



## SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

### Student Docent on Her Way to Annapolis

Claire Pelletier-Hoblock visited the NYS Military Museum in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, with Schuylerville school classmates, as part of the Museum's Educational Opportunities Program. Her grandfather had served in the Coast Guard shortly after World War II, and she was very interested in the Museum's exhibits.

Three years later, she was on a cruise with her family in the Caribbean. At first, she was nervous about being on a large ship, but she quickly was fascinated by it and became focused on the idea of becoming the captain of a big boat herself.

In that same year, Claire was looking for an opportunity to do community service. She immediately thought of the Military Museum, and she decided to become a student docent.

Claire was a volunteer at the Museum from that point until her recent graduation from high school. As she puts it, "everyone there is a veteran [or at least many of them]. I was the only young person. Everyone would tell me their stories. I would sit there for three hours. It was pretty inspiring. It's amazing what their stories were. They've served everywhere around the world."

Claire served many of her docent shifts on Saturday mornings, sitting alongside longtime docent Mike Carney. According to Mike, Claire "was very dedicated" in her work as a docent, and he "could always count on her." He adds that Claire "always wanted to go into the Navy; she has an idea of what she wants to do and goes after it."

In listening to the stories of the veterans at the Military Museum, Claire also noticed something else that was important to her: "They didn't serve with many women."

Claire decided while in eighth grade that she wanted to seek admission to one of the academies that could train her to handle big ships on the ocean – the Naval Academy, the Coast Guard Academy or the Merchant Marine Academy. During her years in high school, she focused intently on achieving her goal. That goal was achieved this Spring, as Claire was offered admission to all three of the academies. She decided to attend the United States Naval Academy, in Annapolis, Maryland. She begins with the six-week Plebe Summer program, which started in late June.

Claire is very appreciative of her time at the Military Museum. "The museum has had such a profound impact on my life." The people at the Museum are also appreciative of Claire's service over the past several years and wish her all the best at the Naval Academy.



## **Vietnam Veterans Hold 50th Anniversary Commemoration**

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony was held at the Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge on March 29, 2022. The Ceremony was sponsored by the Friends and the Capital District of the New York Chapter of the Association of the United States Army.

A total of 108 Vietnam War and Vietnam War Era veterans were honored at the Ceremony. Lapel pins, issued by the U.S. Department of Defense, were presented to each of the veterans or the veteran's surviving family member. More than 200 people attended the Ceremony.

Brigadier General Barry Hartman (U.S. Army Ret.) served as Master of Ceremonies. Lieutenant Colonel Nick Laiacona (U.S. Army Ret.) read the names of the veterans being honored. Command Sergeant Major Bob Van Pelt (U.S. Army Ret.) presented the lapel pins to the veterans or their surviving family members. Hartman, Laiacona and Van Pelt are all combat veterans of the Vietnam War; they are also part of the 50th Vietnam War Commemoration Committee, along with five other members of the Friends.

In accordance with federal law, the event commemorating the Vietnam veterans is held annually on March 29, to honor all of the men and women who fought and sacrificed in the Vietnam conflict. The date of March 29 was chosen because that was the date specified as the end of the War, in accordance with the Treaty signed by the United States and North Vietnam in Paris in 1973.

President Obama signed an Executive Order in 2012, establishing March 29 as National Vietnam Recognition Day. President Trump signed the Vietnam War Veteran Recognition Act in 2017, which designates every March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Commemoration ceremonies honoring Vietnam veterans have been held in New York at various locations in upstate New York since the inauguration of the commemoration.

Also at the Ceremony, a representative from the office of U.S. Representative Elise Stefanik read a Congressional Proclamation, which recognized the Friends and others involved in organizing the Commemoration Ceremony.

The invocation and benediction were given by the Rev. Charlene Robbins, a Gold Star mother. She also cut the commemoration cake, which was provided by the Association of the United States Army.





U.S. Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Nick Laiacona reads the names of Vietnam veterans being honored at the 50th Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony, on March 29, 2022. Photo by Paul Fanning



U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major (Ret.) Bob Van Pelt presents lapel pins to Vietnam veterans at the 50th Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony. Photo by Paul Fanning



## Exhibit on New York Women in Service

A new exhibit, on New York Women in Service, has been set up behind the front wall on the Museum floor, where the exhibit on the September 11, 2001 attacks was previously located. (The prior exhibit had been on loan from the New York State Museum.)

The new exhibit focuses on the role of women during our nation's military conflicts. The exhibit reviews the role of women in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the Spanish-America War, World Wars I and II, the Korea and Vietnam conflicts, and in the modern era.

As stated in the exhibit notes prepared by Assistant Curator Chris Morton, over 40,000 women deployed to combat zones in the Gulf War; in 2013, the Secretary of Defense lifted the ban on women in combat; and, more than 300,000 women have served overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan in the Global War on Terrorism.

Morton's exhibit notes also discuss more fully the role of women in service in America's history:

"New York women have served their state and nation in various roles for over 200 years. Although women could not always enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces, many found ways to serve and over the decades, through persistence and dedication, officially joined the ranks and earned leadership positions. Today women represent nearly 20% of our nation's armed forces including the New York National Guard."

Below are two pictures of women's service uniforms from the exhibit — on the left is a Women's Navy Yeoman uniform from World War I, and on the right is a uniform from the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in World War II.



The present plan is for this exhibit to be a temporary one, with its place being taken later by a permanent exhibit on the Global War on Terror, perhaps next Spring or Summer.

But there are some who would like there to be a permanent exhibit in the Museum regarding the role of Women in Service once the temporary exhibit has closed.

Mary Ann Adams and Melissa Thompson-Flynn are two Museum volunteers who believe that the Museum needs a permanent exhibit to display and discuss the role that women have played in defending America's freedom, both directly in the military and in other capacities.

Both Mary Ann and Melissa have been part of the United States armed services. Mary Ann enlisted in the Army in 1967 and served from June 1967 to June 1970. From October 1967 to June 1970 she was a data processor at Fort Myer, Virginia. She was discharged at the rank of Specialist 5 (E-5). Melissa had a 24-year active duty Army career, which included two tours in Germany and at various locations in the Middle East and the United States. Among other things, Melissa served as a military attache in the American embassies in Israel and Jordan, and as chief of the Iraq desk at the U.S. Central Command; she retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Mary Ann and Melissa believe that it is important to recognize the role of women in each of America's military conflicts. Mary Ann says she is "overwhelmed by the sacrifices of women" in America's military conflicts; the women "were driven to do what they could to help the cause." She adds, "an accurate representation of our military history has to include the role of women."

Mary Ann and Melissa have written talking points about the role of women in service in America. Those talking points offer information on the role of women in each of our major conflicts. As described in detail in the talking points, women have served in a variety of roles in wars from our country's beginning. Women have longed served as nurses and as volunteers providing aid to the soldiers overseas (such as the World War II "Donut Dollies"). They have also provided vital defense work in factories while the men were away in the military. Women have also served as spies, going all the way back to the Culper Ring in the Revolutionary War and including, among other instances, the work of Virginia Hall in World War II (for which she received the Distinguished Service Cross). In addition, also in World War II, the actress Hedy Lamarr was involved in creating communications technology which paved the way for the modern GPS system, along with a system for guiding torpedoes. Today, women serve in all roles in the military, along with their male counterparts. The talking points are now a part of the Exhibition Talking Points which are provided to the Docents at the Museum.

According to Mary Ann, the idea behind a permanent exhibit is to ensure that there will be a meaningful presentation on the role of women. Such an exhibit would also serve as an inspiration to girls who visit the Museum. "Mothers will come to the Museum with their daughters, and the role of women in America's wars will be passed on from mother to daughter." She also hopes that the story will be delivered to students in our schools.

## Robert Kazalski Recognized by the Friends for Long-Time Service to the Museum



Pictured above: Robert Kazalski, long-time member of the Board of Trustees of the Friends of the New York State Military Museum, receives an award from Roy McDonald, President of the Board of Trustees of the Friends. The award recognizes Robert's many years of dedicated service to the Friends and the New York State Military Museum. Robert has served the Friends and the Museum in many capacities over the years. He recently retired as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Friends. But among other things, he continues to be a Docent at the Museum. Robert also wrote and edited the Newsletter of the Friends for several years.

The award was presented at the picnic for Museum volunteers, which was held at the home of Museum Docent Melissa Thompson-Flynn on July 20, 2022.

(Photograph courtesy of Tim Sinnott)





*The Friends of the New York State Military Museum  
and Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge #161  
cordially invite you to join us for*

# *The Seventh Annual Trivia Night Fundraiser*

**Where: Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge,  
1 Elks Lane, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866**

**When: Saturday, October 29, 5:00 pm - 9:30 pm**

Tickets: \$50 per person or \$400 for a table of 8 people  
(Includes prizes, dinner, cash bar, dessert, and FUN!)

***Please RSVP by Friday October 14, 2022***

*Mail in request with check or donation to:*

*The Friends of the New York State Military Museum, 61 Lake Avenue,  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866,  
or The Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge #161,  
P.O. Box 3111, Saratoga Springs, New York, 12866*

## **New York State Military Museum & Veterans Research Center**

**Address: 61 Lake Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866**

**Phone: (518) 581-5100**

**Website: [www.museum.dmna.ny.gov](http://www.museum.dmna.ny.gov)**

**Museum Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10AM to 4PM**

Also open on Mondays from 10-4 from mid-July through August

Closed on all New York State and Federal Holidays

**Bookstore Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 11AM to 4PM**

Also open on Mondays from 11-4 from mid-July through August

Bookstore Phone: (518) 226-0490

Closed on all New York State and Federal Holidays

**Veterans Research Center: Open to the public by appointment only**

**Friends of the New York State Military Museum --**

**Website: [friendsofthenysmilitarymuseum.com](http://friendsofthenysmilitarymuseum.com)**

## New Docents at the Museum

**Wayne Rozen** grew up in Binghamton. He attended the University of Buffalo. After graduation, he returned to Buffalo to work in a family business, where he stayed for 52 years. He took the business in new directions, involving environmental aspects of construction related to energy, and he expanded operations to include large-scale projects in Africa, South America, Mexico and the Arctic.

Wayne is also an expert on boxing. He wrote a column on boxing for the Gannett News Service, served as a New York State boxing judge, worked as a boxing analyst on ESPN and wrote a book on the Johnson-Jeffries fight from 1910 (the book is entitled America On The Ropes). As a boxing columnist, Wayne interviewed many famous fighters, including Mohammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Carmen Basilio, Sugar Ray Leonard and Mike Tyson.

Wayne says that he became a volunteer at the Museum because he has a “great interest in military history and particularly that of our country.” He says that he loves the Museum. He sees it as an “overlooked treasure of Saratoga Springs” and is “eager to encourage... its recognition.”

Wayne is married. He and his wife, Karen, have a combined family including two sons, a daughter and three grandchildren.



Thank you to the following people for their efforts in creating and/or distributing this edition of the Newsletter: Fred Katz, Robert Kazalski, Roy McDonald, Nick Laiacona, Mary Ann Adams, Melissa Thompson-Flynn, Courtney Burns, Chris Morton, Colleen Maheux, Lucille Millarson, Tim Sinnott, Bruce Farley, Paul Fanning, and Francis Crandall (Creative Flight Group).