

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 9, 2020  
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A COLUMN FROM NYS SENATOR PAM HELMING

## **Thank You to Our Veterans Who Serve and Inspire Us**

I am thankful to represent and live in an area rich in military history and service, from the Seneca Army Depot to the Sampson Naval Training Station and Sampson Air Force Base, to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center, Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery, and Waterloo, the birthplace of Memorial Day.

I am eternally grateful for our veterans, and I am proud to recognize the 85 men and women from the 54th District who have been nominated for the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame.

When these individuals completed their military service, they did not hang up their uniforms and say, “My service is done.” They said, “What more can I do to help others?”

These veterans went on to serve in our police and fire departments, teach in our schools, coach youth soccer and Little League baseball, lead veterans organizations, and volunteer with community nonprofits. You can find their names and stories on my website at [helming.nysenate.gov](http://helming.nysenate.gov). Here are just a few:

Vietnam and Korean War veteran Anthony Muscolino of Manchester spent 50 years volunteering with the American Red Cross and assisted with disaster relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina, Ike and Sandy.

As past president of Cayuga County Vietnam Veterans Chapter 704, U.S. Army veteran Lou Patti of Auburn helped establish the new Cayuga County Vietnam Veterans Memorial honoring the county’s fallen heroes.

When Renee Maybee of Ontario left the U.S. Air Force, she decided to become a veterans service officer, and was subsequently promoted to director of the Wayne County Veterans Service Agency. She is the first female commander of American Legion Post 428.

U.S. Marine Corps pilot Jerome “Jerry” Rizzo of Lansing was a prestigious TOPGUN instructor who served in Iraq and Kosovo. He later became a celebrated college football coach at schools including Cornell and the United States Naval Academy. Jerry passed away in 2017 after a heroic battle with brain cancer.

U.S. Navy veteran Matthew Martin of Canandaigua wanted to help other veterans struggling with PTSD rebuild their confidence and reintegrate into society. Matthew founded Tactical Construction, a service-disabled veteran-owned business that hires and advocates for veterans.

World War II and Korean War veteran Thomas “Jim” Lewis continues his lifetime of service to the community and veterans of Waterloo and Seneca County, including his work in support of the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Ross Willink served as chief medical officer on the USS YMS-166 in the Pacific Theater. He became a teacher, superintendent of the Webster Central School District, and has been a Webster Rotarian for over four decades.

Karen Macier of Auburn joined the Women’s Army Corps and Army Reserve and served in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. She has dedicated her professional life to supporting nonprofits and leads the United Way of Cayuga County.

A combat medic in Afghanistan, Trevor Johnson of Marion credits the Army National Guard for giving him the skills and experience to become a registered nurse at the University of Rochester Medical Center, where he has treated COVID-19 patients in the ICU.

My father was a U.S. Air Force veteran who worked as an airplane mechanic during the Korean War. He trained at the Sampson Air Force Base. My son-in-law completed several deployments as a U.S. Army Green Beret. I am indebted to our veterans for their dedicated service to our country and to our military families who support them. To our veterans who inspire us every day, thank you.

*Pam Helming represents the 54th District in the New York State Senate.*