversations. One of my drill instructors said, "It's harder to listen and learn something than to speak and say the wrong thing... sometimes silence is golden." I have tried to follow that lesson in my life.

What do you love most about America?

Our freedoms. In the USA, we can drive almost anywhere without many restrictions, on well-maintained highways and tollways. Travel abroad is rewarding, but here in the USA, we have by far the best all-around freedoms.

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John Harvey Connelly (continued)

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

John Connelly has had an impact on my life through the American Legion and my interactions with him on projects and concerns around our village community. John has "given back" in his work with the veterans, but also to the community, as their business supports many local charities and needs, especially Boy/Girl Scouts. John is a quiet leader within the community. He is a man of action and a man of deep integrity and love for his fellow man. His honor and love of country is as strong as I've seen.

Mr. Connelly is a two-time Commander of American Legion Post 664 in Honeoye Falls, contributing greatly to the success of the Post. He and his family own the Dipper Dan Ice Cream shop in the Village of Honeoye Falls. For his service, Mr. Connelly received the Air Force Good Conduct with 1 BR Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon, and Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

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ROBERT "BOB" MERKEL

Specialist, U.S. Army
1.5 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY
KATHRYN BAILEY

What inspired you to join the military?

I enlisted in order to choose my branch of service during the draft. I chose the Army because my father also served in the Army.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Arriving in Vietnam not knowing what to expect, and again at the base. Also, the poverty that surrounded living at the base.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Adaptability.

What do you love most about America?

Freedom, especially the freedom to vote.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Bob has demonstrated kindness, compassion and is always lending a helping hand to everyone he meets. After the passing of my husband, he volunteered and showed up every day to help me with yard work, painting and moving when I sold my house. He has done the same with the seniors in his apartment building, checking up on them and driving them to the store, and he has never asked or expected anything in return.

Mr. Merkel regularly volunteers at a local soup kitchen by cooking, cleaning, and transporting folks to and from the meal site. He also volunteers at blood drives through the American Red Cross and at Honor Flight events. For his service, Mr. Merkel received the Bronze Star.

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MELISSA S. SPOON

Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
20 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY
LYNN R. CHATFIELD
Wolcott Town Supervisor

What inspired you to join the military?

I really don't know what inspired me to join. I decided in my junior year of high school that I wanted to join and that was always the plan. I wasn't sure I would like it, but it turned out to be an amazing decision. My parents taught us that we have to work hard for what we have, and they are still showing me that. Although they were not happy about their daughter joining the service, they were supportive, and I know they are very proud.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The first time I saluted the flag during the National Anthem. In that moment, it became very real that military sacrifice is real and so very important. I am very proud of my service and thankful for all who continue to serve.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

More than anything, I learned that being 15 minutes early is on time, and being on time means you're late. I have passed that trait on to my kids, who always want to be early to everything.

What do you love most about America?

I love that we get to be whatever we want to be. Being a woman in the military made me understand we have a great country and we need to be proud of what we have done. Being in the service made me understand the importance of fighting for what you believe in and being thankful for freedom every day.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

I recently met Melissa through the Wayne County 4-H program, where her daughter attended Supervisor for a Day. After retiring from the Air Force, Melissa chose to work at a non-profit, using her leadership skills to help mold the lives of the next generation. Melissa has already made a lasting impact on the program and community, and she is a true asset to Wayne County.

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Melissa S. Spoon (continued)

Ms. Spoon currently serves as 4-H Youth Development Team Leader for Wayne County 4-H, where she has secured grants for various initiatives which will have positive impacts on our community for years to come. For her service, Ms. Spoon received the Meritorious Service Medal, as well as various commendation medals and achievement medals.

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FRANCIS X. FREY

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
23 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **LISA BROWER**

What inspired you to join the military?

My father would take me to the Veterans Day parade every year. I enlisted in the Marine Corps as I thought they were very well represented and I admired their dedication and honor.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The moments I remember most were helping the people of the countries that we were sent to. The Vietnamese people were very warm, accepting and appreciative of us being in their country. It was an honor to help and serve in that capacity.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Honor, respect for human life, and the willingness to work hard. When you are faced with adversity, you can overcome it with the willingness to find a solution and rely on your faith. Also, be willing to do what it takes to get the job done. Support of family is also most important.

What do you love most about America?

We are truly blessed to live in this country where we have the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and all of the freedoms that have been bestowed upon us.

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Francis X. Frey (continued)

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Our father enlisted in the Marine Corps as a private and was promoted to Sergeant in Korea, where he was wounded in action. He was commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant after graduating Officer Candidate School, serving at Parris Island, Lakehurst, and Camp Lejeune during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He earned his bachelor's degree from Maryland University before attending war college and linguistic school. Selected as one of the few Marine advisers to the South Vietnamese Marines, he deployed to Vietnam in 1965. He later returned as a Battalion Commander, leading a battalion landing team.

Mr. Frey is actively involved in local politics, and has served as both an usher and religious education teacher at his family's church, St. Gregory's. For his service, Mr. Frey received two Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star, and the Navy Commendation Medal, as well as a Silver Star nomination after enduring 24 hours of crossfire while calling for air support.

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RALPH CONKLIN

Technical Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
21 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **PAUL NEWHOOK**

What inspired you to join the military?

Joined from family tradition.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The comradery of fellow service members, lifelong friendships, and working as a K9 handler and instructor stationed in three countries and four states, including multiple temporary duty assignments and deployments.

What do you love most about America?

Generations of my family have served and fought in every conflict the U.S. has been in. I have been to several countries and take great pride in my service and our freedoms. That's why the flag is proudly displayed and worn by me.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

During his tenure as Commander of VFW Post 7414, Ralph greatly enhanced the quality of the Post. He established a great rapport with the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and made sure programs were instated to enrich veterans in our community.

Mr. Conklin is an active member of various veterans' organizations, including Canandaigua American Legion Post 256 and Canandaigua VFW Post 7414, receiving numerous honors for his work. For his service, Mr. Conklin received numerous honors including the Air Force Commendation Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, and Air Force Good Conduct Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters.

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JACOB "JAKE" CICERO

Sergeant, U.S. Army
9 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **GARY BUCHANAN**

What inspired you to join the military?

Seeing others fight for our country made me want to fight terrorists/terrorism.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Afghanistan was stressful yet fun. Building a bond with brothers that could never be broken.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Time is to be cherished. Value the time you get. One hand washes the other.

What do you love most about America?

True Americans want to protect their homeland and will do whatever it takes to win. The pride that true Americans provide will never be defeated.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Jake is someone that we can depend on. He is always there if we need him. Jake has always said he is out there to help people and try to make a difference. I have heard nothing but good from his fellow deputies about him. Jake is just a great guy and father who will help anyone. His adult life has been only to serve the people of Livingston County.

Mr. Cicero continues to serve our community as a Livingston County Deputy Sheriff and SWAT Team member. For his service, Mr. Cicero received the Army Commendation Medal with "C" Device, four Army Achievement Medals, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal.

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WALFORD "WALLY" ANDERSON (HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY)

Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **DAVE BRISBANE**

What inspired you to join the military?

Wally's desire to join the Marine Corps was inspired by an uncle who served in WWII.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

While stationed at Henderson Hall (headquarters of the Marine Corps), he often posted the guards at the Iwo Jima Monument in Arlington National Cemetery. This, I believe, was a rather sacred place for him and those whose job it was to stand guard at this site.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

From Wally: "At the age of 20, I enlisted in the Marine Corps. There, I learned the true meaning of teamwork. Not only did I learn to take orders, but how to give them with respect and fairness."

What do you love most about America?

Our freedoms and democracy.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Wally served as a positive example of how to live a life that has a positive impact on others.

Following his service, Mr. Anderson had a successful career in the manufacturing field. After retiring, he worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant and Geriatric Care Specialist at Thompson Hospital, once being recognized as Employee of the Year. He regularly gathered veterans for Flag Day and Veterans Day remembrances on the units of the Continuing Care Center. If the veteran couldn't make it to the remembrance, he went to their bedside.

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G. FREDERICK SCHUTZ [HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY]

Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Air Force / U.S. Army
31 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **PAUL NEWHOOK**

What inspired you to join the military?

Enlisted from family tradition.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The friends he made, and watching his family (cousins, nephews, great-nephews) join the service.

What do you love most about America?

Fred was the epitome of a veteran helping his community.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Fred was instrumental in helping keep the VA open in Canandaigua as a member of the CARES Committee. He was an inspiration to me to join the military and follow in his footsteps.

Following his service, Mr. Schutz served as both an American Legion and VFW Commander. He received numerous awards (many of which, his family recalls, he was too humble to accept) for his service to Canandaigua-area veterans, including Legionnaire of the Year. His advocacy was critical in ensuring the Canandaigua VA remained open. Mr. Schutz was the longtime owner of Canandaigua Brew Company on Phoenix Street, as well as a volunteer firefighter. For his service, Mr. Schutz received the Bronze Star, Korean Service Medal, and Legion of Merit.

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GERARDO "JERRY" REYES

E4, U.S. Army
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **STEPHEN J. MILLER**

What inspired you to join the military?

Serving in the Army was something I always wanted to do as a child. I always knew I would serve.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

I was among the first 1,000 assault troops that went into Iraq. I saw active combat for almost two full years of my Army service.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

The biggest lesson I learned in the Army was accountability. Before going in, I was very unorganized, and when serving, I learned organization and how to lead and work with people as a squad leader for two years.

What do you love most about America?

Freedom of speech.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Jerry is a great employee and member of his community. He is an excellent father and husband. He works hard every day and never complains about his work. He is a respectful and tough dude and inspires others by example. I have worked with Jerry for over a decade at Van Bortel Ford.

Mr. Reyes' unit was one of the first to see combat in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He served in an Airborne/Mortar Division. Mr. Reyes also worked in security at the Smithsonian after his tour of duty. For his service, Mr. Reyes received the Army Commendation Medal with Valor.

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JUSTIN COGSWELL

Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps
8 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **MATTHEW TUCKER**

What inspired you to join the military?

I had a rough childhood and was looking for a new life. Soon after September 11, I went to the recruiting office and enlisted.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Hearing C-4 go off in the demo range for the first time is a feeling I'll never forget. It is a sound that goes through your whole body.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Honor, courage, and commitment.

What do you love most about America?

The freedoms and liberties we enjoy. Too often, people don't understand the sacrifices made to maintain them.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Justin is a great person with a heart of gold. He has always been the type to put others ahead of his own self. He empowers people to do better and to take control. Since returning home, he has done nothing but help others out with vehicles, mental health, and housing.

Along with fellow Marines, Justin founded Operation Build Up, a 501(c)(3) organization which purchases used vehicles, repairs them, and gifts them to veterans and first responders in need, many of whom are experiencing homelessness. To date, the organization has repaired and gifted nearly 350 vehicles to those in need. Operation Build Up's efforts have been featured by various national news organizations.

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VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

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ROBERT "BOB" WOLTER, JR.

Sergeant Major, U.S. Army
23 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
CHRISTOPHER BRIDENBAUGH

What inspired you to join the military?

Love of country.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

My first parachute jump, and getting my jump wings.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

What leadership with a sense of duty means.

What do you love most about America?

Freedom.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Bob has led the Livingston County PFC Dwyer Peer Support Program for approximately two years. He puts the well-being of the program's veterans at the top of his priorities. He has brought together the veteran community from all across Western New York, not just Livingston County. Through his tireless efforts to bring support to veterans in serious need, he has also cultivated friendship and respect for these veterans. Having had numerous discussions with Bob, it quickly became clear he is a selfless leader with a keen focus on the welfare of those he interacts with. I cannot think of a better candidate for recognition.

Following his Army service, Mr. Wolter served as a member of the New York State National Guard as a full-time soldier, achieving the rank of Sergeant Major. Currently, Mr. Wolter serves as a Veteran Engagement Specialist for Livingston County. For his service, Mr. Wolter received the Army Commendation Medal.

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GERALD VICTOR SCHADT

[HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY]

Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
EILEEN LOUISE MIGLIACCIO

What inspired you to join the military?

Dad was eager to serve his country. He wished to enlist in the Marines, but did not want to wait two weeks until he turned 18, so he walked down the hall at the recruitment center and joined the Navy.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

My father never forgot the torpedo hits, the kamikaze planes destroying ships, the burials at sea, and the accidental and horrific killing of one of his shipmates which he witnessed. He kept a detailed journal of his life on the USS *Carolina*, which we have scanned and submitted to the BB55 museum.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Life in the Navy taught Dad to look at life with maturity, dignity and courage. He never gave up on fighting "the good fight."

What do you love most about America?

Dad embraced freedom. Freedom to do what was needed to achieve goals and happiness.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

My father was a man of dignity, strength, and courage; a true life's role model. He labored at Kodak supporting six children by lifting 50-gallon drums filled with toxic chemicals for film processing. He often came home with orange-tinted skin, even after showering.

A member of the Greatest Generation, Mr. Schadt served in the Pacific Theater of World War II, including in the Philippines and the Battles of Iwo Jima and Saipan. For his service, Mr. Schadt received the Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 11 stars, Philippine Liberation Medal with 1 star, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and American Defense Service Medal.

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ROBERT ALBRECHT

Master Sergeant
U.S. Marine Corps / U.S. Air Force
35 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **MICHELE ALBRECHT**

What inspired you to join the military?

Seeing my uncles serve and the desire to serve my country.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Graduating Marine Corps basic training.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Many aspects of aircraft maintenance, as well as the fellowship of serving along others.

What do you love most about America?

The desire to strive to do our best and to defend and help those less fortunate.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Robert has given me a sense of honor and patriotism, helping us raise our children to respect those that served. He also has been able to give back and share his experiences with the youth in the area.

Mr. Albrecht served in both Operation Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom as a member of the Marine Corps and Air Force, respectively. He continues to serve his community through involvement with his church. For his service, Mr. Albrecht received various honors, including the National Defense Service Medal and the Sea Service Ribbon.

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BENJAMIN M. CORKE

Aviation Ordnance Technician
U.S. Marine Corps
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **TAMMY J. LOZIPONE**

What inspired you to join the military?

A proud family tradition of military service, enlisting in the Marine Corps at the age of 18, specializing in aviation weapons systems.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The adrenaline of preparing aircraft to drop bombs to kill Osama Bin Laden. Ultimately, Bin Laden was killed the night before the planned air attack in a raid.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

A meticulous attention to detail that is crucial in both combat and the demanding world of welding inspection.

What do you love most about America?

The freedom to pursue the American Dream and the opportunity for individual liberty, success, and upward social mobility through hard work. Also, having the chance to achieve prosperity and happiness without being confined to a predetermined path.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Ben embodies "Once a Marine, Always a Marine." Every day, he displays integrity, respect for human dignity, and a steadfast commitment to his obligations. He is the person you can always count on to help, a true jack of all trades who can fix anything. When his wife purchased City View Equestrian in Bloomfield 11 years ago, the farm was in disrepair and needed endless improvements. Despite working full time, Ben has been there every day making repairs, cleaning stalls, and doing whatever is needed to support Mary and ensure her woman-owned business thrives. His dedication to her success is unmatched, and his calm, encouraging demeanor has also served as a role model for others, including my son.

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Benjamin M. Corke (continued)

Mr. Corke is currently employed by ITT Goulds Pumps as a Weld Engineer. Along with fellow veteran Scott Quick, Mr. Corke founded Forged by Valor, a non-profit organization aiming to provide tuition-free vocational training to veterans. After securing non-profit status and funding sources, the program's first classes are set to launch this fall.

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JAMES HARRY WICKER

Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **JOHN CIPOLLINA**

What inspired you to join the military?

Growing up, I always wanted to be a Marine; to serve my country.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

When I earned my anchor and globe. It was a life-changing moment and changed my life.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Setting goals and discipline.

What do you love most about America?

Freedom and opportunity to be what you want to be.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Jim has served as Chairman of the Challenge 22 committee for the last five years, raising over \$200,000 for veteran suicide prevention/awareness programs. He has personally assisted veterans facing eviction by helping them to clean up and organize their living spaces. Jim participates with the Color Guard and Honor Guard of both the Shortsville and Canandaigua American Legion Posts. Jim and his wife, Joyce, are both certified volunteers at the Canandaigua VA.

Mr. Wicker has held numerous positions of leadership in various veterans' organizations, including currently serving as Sr. Vice Commandant of the Memorial Day Detachment #468, Marine Corps League. In 2024, he was selected as the Detachment's Marine of the Year. Jim's legacy of service continues to be an inspiration to his two grandsons, who are both active duty Marines. For his service, Mr. Wicker received the Good Conduct Medal and National Service Medal.

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JOSHUA A. SNYDER

Sergeant, U.S. Army
5 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **KEVIN E. BECKER**

What inspired you to join the military?

The September 11th attacks were the driving force behind my service.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Serving as an AIT Instructor.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Discipline, hard work, dedication.

What do you love most about America?

The dedication and passion of its people.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

After returning home, Josh chose to continue his mission of serving others, this time on the front lines of his own community. He joined his local fire department, where his commitment to public safety quickly grew. Driven by a desire to do more, Josh pursued advanced medical training, becoming an EMT and then a certified Paramedic and National Registry Paramedic. He embodies the spirit of a true public servant and is a shining example of what it means to protect and care for others.

Josh continues his service to his community as a volunteer firefighter at the South Macedon Fire Department, as well as an EMS Lieutenant at Finger Lakes Ambulance.

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DAVID E. HARCLEROD

Specialist, U.S. Army
2 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **ELAINE HARCLEROD**

How did you react to receiving your draft notice?

I'm going - what else could I do? I loved it - a learning experience.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

When I completed my radio mechanic's course and saw others struggle with the course. I had good teachers.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I learned the lessons of loving others no matter their color or creed and working together. I also learned many repair skills.

What do you love most about America?

That it's free because of what our soldiers did, before and after my service.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

David married me a year after he was honorably discharged from the Army. He was drafted at age 21 and went into service willingly and proudly. Our three children are proud of their dad!

After serving in Europe during the Vietnam War, Mr. Harclerod continued his service to his country and community as a civilian. He is a 47-year member of the American Legion, including serving as Chaplain, Post 0354 Commander, and Livingston County Commander, and a 40-year member of Veterans of Foreign Wars. He has also given back to his community as a 15-year Mount Morris Kiwanis member, Boys' State Coordinator, Boy Scout Leader, and Mount Morris band parent. For his service, Mr. Harclerod received the Good Conduct Medal and Sharp Shooter Badge.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



FRANCIS JUDE CLARK

Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **FRANK SUMNER**

What inspired you to join the military?

Enlisted before the draft as a matter of conscience. Father had been in the U.S. Army.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

The value of teamwork and family, which is most precious to me.

What do you love most about America?

Our freedoms, which were bought at great costs.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Despite the burden of severe PTSD from his service as a Marine, Francis persevered in raising a beautiful family of two daughters and five grandchildren. He has been a bulwark of support for his family and friends, even while suffering and battling depression. He has been a wonderful friend and brother to me and many others, generous and gracious. Francis has not allowed his past to control him, which I attribute to his upbringing, faith in God, and humility.

Mr. Clark served three tours of duty in Vietnam through his term of service, volunteering to deploy for his additional tours. He is an active member of his church and retired after 40 years of employment.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



ROBERT NORMAN WERTH

Specialist, U.S. Army
2 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **DALE R. WERTH**

How did you react to receiving your draft notice?

I was drafted.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The War.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Hard work, teamwork, commitment, and loyalty.

What do you love most about America?

Freedom.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

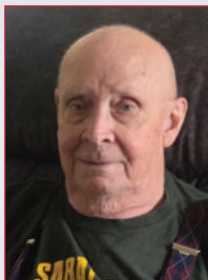
He's my father, so he has been a huge part of my life. His loyalty, work ethic and commitment to his family have been great examples for me to follow as a husband and father.

For his service, Mr. Werth received the Sharpshooter Badge, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, and National Defense Service Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



PETER TREIBLE

Hospital Corpsman First Class, U.S. Navy
9 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **LUKE MOODY**

What inspired you to join the military?

I always knew I wanted to be in the Navy. I enlisted at the very first opportunity at the age of 17 in high school into the Naval Reserve, and then when I graduated, I switched and went into active duty.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

I sailed around the world on the USS *Vogelgesang* (DD-862). We departed Norfolk, Virginia, and went through the Panama Canal and on to Vietnam, before returning through the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea. On that trip, I served as the single medical support personnel for the ship. One night, a sailor came to me and I noticed he was showing signs of appendicitis. They sent a helicopter for the sailor and he was given emergency surgery. The incident was reported in the Navy Times as a lifesaving event.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

The ability to be resourceful, react to emergencies and make quick decisions. On a ship, you have very limited supplies and personnel. You have to make quick decisions and treat patients with whatever resources you have. This translated into my civilian career as a nurse. I was able to take action quickly and help all of my patients.

What do you love most about America?

I love the opportunities that we have. In my life, it started with the opportunity to serve in the Navy, which allowed me the opportunity to teach/train at a nursing college. This experience allowed me to launch my career as a nurse at Strong and in the correctional facilities. Having a great career allowed me to give back as a member of the VFW and Boy Scouts to my community.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Peter Treible (continued)

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Peter has made a lasting impact on the Lima community, as well as Monroe and Livingston counties, through decades of service both in and out of uniform. Beyond his military service, he devoted more than 30 years to nursing, caring for patients and mentoring young healthcare professionals. Through his dedication, Peter has become a respected and beloved figure whose influence continues to shape lives in Lima and beyond.

Following his service, Mr. Treible entered the healthcare field, serving as a nurse for over 30 years, including at Strong Hospital, the Monroe County Jail, and Groveland State Correctional. Additionally, Mr. Treible is a proud member of Lima VFW Post 26 and has served as an Assistant Boy Scout Leader.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



JAMES W. SANFORD

Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:

SAMANTHA SANFORD-MEREAU

What inspired you to join the military?

Enlisted at age 17, feeling like it was an honor to serve.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

While injured, Bob Hope and his show came through the infirmary to entertain the troops.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

He became resilient, strong, and brave because of those experiences.

What do you love most about America?

"We are blessed because we are free."

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

My father has always been an amazing example of what hard work and perseverance look like. His push and support helped mold me into the person I am today. My dad is the one people go to for advice, direction, and validation. He has impacted so many people in Clifton Springs, where he was born and raised, as well as countless others lucky enough to cross his path. My dad makes an impression everywhere he goes and is a proud American who loves his family, his community, and his country.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

James W. Sanford (continued)

Mr. Sanford enlisted in the Air Force at the age of 17, eventually being assigned as a dog handler in Vietnam alongside his K-9, Prince. He is a member of American Legion Post 457 in Phelps, as well as a "life" member of VFW Post 44 in Clifton Springs and the Vietnam Dog Handlers Association. He leads many veterans-related efforts in Clifton Springs, including coordinating banners for Memorial and Veterans Days and managing multiple poppy programs. Currently, he is spearheading the construction of a monument in the village dedicated to local deceased servicemembers and Gold Star families. For his service, Mr. Sanford received the Air Force Presidential Unit Citation, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device, Republic of Vietnam RVN Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm, Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Bronze Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and National Defense Service Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



ANTHONY PETE PETRUCCI, SR. (HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY)

Corporal, U.S. Army
3 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
ANTHONY PETE PETRUCCI, JR.

What inspired you to join the military?

Pete and his brother both left school before graduating and enlisted in order to support their family.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Pete was with the Army engineers who held off Nazi forces at Ludendorff Bridge during the Battle of the Bulge until General Patton and his forces arrived.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Entering the service helped Pete become more outgoing and decisive. He was only a kid when he went in, and grew a lot during his service.

What do you love most about America?

Pete loved everything about this country. His father emigrated from Italy, so he really valued our freedoms, including freedom of speech.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

My father was an enormous role model for me, including how to research different things and how to invest. He made me a good person, showing kindness to all and being careful of things too good to be true.

A member of the Greatest Generation, Mr. Petrucci served with the 291st Engineer Combat Battalion in World War II. Following his service, Mr. Petrucci was a longtime member of the Sons of Italy Lodge #2397 and the Winnek American Legion Post 396. For his service, Mr. Petrucci received various awards, including the Distinguished Unit Badge and Good Conduct Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



JOHN FALBO

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army Reserve
8 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
CRISTINA FALBO

What inspired you to join the military?

The September 11th attacks had a profound impact on me. I felt a deep sense of duty to stand up and serve my country. Within weeks, I enlisted in the Army into a nearby Reserve Unit in Mattydale so I could continue my education while training to do my part to protect our Nation. After we invaded Iraq in 2003, I took a leave of absence from college to finish my job training so I could deploy, but when I returned, the unit was already gone. I come from a long line of veterans. My paternal grandfather and his four brothers all served in WWII at the same time in different theatres and were dubbed the Hasbrouck Height's "Fighting Falbos." I recently learned I have ancestry traced to a Revolutionary War soldier. I am very proud to add to my lineage of patriots.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

I have many memories, good and bad, but there is one person I think of most often. His name was George, an Iraqi citizen and construction contractor, and also a Catholic Iraqi living on the outskirts of Baghdad. I met him through my work rebuilding schools in Western Baghdad. He wanted to help rebuild his country and bid on many of the projects I worked on. We became great friends during my time there, as he was forever grateful for what he considered a liberation.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I learned the value of discipline, teamwork, and leadership under the most difficult circumstances. Serving in Civil Affairs in Iraq showed me how important it is to build trust, communicate across cultures, and find solutions even in the midst of chaos and conflict. I also developed the ability to lead others under pressure, make critical decisions quickly, and never lose sight of the people we are there to serve.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

John Falbo (continued)

What do you love most about America?

The freedom and opportunity that so many of us have sworn to protect. Having served both overseas in the military and at home in law enforcement, I've seen firsthand the sacrifices people are willing to make so that others can live safely and pursue their dreams. I am grateful to God for being born in this country.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

As John's wife, I have had the honor of watching his journey of service from soldier to law enforcement leader to town manager, and I can say without hesitation that his impact has reached not only our family, but countless others in our community, our country, and even abroad. Through every chapter, whether in combat zones, investigations, organizational crises, or community leadership, John has shown that true leadership means sacrifice, integrity, and compassion. To our children and me, he is a hero, and to the wider community, he is a patriot, protector, and builder of a stronger future.

Mr. Falbo currently serves as Town Manager for the Town of Canandaigua. Prior to this role, he spent nearly 20 years in law enforcement, rising to the rank of Chief Deputy and briefly serving as Interim Sheriff. He has also served as Chair of the Finger Lakes Law Enforcement Academy and been recognized for his service by many community organizations. For his service, Mr. Falbo received various awards, including the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Achievement Medal, and Army Good Conduct Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



KENNETH JUERGENS

Colonel, U.S. Army
25 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:

JOHN HARTMAN
Village of Churchville Mayor

What inspired you to join the military?

I was a Cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point, motivated by a deep sense of service to the country. My parents emigrated from Germany and Scotland, became citizens, and instilled in me an early appreciation for the greatness of America and the obligation to give back. Born in Canada and brought here at age three, I was naturalized in 1975, an experience that further shaped my sense of duty. I was also strongly influenced by a high school mentor, a Reserve Major whose father taught at West Point, who guided and inspired me to pursue this path of service.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Taking Battalion Command in the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum and the awesome responsibility of command, serving my soldiers and their families.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Self-discipline, selfless service, time management, critical decision making, communications, leadership, caring and mentoring.

What do you love most about America?

America is the greatest nation on Earth. I have traveled the world and there is no nation on this planet that is like the United States. The freedom we enjoy and the ability to achieve is unmatched. My father taught me that in America, it doesn't matter what you look like, where you came from, or who you know, you are judged by your brains and what your hands can do. I believe that with all my heart. I love our values, our generosity, our freedoms, and our history.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Kenneth Juergens (continued)

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

As the Commander of the Harvey C. Noone American Legion Post 954, Ken has demonstrated what it means to serve one's community. Together with his wife, Tish, he has reinvigorated Post 954, injecting new life into a struggling post. Ken takes to heart his oath of service, which shows in the many improvements to the legion hall to make it more accessible to veterans and others of all ages and abilities.

Recognizing his efforts revitalizing Post 954, Mr. Juergens was named the American Legion Department of New York 7th District Legionnaire of the Year in June 2025. He is also a member of the Hilton Hall of Fame, the Section V Wrestling Hall of Fame, and the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Hall of Fame. For his service, Mr. Juergens received numerous awards, including the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (6), and Joint Service Commendation Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



BERNARD WILLIAM CANNAN, JR.

Private First Class, U.S. Army
2 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **PATRICIA CANNAN**

How did you react to receiving your draft notice?

I looked forward to receiving my notice and the opportunity to serve.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

As a member of the first Guided Missile Battalion, we displayed the missile during President Eisenhower's Inaugural Parade. I was stationed outside Fort Belvoir, Virginia and helped display the capabilities of the missile to various VIPs to secure funding for the project.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Discipline.

What do you love most about America?

I love everything about America. At almost 90 years old, I have nothing negative to say about my country.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Bernie's a very strong, proud person that worked hard early in life. He was raised in a multigenerational home that also sustained hardship and disappointment.

Following his service, Mr. Cannan earned degrees in industrial engineering from the Rochester Institute of Technology, while working at Xerox and raising his family. He has been self-employed for the past 30 years. Mr. Cannan is a 25-plus-year member and past President of the Penfield-Perinton Kiwanis. In his community, he has participated in many service projects, including highway cleanups and visiting Mary Cariola homes as Santa Claus.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



REBECCA KEOUGH

Sergeant, U.S. Army
8 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **ALBERT MAGNAN**

What inspired you to join the military?

I enlisted because my family has generations of service to America.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Completion of basic training.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Teamwork and management of diverse groups of people.

What do you love most about America?

That the United States is the land of opportunity to everyone who lives here.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Rebecca Keough has dedicated her life to public service, in the Army, the New York State National Guard, and the U.S. Veterans Administration. Through her service, Rebecca has touched the lives of countless veterans both in Canandaigua and the 54th Senate District, as well as across the State and Nation.

A sixth-generation resident of the Town of Bristol, Ms. Keough is active within her community as the Vice President of the Bristol Library's Board of Trustees, as well as a member of Harmony Circle, a local women's philanthropic organization. She recently retired from public service after more than 30 years with the VA.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



TROY SHELTON

Sergeant, U.S. Army
3 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **JASON SHELTON**

What inspired you to join the military?

Enlisted out of a desire to serve his country. Also inspired by his brother, Bob, an Air Force veteran.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Being in Germany during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Communications.

What do you love most about America?

Freedom.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Troy is a tireless voice for veterans. Under his leadership, Post 931 has worked to find ways to support members who need assistance. Thanks to his leadership, the Post will have a physical building for the first time in about 30 years. Troy is always willing to help people in any way that he can, even at the age of 88.

Mr. Shelton served during the Vietnam War, stationed in Germany during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as well as during heightened Cold War tensions over the Berlin Wall. He currently serves as Commander of the James Cook American Legion Post 931 in Victor. For his service, Mr. Shelton received the Good Conduct Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



KENNETH JAMES WEAVER, JR.

Commander, U.S. Navy
34 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **GLENDAY KAY WEAVER**

What inspired you to join the military?

I enlisted in the U.S. Navy through the delayed entry program while still in high school. Influenced by my grandfather who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Korea, stories I heard as a child at a local Legion Post, and a classmate who received an appointment to the Naval Academy, I decided to enlist. I was offered one of the most difficult pipelines in the Electronics Technician field, which gave me hands-on experience and made me a better officer by knowing the enlisted functions of the military.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Coming out of Afghanistan, my last combat tour, I was placed on the wounded warrior list and told my career was over. I had sacrificed personal and family life to get to that point and thought I had another 5-10 years to serve, so it was very difficult to give up a career I truly enjoyed. I was glad to be back with my family after three years away, though they had to see me go through operations and a difficult homecoming. On the bright side, I have been able to move forward, enjoy my family, and use my experience to help other veterans.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Military service is dynamic and attracts people from all walks of life, and through it I learned time management, independence, comradery, and teamwork like no other in the working world. I gained experience with system operations and highly technical equipment, and developed leadership skills by serving alongside different services in a combat environment.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Kenneth James Weaver, Jr. (continued)

What do you love most about America?

I have been all over the world and experienced many cultures, and I can say with certainty that anyone born in the U.S. has won the life lottery. By far, America is the best country in the world, a great experiment now nearing its 250th birthday, because it provides freedom and opportunity to be whatever you want to be. Our diversity has made us a leader in technology, medicine, and human rights. In America, success and happiness are only a dream away with hard work, perseverance, and the courage to take a chance on an idea or vision.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Ken's dedication to his family, his community, and his fellow veterans is above reproach. During his deployment to Iraq, when he had any free time, he helped to design and build pinewood derby cars for his son to race during a Scout event. Ken has always been involved with our children's education and athletics, helping them with anything they needed to understand better, supporting both kids to be high school valedictorians, and helping them obtain Air Force ROTC scholarships.

Mr. Weaver is a "life" member of both his local American Legion and VFW, having served in numerous leadership positions within both organizations. He is a Past Chair of Livingston County Boys' State, former member of the Kesequa CSD Board of Education, and past Commander of the Livingston County American Legion. He continues to serve as the Department of New York American Legion American Red Cross Blood Donor Chair, having overseen over 250 blood drives, accounting for nearly 7,000 donation units. Mr. Weaver is known to provide detailed historical snapshots of veterans' service to their families following their passing, creating accounts of their service which provide their families with comfort and information they oftentimes don't even know themselves. For his service, Mr. Weaver received the Meritorious Service Medal (3), the Army Bronze de Fleury Medal, and Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3), among others.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



ANTHONY J. FRATTO

Petty Officer First Class, U.S. Navy
14 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:

JAMES GEORGE PETROPOULOS
Geneva City Councilman

What inspired you to join the military?

My father took me and my brothers to see the movie "Top Gun," and from as early as I can remember, I was an aqua baby, swimming at the Geneva American Legion. When I saw the rescue swimmer jump out of the helicopter, I knew that was gonna be me.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

During Fleet Week 1999, we were manning the rails on the USS *Wasp* and I had a small boom box on the air dry cubby area. It was very loud for a little boom box. I had the song "King of the Night Time World" by KISS playing off the "Destroyer" album as we were coming into New York City and I saw the Twin Towers. I'm looking around at parade rest with all the sailors and Marines and the lights of New York City. I'll never forget it as long as I live.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I learned about honor, courage, commitment, and how to be a better human. I wanted my family, mostly Italian and Irish immigrants, to be proud of me, the little American Dream they collectively created. I wanted all the people I looked up to, my coaches and teachers, to be proud of me. I wanted to represent the town that taught me and bring that all over the world, and I did.

What do you love most about America?

What I love about America is what I love about New York. It is the cornucopia of the world and all its cultures, and for anybody from anywhere, if you come to this beautiful country and you're willing to respect it, love it, and earn from it, it is just as much yours as it ever was mine.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Anthony J. Fratto (continued)

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

AJ has shown me what a life of selfless service looks like. Through his dedication, he has overseen the Post's move to a new building, increased membership, and restored pride to a venerable institution. AJ Fratto continues to represent the American Legion at community events and is a fixture in youth mentorship and motivation.

Mr. Fratto currently serves as Commander of the American Legion Winnek Post 396 in Geneva. He is also the founder of AJ's Bravehearts, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the well-being of animals, children, veterans, and domestic violence survivors. For his service, Mr. Fratto received numerous awards, including the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (5), and Navy Good Conduct Medal (5).

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



KEVIN HEALD

E4, U.S. Army
3 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **NICOLE KESSLER**

What inspired you to join the military?

My father and uncle both served. I was looking for opportunities to serve others, better myself, and see other parts of the country.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

My friends who are still my friends to this day. It is a brotherhood like no other.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Comradery. There are people that will always have your back. I learned to work hard with goals in mind. I developed a drive to continually better myself and with that, support and encourage others to do the same.

What do you love most about America?

The freedom to express yourself, live a prosperous life through hard work, and the ability to be able to reach your goals.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

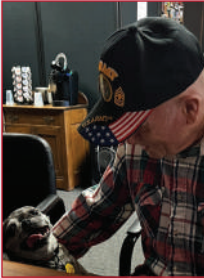
Kevin went into the military to make a better life for himself. Once he was out of the service, he started his own landscaping business with the dream to make a campground along the Erie Canal. His dream of starting the campground was not easy and took years to get the approvals. Kevin doesn't see the impact he has on the community, but he has created a fun family place to come together in the outdoors and also gives back to other veterans. I'm incredibly proud of the person he has become.

Mr. Heald and his wife, Barb, founded Red's Twilight on the Erie RV Resort in 2015. Through their business, they have held numerous fundraisers for local causes, including Honor Flight. Before opening Red's, the Healds owned Red's Landscaping for 30 years, passing the business onto their son.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



EDWARD WALKER

First Sergeant, U.S. Army
23 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **NICOLE KESSLER**

What inspired you to join the military?

I wanted to enlist after high school.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Serving in Germany.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Teaching, taught at MCC.

What do you love most about America?

Freedom to live free!

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Edward is a client at the office I work at. He always comes with a smile on his face, wearing his military veteran hat. He has a great outlook on life and is thankful for every day. We also attend the same church. He brightens my day every time I see him.

Mr. Walker served in Germany, stationed at the Berlin Wall. For his service, Mr. Walker received several commendations.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



ROY S. JAPP
(HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY)

Sergeant, U.S. Army

NOMINATED BY:
BARBARA JAPP MCCARTHY

What inspired you to join the military?

Roy enlisted to fight in the Second World War.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

In 1944, Roy and a GI buddy were outside the hospital. Roy took 100-plus photos while in the Army. He handed his camera to the friend to take a photo. Generals Eisenhower and Patton stood on top of the steps. Roy walked up, stood between them, and said to Patton, "Home alive in '45." Patton replied, "You are right, son."

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

When Roy enlisted, he ate his first egg and claimed he found a home. He sent his paychecks to his mother to find a better home. His dad's shop was in the front room, so they remained. Isabelle gave her son the money back when he returned home in 1945.

What do you love most about America?

Tears would come to Roy's eyes when the flag was carried by soldiers in a parade, though he never talked much about his experiences in war. He laughed when he recalled sleeping in snow and cold, despite suffering from trench foot and his shoulder being dislocated from a bomb blast.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

I first met Roy in 1946 when I was a student nurse in Rochester General Hospital. He was taking classes to get his degree in X-Ray, which was needed in New York despite his three years of X-Ray experience in Europe and the Army. Roy was known for owning Roy's Marina in Geneva, which we founded in 1953.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Roy S. Japp (continued)

Mr. Japp's legacy lives on through Roy's Marina, which has been family owned and operated for over 70 years on the shores of Seneca Lake. A dedicated steward of the lake, he was recognized numerous times for his work in weed and eel control, water depth monitoring, and tourism promotion. Mr. Japp co-founded the Lake Trout Derby in the 1960s, alongside two other men. For his service, Mr. Japp received the Purple Heart.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



TODD F. STRELOW

Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army
21 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:

SIM JONATHAN COVINGTON, JR.
Canandaigua City Councilmember

What inspired you to join the military?

I needed direction in life and the military was a great opportunity.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Seeing the pyramids while serving on the Multinational Force and Observers' mission in Egypt in 1993.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Self-discipline and time management skills.

What do you love most about America?

The fact that we have a constitutional republic, where people have some control over their own destinies.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Sgt. Strelow stands out as someone who leads by example: steadfast, composed under pressure, and dedicated to the safety and well-being of the campus community. His U.S. Army background is evident in his attention to detail, resilience in high-stress situations, and the way he brings integrity, loyalty, and courage into every interaction. Sgt. Strelow balances strength of belief with openness, fostering respectful dialogue among colleagues with diverse perspectives, and creating a cohesive work environment. He connects deeply with students, faculty, and staff, approaching every interaction with genuine care and attentiveness. His calm, thoughtful approach, combined with his unwavering sense of duty, has made him a trusted and respected leader who protects while building meaningful relationships across campus.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Todd F. Strelow (continued)

Mr. Strelow currently serves as Supervising Campus Safety Officer with the Finger Lakes Community College Police Department. He also volunteers as a Trapper Education Instructor for the New York State DEC's Hunter Education Program, teaching safety, responsibility, and good stewardship of natural resources. For his service, Mr. Strelow received the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Air Assault Badge, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Army Achievement Medal, among others.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



JAMES JOSEPH REMMEL

E4, U.S. Army Reserve
22.5 Months of Service

NOMINATED BY: **PHILLIP C. PEEK**

How did you react to receiving your draft notice?

I was drafted. It was time to change my way of life.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Saw a red light, then waking up in the hospital.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

How to survive on your own.

What do you love most about America?

The freedom we enjoy that most other countries do not have.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Jim is always ready to lend a hand at the Legion in Shortsville on various projects. The Legion's Honor Guard provides 21-gun salutes, flag-folding ceremonies, and presentations, whatever families request. Jim also provides a Flag Day ceremony at Red Jacket CSD, works with local school officials to ensure there is at least one Boys' State candidate every year and helps guide those candidates through the application process.

Mr. Rimmel has held various positions at the Turner Schrader American Legion Post 34, including serving two years as Commander. He currently serves as Sergeant-at-Arms, overseeing the Honor Guard and providing closure to dozens of families per year. Additionally, he spearheads various fundraising drives to support the Legion's Children and Youth Fund, which helps support Boy Scout Troop 34, Boy Scout Troop 48, Red Jacket Shooting Club, and other youth organizations. For his service, Mr. Rimmel received various awards, including the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Combat Infantry Badge.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



ROBERT GOOD

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **PHILLIP C. PEEK**

What inspired you to join the military?

I heard the Marines were the best and wanted the best, and didn't want to go to college. Once a Marine, always a Marine.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

When I put the flag up and took it down at Camp Lejeune. The time I spent as a Security Guard at the American Embassy in Vienna, Austria. Meeting President John F. Kennedy when he came to Europe and serving as one of his military guards!

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

How to become a man, respect others, and treat people well. I learned to shoot a pistol and be good at it.

What do you love most about America?

FREEDOM, being allowed to go where you want and when you want. Respect from others who respect my time as a Marine.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Robert has been instrumental in the development of the youth football program at Red Jacket CSD, guiding the program for over 40 years. Through his guidance and teaching, literally thousands of children have learned the basics of teamwork and good sportsmanship. Robert has served in various leadership positions at Turner Schrader American Legion Post 34 in Shortsville, including two years as Commander. He is always ready to lend a hand.

Mr. Good has been a key member of the Red Jacket Sports Booster Club for many years, spearheading fundraising drives and activities to help support all sports at the school. For his service, Mr. Good received the Security Guard Ribbon.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



LAURA VAN BUREN

Captain, U.S. Army / U.S. Army Reserve
10.5 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **WILLIAM AMBROSE**

What inspired you to join the military?

At 18 years old, I was looking for support, education, and purpose, and wanted to serve my country.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Serving in a medical clinic in Germany. Served active duty military from all over the world at Hohenfels Army Health Clinic for one month in the Reserve.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Diversity, getting along with other people, tolerance. Gave me structure and purpose and provided a way of life for me.

What do you love most about America?

My freedom, my land of opportunity. We are a melting pot.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

In Laura's years of serving veterans at the Canandaigua VA as a Nurse Practitioner, she provided care to numerous aging vets.

After serving six years in the Army, enlisting after high school, Ms. Van Buren again served her country for five and a half years as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. Ms. Van Buren is a 45-year member of the medical field, including serving veterans at the Canandaigua VA for the past 24 years.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



RICHARD FRANKLIN WEBB (HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY)

Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
26 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **STEPHEN R. WEBB**

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

He was a skilled communicator and was good with people.

What do you love most about America?

The U.S. Constitution.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

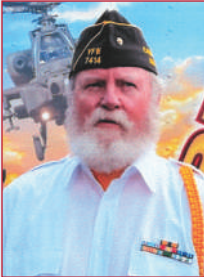
Dick was my father. He taught me the values I have tried to live my life by.

Mr. Webb was the subject of a story in the Regular Baptist Press Conquest publication, recounting his service in the Korean War. Mr. Webb survived an encounter with North Korean soldiers, which included being shot in the head and bayoneted in the shoulder. He drove himself to safety, eventually being cared for by South Korean troops. Following his service, Mr. Webb was assigned to personal affairs and spent the remainder of his military career working with the families of deceased veterans to make sure they received all the benefits they were entitled to. For his service, Mr. Webb received the Purple Heart and Silver Star.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



WILLIAM J. AMBROSE

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **JOHN H. AMBROSE**

What inspired you to join the military?

My older brother served in the Navy. He was part of the Cuban Missile Blockade. He set the example which I wanted to follow. So I enlisted in the Air Force at the completion of high school.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The moment of greatest impact was saying goodbye to my family before leaving for Vietnam.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I was 18 years old when I enlisted. I learned that by dedicated effort I could achieve goals. I received top status at Basic Medical Training, which afforded me the opportunity to attend Preventative Medical Training at Brooks School of Aerospace Medicine. Dedication to a goal pays off.

What do you love most about America?

America's Statue of Liberty - "Give me your tired."

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Although I had known about the other Ambrose in the city for many years, we finally met at the "County Vets With Our Pets" program. Will worked at the mobile plant on the north side of the city for 30-plus years and was regarded by all. Our daughters were friends in school. I asked him to go to the VFW, which he did. He took over the Angel Tree Program, which gives toys, clothes and food to our families in need. He also works on our Toy for Tots. He is now our VFW Post 2nd Vice Commander in Canandaigua.

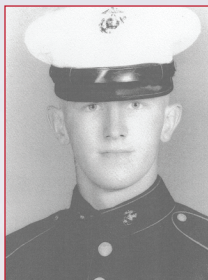
Mr. Ambrose serves as 2nd Vice Commander for Canandaigua VFW Post 7414, where he leads the Post's Angel Tree Program. He is also an active volunteer with Toys for Tots.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



BEN ROWLINSON, JR.
(HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY)

Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
MARY LOUISE "MUFFY" MEISENZAHN

What inspired you to join the military?

Ben's mother died when he was 11, and with no resources for college after high school, he turned to military service. Stories from veterans, including his uncles, inspired him, and as a student-athlete and Class Officer, he was drawn to the Marine Corps' posters: "The Few. The Proud." After visiting a recruiting office, he enlisted, saying that moment "settled his life and set the course for his future."

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Ben was inducted September 29, 1959, and traveled to Parris Island, where the train stopped near Beaufort and recruits cleared hurricane debris so it could proceed. At Parris Island, he assisted another Marine with fitness standards, later recognizing him as actor Brian Dennehy. At El Toro, California, he trained in aviation, visited Disneyland during his trials, and heard the Beach Boys perform.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

Ben believed military service instilled discipline, trained skills, and problem-solving strategies that endured beyond discharge. He saw "We the People" as a personal invitation, emphasizing that freedom is not free. Veterans bring these attributes home, benefiting local communities, and the lessons Ben learned as a Marine were adapted and honed throughout his life.

What do you love most about America?

Ben's appreciation for our country was expressed in conversation, public events, and during the National Anthem. He believed freedoms offer endless personal opportunity, constrained only by imagination, and warned that apathy erodes collective strength. He advocated that citizenship is a gift that requires active participation, and his life stands as a testament to America's promise of possibility for all.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Ben Rowlinson, Jr. (continued)

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Ben's influence on my life and the lives of many others is profound. His Marine Corps training shaped a philosophy of simplicity, adaptability, and results-oriented action, which he carried into civilian life, work, and community service. He was a mentor and friend who reminded us to keep it simple and adapt, knowing change is inevitable. From initiating a Marine Corps birthday celebration to demonstrating unwavering respect for the American flag, Ben lived his values and passed them on. His impact extended to family, coworkers, veterans, municipal workers, and public officials through mentoring, advocating for veterans, and creating opportunities via the American Legion. His words, actions, and traditions continue to resonate in all the lives he touched.

Following his honorable discharge, Mr. Rowlinson began his career with the Village of Honeoye Falls, ultimately rising to the rank of Superintendent of Sewers. He gave back to his community as a Little League coach, volunteer firefighter, and "life" member of multiple veterans' organizations. Mr. Rowlinson's legacy lives on, including through a scholarship in his name and an Easter event he organized, which continues to benefit those in need. For his service, Mr. Rowlinson received the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Rifle Sharpshooter Badge.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



KENNETH A. JENSEN, SR.

Petty Officer Third Class, U.S. Navy
4 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **TAMMY L. MCGARVEY**

What inspired you to join the military?

My cousin, Richard Orr, also served in the Navy and was an inspiration to join.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

I remember watching the planes launch off the deck of the ship. I remember having to carry a very time-sensitive, verbal message from the Admiral on the Bridge to the Flight Deck.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I grew a lot and learned a lot. I gained knowledge of electronics and experience in dealing with people in similar circumstances. I met a lot of people I would not have otherwise known.

What do you love most about America?

I love the attempts to make things better for everybody else.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Ken has always been a behind-the-scenes servant leader and kind neighbor. His passion for his Nation, integrity, and sacrificial love for others make him a man of excellence who gives more than he receives. He consistently shows gratitude when anyone does even the smallest acts of kindness toward him, while giving to others more than he has ever received. He has had a sacrificial love for his Nation and continues to make the world around him a better place. I am very truly blessed to have him a part of my family and I know that my life is better because he is in it.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Kenneth A. Jensen, Sr. (continued)

Following his service, Mr. Jensen dedicated many years to Penn Yan Express as a dispatcher and platform supervisor, as well as to the Arc Ontario's Abbey Industries as Transportation Department Manager. He is known to take in and train stray cats, providing them homes when few else will. For his service, Mr. Jensen received the National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Navy Unit Commendation, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



ROBERT F. WALLACE

Sergeant, U.S. Army
12 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
**THE JOSEPH GALLIPEAU
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT 294**

What inspired you to join the military?

I joined the service to serve our country. My family served our country for many generations, including my father, brother, and uncle. My father and brother both served in the U.S. Marine Corps and my uncle served in the U.S. Army.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

The moment that seems like yesterday is flying from Germany to land and pick up our equipment in Saudi Arabia to sit and wait in the desert to cross the Iraq border for the liberation of the Kuwaiti people. I remember the nasty heavy smoke and the smell of burning oil fields.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I learned what it meant to have integrity, honor, and leadership. I learned about being a part of something larger than myself. I learned to help others succeed in military life and civilian life. I learned to always get back up when you are knocked down.

What do you love most about America?

I love America. I love our freedoms, diversity, religious freedom, and the ability to speak freely and openly.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Robert Wallace has profoundly impacted his country, community, and fellow veterans through tireless service. Stephanie Gleason, a Gold Star Mother, says Bob "personifies the most genuine form of heroism," standing by her family after the loss of her daughter in service and always being available to talk. At Avon American Legion Post 294, Bob is known as the first to respond when a veteran needs support or resources, securing everything from new furnaces and roofs to gift cards for local veterans.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Robert F. Wallace (continued)

Mr. Wallace is a 36-year member of American Legion Post 294 in Avon, and recently chartered the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 294 in 2024. He has held numerous leadership roles at the Post, County, District, Department, and National levels within the American Legion and has chaired and worked on countless Post events, including car shows, breakfasts, dinners, parades, ceremonies, and charity rides. He is vital in bringing The Moving Wall, a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to Geneseo. For his service, Mr. Wallace received the Army Commendation Medal (2), Army Achievement Medal (2), Good Conduct Medal (2), and Southwest Asia Medal with 3 Bronze Stars, among others.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



**REV. EDWARD
EARL BORTLE**
(HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY)

Sergeant, U.S. Army
3 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY: **ROSEMARIE E. BORTLE**

What inspired you to join the military?

Edward enlisted, answering the call to serve his country in the Vietnam War.

What do you love most about America?

Edward loved our country. He was always glad and proud he served. He was very conscientious and willing to go beyond the call of duty.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

Edward was faithful, loving, caring, dedicated, very well liked, and quiet. He always went the extra mile to serve everybody.

Following his Army service, Rev. Bortle had a long and successful career as a skilled cabinet maker. He worked for Wegmans for around 40 years, often being tasked with custom projects for Dan and Bob Wegman. Rev. Bortle was ordained in 2022 following a lifetime of service to the church. Throughout his life, he and his wife, Rosemarie, participated in several mission trips. For his service, Rev. Bortle received numerous awards, including the Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Good Conduct Medal, and Vietnam Service Medal.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



JEROME BUTTERBRODT

Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
20 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
DONALD W. WESTER
Town of Conesus Supervisor

What inspired you to join the military?

Sadly, I entered the military to escape an abusive stepfather: the best decision I ever made.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

Our operation in Eldorado Canyon, when we bombed Libya. A SMSgt and I were the only two who were read in on the operation that could process the SR-71 animation strips. The night before the mission, France decided we could not overfly their airspace, so the whole track required redoing. My wife was 8.5 months pregnant, and I had to redo it. The next day, we were at her parents' house for dinner. On the way, the ramp was filled with KC-10 aircraft refuellers, and on the way home, they were gone. I told my wife I had to go to work that night and I'd see her in a day or two.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I found discipline, structure, and time management while in the Air Force.

What do you love most about America?

America offers everyone the opportunity to be who or whatever they desire as long as they're willing to put forth the hard work.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

I have had the honor and privilege of working with Mr. Butterbrodt on our Conesus Town Board and other community projects. He is truly an inspiration with his dedication and vision for the town, including working with our veterans and the Honor Flight program.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS

RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT

Jerome Butterbrodt (continued)

Following his retirement from the Air Force, Mr. Butterbrodt worked for Eastman Kodak Government and Commercial Systems, retiring as Program Manager in 2017. He has continued his public service as a volunteer firefighter and fire captain, Fire Commissioner, and Town Councilman. For his service, Mr. Butterbrodt received the Meritorious Service Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Commendation Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, AF Achievement Medal, and Outstanding Unit Award with 1 Silver and 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, among others.

★ 2025 ★

VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SENATOR PAM HELMING, 54TH DISTRICT



DANIEL G. WALKLEY

Specialist, U.S. Army
3 Years of Service

NOMINATED BY:
DONALD W. WESTER
Town of Conesus Supervisor

What inspired you to join the military?

Enlisted.

What moment in your service do you remember the most?

I had a large range of emotions that were very mixed.

What valuable lessons or skills did you learn from your time in the military?

I learned construction and heavy equipment skills that I utilized in my career after the Army.

What do you love most about America?

Our freedom.

What impact has your nominee had on the lives of yourself and others?

I have known Dan my entire life here in Conesus. He has been a huge influence in our community, born and raised here. He remains very active in our American Legion Post. Dan has maintained and is supervisor of our recycling center.

Mr. Walkley is a two-term Commander of the American Legion Post #1779 in Conesus. He is a past Assistant Chief and longtime member of the Conesus Fire Department. Mr. Walkley and his wife, Kay, are lifelong residents of Livingston County and, in 2022, were Livingston County Seniorama Honorees. For his service, Mr. Walkley received the Distinguished Service Cross.

