



Senator Terrence P. Murphy



NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

Dear Veterans, Friends and Families:

Welcome to the annual Veterans' Hall of Fame Ceremony. It is with a great sense of pride and admiration that we in the New York State Senate are once again honoring and recognizing outstanding veterans from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves both in military and civilian life.

The veterans gathered here today have given their lives to a cause greater than themselves, and in doing so, have protected our country and way of life. Today we honor these heroic New Yorkers whom we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. Their past bravery in military endeavors has helped shape the American landscape- a country of strength, freedom and diverse beauty.

Many of those here today have also helped extensively in their communities. These are not only veterans, but community organizers, teachers, small business owners, police officers, firefighters, emergency personnel and first responders.

Finally, as we pay homage to all the veterans, let us not forget the families – fathers, mothers, daughters and sons – who also participated in the rich tradition of military life. Thank you all for your laudable service to our nation.

Terrence P. Murphy

Senator Terrence P. Murphy





NEW YORK STATE SENATE
VETERANS'
HALL OF FAME

PROGRAM

POSTING OF THE COLORS

HAWTHORNE AMERICAN LEGION POST 112

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

NATIONAL ANTHEM
BY JESSICA LYNN

INVOCATION

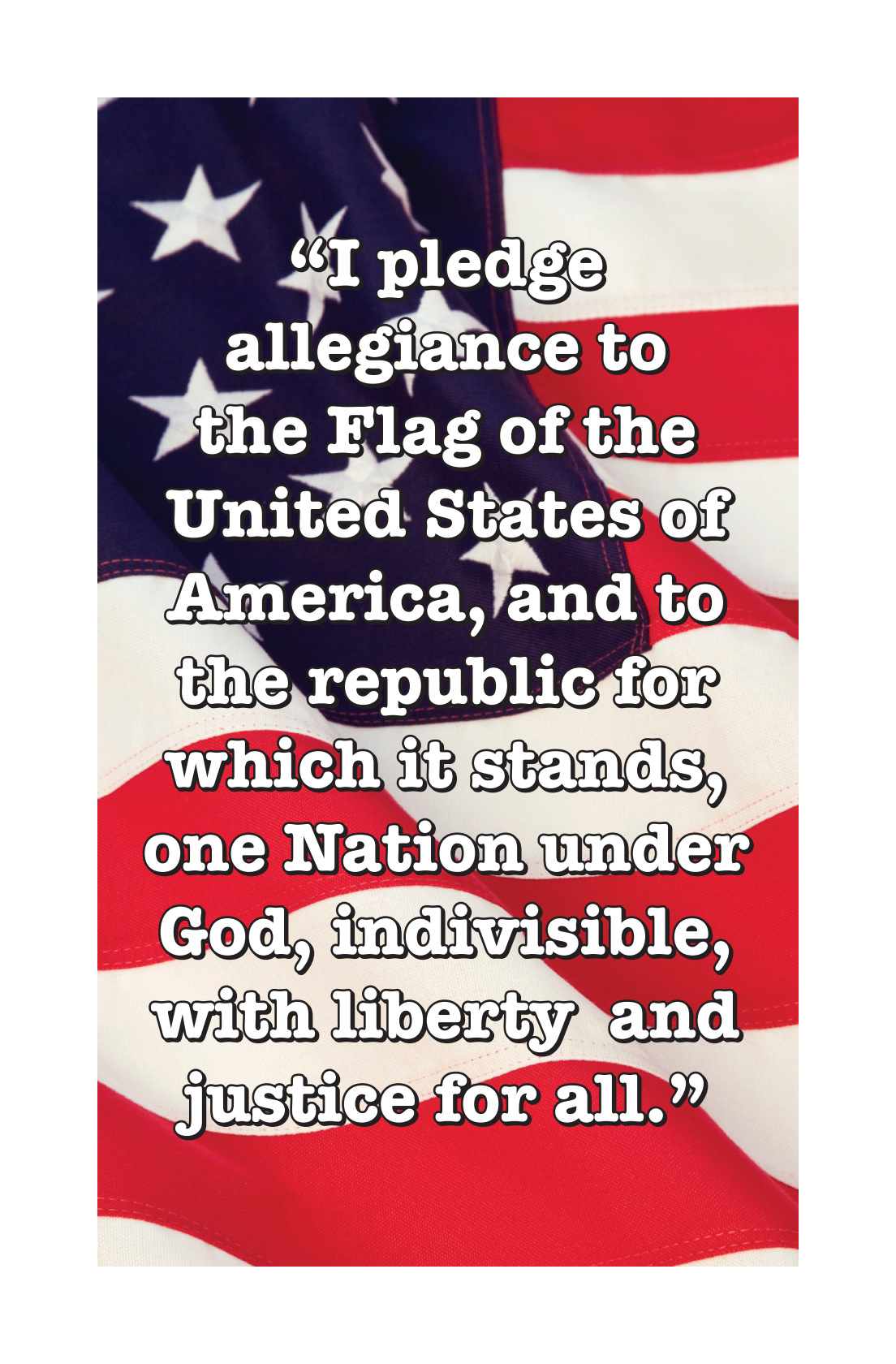
POW-MIA

SENATOR TERRENCE P. MURPHY

A POEM
"A Veteran", BY E. MARSHALL EVANS

INDUCTEES TO 40TH SENATE DISTRICT
VETERANS HALL OF FAME 2015

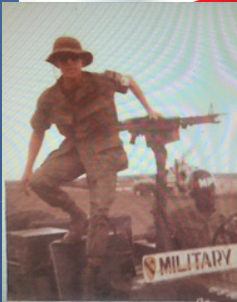
CLOSING REMARKS
SENATOR TERRENCE P. MURPHY

The background of the image is a close-up, slightly blurred view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. 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.”**

2015 HONOREES





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

THOMAS F. CAIRNEY *Patterson*

Thomas F. "Scotty" Cairney served in the U.S. Army from June 1971 to June 1973, including a tour of duty in Vietnam with the 18th M.P. Brigade. He was honorably discharged in 1973.

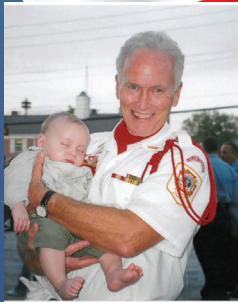
Not only was Scotty's active duty honorable, since his return he has set an outstanding example of service to his fellow veterans. As a member of the Putnam Lake VFW Post, he served as Commander, Chaplain and a number of other positions. He is always involved, willing to help out in any situation and is ever present when a fellow vet needs assistance.

Scotty runs a number of the Post's outreach programs to the local community, including the Thanksgiving Day Raggamuffin Parade for the last 25 years. The parade is an annual event eagerly awaited by the local children where they get to dress up in costumes, win prizes, and meet Santa Claus where every child receives a gift.

Scotty has served as Putnam County VFW Commander Liaison to State Commander Karl Rhode and has been active in the Joint Veterans Council. Scotty also organizes the Memorial Day and Veterans Day services.

Scotty is one of those rare and exceptional people whose service to his country continues through his never-ending service to his community and fellow veterans. In the 40 years since Scotty has served in the Army, he has led by example, never wavering his dedication and always inspiring the people around him.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

RAYMOND CALLINAN

Carmel

Raymond Callinan who resides in the Hamlet of Mahopac, Town of Carmel, is married 44 years to his wife Barbara. He has two grown daughters, and five grandchildren. Ray proudly served in the United States Navy from 1965 to 1968 achieving the rank of E-3.

The military awards that Ray has received include: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation, and Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon.

For 36 years, Ray has been an active member of the VFW Post 5491 in Mahopac where he served as Post Commander. He currently serves as a member of the Color Guard and as the VFW Chaplain.

Ray is also a member of the American Legion Post 1080 in Mahopac, where he has proudly served for the past 28 years.

Ray's professional career was as a distinguished firefighter with the FDNY where he proudly served for 35+ years retiring with the rank of Lieutenant.

Ray is an active member of Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Mahopac, NY where he has taught CCD for the past 15 years.



NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

JACK CAROSI

Mt. Pleasant

Private Jack Carosi is nominated for his heroic achievement in military operations against the enemy in Normandy, France.

On June 18, 1944, near the vicinity of St. Andre de l'Epine, Company "C" came under heavy enemy fire from the front and both flanks as it spearheaded the attack by the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry. Private Jack Carosi, rifleman, set out to locate the Battalion Observation Post to report the hazardous situation. Although Jack was painfully wounded enroute, he persisted in the completion of his mission before being treated and evacuated.

Private Jack Carosi's courage and devotion in this action were of high order and reflected great credit upon himself and the Military Service. Jack entered the service from New York and is the recipient of the Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, and the Bronze Star Medal which he proudly wears. Jack's largeness of spirit and patriotism comes shining through when you meet him. The Town of Mt. Pleasant is pleased to recognize Jack as their representative on the 40th District's Veterans Hall of Fame.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

ROBERT J. CASTELLI

Lewisboro

Former State Assemblyman Robert J. Castelli began a lifetime of public service at the age of 17, when he left high school to join the U.S. Army during the war in Vietnam. After basic training and Advanced Infantry Training, he volunteered to serve in Vietnam and was assigned to the 7th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Division as an Infantryman.

He arrived in Vietnam and participated in combat operations during the Tet Offensive of 1968, in the Battles of Hue, Khe Sahn, and the Ashau Valley, three of the largest battles of that war. As an Infantry point man and later a reconnaissance company team member, he rose to the rank of Sergeant by the age of 19 and remained in Vietnam through part of 1969. He returned home and continued to serve as a training instructor at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, until he left the Army to return to school. He was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal and unit awards of the Presidential Unit Citation and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

After finishing school he started a career in law enforcement as a State Constable in South Carolina, followed by a 21-year career in the New York State Police, where he served as a Trooper, Sergeant, Investigator and Station Commander throughout the State of New York.

After completing a graduate degree at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, he began his next career as a college professor, serving in John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Marist College and Iona College, where he eventually rose to become Chairman of the Criminal Justice Department.

He continued public service by serving four years on the Town Board of the Town of Lewisboro in Westchester County and eventually was elected to two terms in the New York State Assembly, where he served as a ranking member on the Veteran's Affairs Committee and passed several important pieces of veteran's legislation.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

ROBERT E. FERGUSON

Cortlandt

SFC Robert E. Ferguson served his country with honor for 29 years, serving in the US Army, National Guard, and Army Reserves. He has been decorated with the Army Achievement Medal, Reserve Components Achievement Medal (with 4 bronze devices), National Defense Service Medal (with 1 device), Armed Forces Reserves Medal (with 2 devices), Armed Service Medal, NY Military Commendation Medal, Long and Faithful Service Medal, Recruiting Medal, Aid to Civil Authority Medal, Humane Service to New York State Medal, and the Long and Faithful Service to the 102nd Medical Battalion Medal.

During his ten years of employment at the Montrose VA Hospital, SFC Ferguson became aware of the plight of many of his fellow veterans. Currently retired from the military, SFC Ferguson is serving as a member of the Cortlandt/Hudson Valley Veterans' Committee and the Montrose Action Committee (MAC), whose primary goal is improving conditions for veterans and promoting their cause. MAC has made connections with Montrose VA officials as well as local, state, and national officials, to gain support for its efforts on behalf of veterans. MAC wants to ensure that no services are taken from veterans, and that veterans receive all benefits to which they are entitled.

SFC Ferguson also serves as Compliance Officer for the American Legion Fox-Eklof Post 505 in Croton-on-Hudson, and as liaison between this organization and the Cortlandt/Hudson Valley Veterans' Committee.

SFC Ferguson expressed the great honor he felt to be nominated for this award, and is humbled and indebted to those veterans who have served, and are still serving, to preserve our freedom here in America.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

CORPORAL DONALD FORD

Mt. Kisco

Donald Ford served in the 3rd Infantry, under President Eisenhower, where he was chosen to guard the president during his service in Washington, DC. Don also attended the Leslie McNeil War College on the Potomac River and was a major part of the Parade Unit at Fort Meyers. Although Don was stationed in the States during the war, he was very involved in the war effort and was promoted to the rank of Corporal as a result.

Donald Ford's commitment to veterans and to the Northern Westchester community continues to this day. He is a proud member and Past Commander of Moses Taylor Jr. Post 136 in Mount Kisco. He also served as Westchester County Commander for a number of years and Treasurer for more than 20 years.

Through his efforts, the Moses Taylor Legion entertains members of the VA Hospital every month. He arranges for Mount Kisco Elementary School children come to the Legion for lunch, in an effort to teach them about American history and the accomplishments of the veterans that served during war time. Don started a program that sends Legion members to our local high school to speak to the students and to offer scholarships to Veterans' families. He is instrumental in contributing funds to Wounded Warriors, the USO, and physically disabled veterans.

For his outstanding contribution to our community, Don has been recognized by a number of organizations. The Mount Kisco Chamber of Commerce, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Italian American Club of Northern Westchester have all honored Don as "Citizen of the Year." The Knights of Columbus has honored him as "Civic Leader of the Year." He was also presented with awards by Mount Kisco's Rotary Club and Lions Club for his outstanding contributions to his community.

In the Greater Mount Kisco area, Don is known as "Mr. American Legion"





NEW YORK STATE SENATE
VETERANS'
HALL OF FAME

MARIO G. FUSCO, SR.
Somers

Entered U.S. Army
May 1951

Served six(6) years of active duty status
1951-1957

Honorably discharged
July-1957

Four years (4) active reserve status as Master Sgt.
1957-1961

Honorably discharged
June- 1961

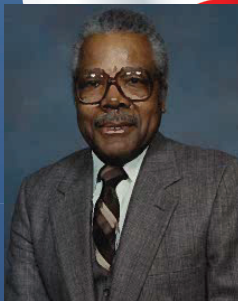
Current Sr. Vice Commander of VFW Post 8213 Somers, NY
2006-Present

During Active Duty, Sgt. Mario G. Fusco served in many assignments, most notably was his assignment as an Advisor in Indo China- South Vietnam. Sgt. Fusco was deployed from May 1955-May 1956, with his assignment classified as Top Secret in nature.

He reported to the General Plan Division located in Saigon-Cholon. His unit was a collaboration of American, as well as French Officers.

These orders were directly issued by the Secretary of the Army, Washington, DC to qualified personnel.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE
VETERANS'
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OLLIE HINES
Croton

Ollie Hines was born more than 90 years ago in rural Southampton County, Virginia.

While he had the usual toys of the day: a rubber ball, a red wagon and so on, he also possessed a unique plaything...Ollie had a steel helmet and gas mask which had been issued to his father, a veteran of World War One. Ollie would don the ill-fitting helmet and musty mask while playing "Doughboy" for hours on end.

Years later, playtime became very real as Ollie -then a college student- was inducted into the Army on May 21, 1946.

Ollie served as a personnel clerk in the Aleutian Islands, and achieved the rank of Corporal. Ollie is humble about his service to the nation, often saying he was an ordinary man with ordinary duties that had to be performed well.

Always expressing respect for his comrades, he considers himself a beneficiary of the sacrifices of the men he served with.

Ollie is the Fox-Eklof Post 505 of Croton-On-Hudson 2015 Veteran of the Year.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERAN'S** HALL OF FAME

ERIC A. JONES *Pound Ridge*

Captain Eric A. Jones, United States Marine Corps, was born on April 12, 1980 in Mount Kisco, NY to Kenneth and Cynthia Jones. Growing up in Pound Ridge, NY, Captain Jones found his sense of adventure and athletic skills. While growing up, Captain Jones was fascinated with flying and at the age of 12, he went up in a plane with a friend, further fueling his desire to fly. As an avid lacrosse player, Captain Jones showcased his athletic prowess at Fox Lane High School in Bedford. After his 1999 high school graduation, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Finance from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts in 2004. While attending Northeastern University, Captain Jones continued to develop his love of aviation by taking flying lessons.

On August 13, 2004, Captain Jones made his first lead toward achieving his goals by being commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. After completing The Basic School, he joined Marine Air Training Support Group 21 in Pensacola, FL to begin his flying career and fulfill his childhood dream. He earned his coveted Naval Aviator wings on April 27, 2007. He was assigned to HMLA/T-303 at Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, CA to learn to fly the UH-1N Huey Helicopter. After completing the Fleet Replacement Squadron, Eric joined HMLA 367 at Camp Pendleton, CA. He deployed on his first combat tour in support of OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) from May - November, 2008, earning the call sign "Jethro." Upon returning from deployment, Captain Jones selflessly volunteered to re-deploy with HMLA 169 six short months after his return. He re-deployed to Iraq again in May of 2009 where he continued to fly combat missions in support of OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom). In July of 2009 Captain Jones was reassigned to Camp Bastion, Helmand Province, Afghanistan to fly combat missions in support of OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom). Throughout his time in Afghanistan, Captain Eric Jones skillfully and courageously employed his UN-1N on multiple occasions to save the lives of ground troops. Captain Jones's devotion to duty and selfless personality will always live within the spirits of his family and brothers-in-arms.

Eric stood 6'3" tall, every inch of him passionate about flying and being a United States Marine. Whenever asked about the dangers he might have to face, he'd brush it off with his trademark laugh and double-handed point. Although his life ended at the age of 29, he lived every one of those years to the fullest, never taking a single day for granted. It was Eric's calling to fly and to be a Marine. He was a true American patriot, a loyal combat brother, and a devout and loving friend. His selfless actions will never be forgotten. Captain Jones's personal decorations include the Air Medal with gold numeral one, 6 Strike/Flight awards and Combat Distinguishing Device, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with two gold stars.

Written on 16 November 2009 by USMC for the Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadrons 169 and 367 Marine Aircraft Group 39, Memorial Service.

Captain Eric A. Jones was killed in a helicopter collision during a combat mission in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan on October 26, 2009.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

EUGENE LANG *Yorktown*

In 1956 at 9 years old, Eugene Lang and his family fled Soviet-occupied Hungary. Dodging landmines and being handed from guide to guide, they all made it safely to Austria eventually making it to America where Eugene would grow up in the Bronx.

For many people that would constitute an odyssey to define a lifetime, but Eugene's story had only just begun.

As a young man, Eugene was drafted and sent to Vietnam in the 1st Air Cavalry. While still a Private 1st Class, his unit was attacked by NVA forces near the border with Laos in May of 1968. Ordered to run up a hill and fire an 81mm mortar, he was hit with shrapnel which lodged in his lower right leg -metal he still possesses to this day.

His wounds treated at Dong Ha, Eugene returned to his unit and fought on, eventually reaching the rank of Sergeant. Unfortunately, the records of Eugene's wounds and treatment thereof were lost somewhere between Southeast Asia and Washington DC, and for 44 years, he went without the Purple Heart he had earned -mainly because like his fellow heroes, Eugene Lang is humble and rarely sought any celebration of his service.

In 2012 after many years of red tape and bureaucracy Eugene Lang -now of Yorktown- received a visit from Senator Chuck Schumer who brought with him a Purple Heart Medal.

An odyssey indeed...





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERAN'S** HALL OF FAME

GREGORY T. LOBATO

Sleepy Hollow

Gregory Lobato was born and raised in Sleepy Hollow, New York. Greg graduated from Rutgers University in 2001 with a degree in the Administration of Justice. While studying at Rutgers, Greg underwent training through the United States Marine Corps' Platoon Leader's Course and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant upon graduation from college. Greg would later be assigned to the military police military occupational specialty. In 2002, Greg was sent to his first duty station and served as the Operations Officer for the Provost Marshal's Office in Iwakuni, Japan. As Operations Officer, Greg oversaw the daily law enforcement and security operations for a Marine Corps Air Station. After his tour in Japan, Greg wanted to assist in the deteriorating situation in Iraq. With news that the Marine Corps would be returning to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom II, Greg requested orders to the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force. In 2003, he was assigned as a Platoon Commander with Company A, 2nd Military Police Battalion aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C. After a nine-month training period, Greg deployed with Company A to Iraq in 2004. Once in Iraq, Greg's Platoon detached from Company A and was sent to Fallujah to serve as the Military Police Detachment for Combat Service Support Battalion - 1, whose job it was to directly support the 1st Marine Regiment in the Al Anbar Province. During his deployment, Greg led 72 Marines while conducting critical logistics missions throughout Al Anbar and other provinces. Greg's Platoon provided support to combat units from the 1st Marine Division before, during, and after the battle of Fallujah. Greg's Platoon finished their deployment by helping with security for the first Iraqi election and the reopening of Fallujah to the residents of the city. After returning from Iraq, Greg returned to Camp Lejeune and served as acting company commander for Company A. In six months, Greg reformed and retrained the company, meeting all of the Commanding General's training requirements for redeployment to Iraq. In October of 2005, Greg was reassigned to the Provost Marshal's Office at Miramar, California. Once again, Greg oversaw the daily law enforcement and security operations for a Marine Corps Air Station and executed the security plan for the 2006 Miramar Air Show; the largest air show on the West Coast. Greg was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in December of 2007, after six years of service.

After leaving active duty, Greg returned home to New York, where he used his G.I. Bill benefits to complete an MBA in Finance in 2010. Greg landed his first job as a trading assistant on the foreign exchange trading desk at J.P. Morgan. Greg filled the role as assistant to the high-frequency electronic trading risk manager and was responsible for the proper execution of over 30,000 trades, daily. After three years at J.P. Morgan, Greg felt that the life of an investment banker was not as fulfilling as the one he once led in the service. Greg made the decision to go back to serving his community and applied to the Sleepy Hollow Police Department, in Westchester County. Greg was hired by the SHPD and is currently in the Westchester County Police Academy.

Greg's military awards include: the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (with Gold Star in lieu of second award and Combat "V" for heroic actions in the face of the enemy in Iraq), the Combat Action Ribbon, and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Commanding General's Company Grade Leader of the Year Award (2004).





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

LOU MUSELLA *Pawling*

According to Town Supervisor David Kelly, Lou enlisted in the US Navy on September 8, 1964. He departed Albany for basic training at Great Lakes, Illinois. Upon successful completion of Boot Camp, Lou was shipped to San Diego, CA for 6 months while attending "A" school for welding. After "A" school, the brave sailor was assigned to Little Creek, VA where he served aboard the USS Donner LSD-20. Assigned to the "R" division where he and his shipmates were responsible for all repairs on the ship. Lou's proficiency at welding was noticed by his superiors which provided him the opportunity to attend "Advance Welding School" in Portsmouth, VA.

With the additional training under his belt, Lou began rising through the ranks. From 1964-1966 Musella made both the E-4 and E-5 pay grades. Upon achieving E-5 in 1966 Lou was charged with running the Shipfitter shop where he supervised 15 fellow shipmates. During this same period Lou also attended firefighting school and was in charge of flight deck operations during flight quarters.

Lou's storied career in the United States Navy included three tours in the Mediterranean as well as voyages in the Pacific, North Atlantic, the Caribbean, and a stay at Gitmo.

Lou Musella rightfully received an honorable discharge from active duty on September 7th and served in the reserves until 1970. Lou's military career was the beginning of his dedication to public service. For ten years Lou faithfully served as the Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals for the Village of Pawling. Additionally he has spent over 25 years as a NYS Hunter Education Instructor. For 38 years Lou was a certified USA Hockey Official.

Lou's dedication to his country and his fellow service members is on display full-time as Lou serves as Commander of the Hasler-Kamp Post 215 of the American Legion in Pawling. Living by the words of President John F. Kennedy, Lou does not ask what his country can do for him but instead chooses to instill the values of serving the country in the local Cub and Boy Scouts. His further commitment to fallen soldiers is evidenced by his hard work in maintaining the privately owned Pawling Veterans Cemetery.

Lou's proud display of his naval career can be seen every year at the Memorial Day Parade in Pawling which is organized by the Memorial Day committee of which Lou Musella is the Chairman.





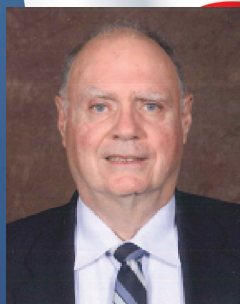
NEW YORK STATE SENATE
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EMIL PREUSS
Beekman

Emil Preuss served his country with honor as an Air Corp Sergeant from 1943-1946. While serving, he attended training school in Denver to learn how to load bombs into the B-29 aircraft. He earned medals of Good Conduct with both the Pacific Theater and the Battle of Guam. After his years of service in the Air Corp, he spent the next 33 years working for the New York State Department of Corrections. He retired as a Lieutenant in charge of inmate transfer. He worked at the Sing Sing, Downstate Corrections, and Green Haven facilities.

After his dedicated service, he served on the Town of Beekman Recreation Commission, Beekman Conservation Board, and served 16 years as Beekman Town Councilman. He has also dedicated his time to his church board, the PTA, and the Boy Scouts of America.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE
VETERANS'
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PAT SMITH
North Salem

After joining the Navy in 1958, Pat completed boot camp and boilerman school. His years at sea started in San Diego where his ship left on a Western Pacific deployment for six months. In 1960 the ship was repositioned to Mayport, Florida from which he made two Mediterranean deployments and one North Atlantic deployment. Upon completion of those deployments, Pat's enlistment was up and he was discharged in 1962.

For the next 30 plus years, Pat worked as a Stationary Engineer for the City of New York until retirement. He has lived in North Salem for all those years. Together with his wife he raised three sons, who are all Eagle Scouts from Troop 1 in North Salem.

Pat joined the North Salem Post 1866 of the American Legion in 1990 and has been a member ever since. His final thought in his short bio: "I have made many good friends and met many wonderful people during this time."





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

THOMAS B. SMITH *Brewster*

Thomas B. Smith was born in Brewster, NY, one of 14 children. He has eight brothers and five sisters. Six members of his family joined the armed services during World War II. Thomas was one of five siblings who went into the Army. Their other sibling joined the Navy.

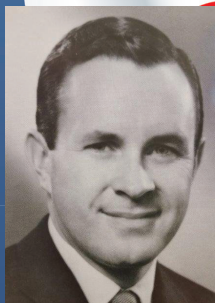
Thomas was drafted in September 1944. After basic training, he was shipped to the European Theater and landed at Le Havre, France in March, 1945. His primary responsibility was clearing stragglers and snipers. His Division stopped in Frankfurt, but he was placed in another detail and continued on living out of foxholes.

Thomas was injured during shelling and returned home through Frankfurt, Paris, and the Hospital Ship Wakefield to reach William Beaumont Hospital in Texas. After six weeks in the hospital, he was medically discharged as a PFC.

His medals included the European African Middle Eastern Medals, one cluster with the Battle of the Bulge, Bronze Star for bravery beyond the line of duty, Combat Infantry Badge, WWII Victory Medal, Lapel Button (Ruptured Duck), Good Conduct Medal engraved with his name, and the New York State Medal.

In 1946, Thomas married Madelyn Hunter from Woodlawn in The Bronx. They had one boy and two girls and moved back to Brewster in 1952. Thomas joined the VFW in 1961, and was VFW Brewster Post 672 Commander from 1965-66 and Putnam County VFW Commander in 1966. He retired from a distinguished career with Metro North in 1986, after 40 plus years of service.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

WILLIS H. STEPHENS

Southeast

Born June 7, 1925, Willis H. Stephens is a life-long resident of Putnam County. At the age of 16 and a student at the Lawrenceville School, in Lawrenceville, NJ, he learned of the destruction at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

While at Lawrenceville, Will Stephens was involved in the College Air Corps Cadet Program and had learned to fly planes at the Danbury, CT, airport. Upon his graduation from high school in 1943 he enlisted with the Army Air Corps and went for training at the Army Air Corps Basic Training Center #10 in Greensboro, NC. He was then sent to Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC, to continue with his flight training. He also attended the Western Flying Training Command in Santa Anna, CA, and Army Air Corps Contract School for further flight training. He flew Stearmans, which were bi-planes, and later was certified in AT6's, a single wing advanced flight trainer.

Willis Stephens graduated at Luke Field, near Phoenix, AZ, in April, 1945 as a pilot, 2nd Lieutenant. As the War in Europe ended shortly thereafter, the newly graduated pilots were sent to Basic Flying Instructors School in Waco, TX.

The war with Japan was over in August, 1945, and while awaiting discharge, he returned to Luke Field to instruct combat returnees, some were combat pilots being retrained, some were returning POW's.

After being discharged in October 1945, Mr. Stephens entered Princeton University, where he majored in Economics.

He married Daphne Dunbar on November 24, 1951 and they have four sons.

In 1952, Mr. Stephens was elected to the NYS Assembly and served for 30 years representing the residents of Putnam County, Dutchess and Westchester Counties. During his legislative tenure he was appointed Chairman of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee where he served as chair from 1969 to 1974 and ranking minority member of that committee from 1975 until his retirement from public service in December, 1982.

In 1959, Mr. Stephens started The W.H. Stephens Corporation, brokers of coal and oil. He retired in 1990.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

MERWIN TREPTOW *Peekskill*

Merwin “Dutch” Treptow joined the navy in 1945 at the age of 17 as a First Class Petty Officer. He was stationed in Guam. Upon discharge three years later from a minority Crew, he had the pleasure of coming home on the USS Hector. Mr. Treptow’s sense of obligation to his country drove him to re-enlist a year later. He was stationed in Hawaii until he was discharged again at the age of 23.

He married his lifelong friend, Joyce, at the age of 20, and has been married for 65 years. They have a beautiful family of three children, four grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

Mr. Treptow worked as a photo lithographer during his leaves from the Navy and after his final discharge he pursued a career with Prudential Insurance as a salesman and where he retired as a staff manager.

Mr. Treptow was not done yet. After retirement, he bought the Red Shutter Inn in 1970 and was a successful businessman until he sold it in 1981.

He has been very dedicated and involved in the Peekskill Elks Club since 1958, organizing fundraisers and dinners. Mr. Treptow also earned the Elk of the Year. He was a volunteer fireman since he was in his 20’s, and served as Captain in the Washington Engine Company in Peekskill. Mr. Treptow is also a Mason and a Legionnaire.

Mr. Treptow is devoted to his family as well as the community – he tirelessly serves.





NEW YORK STATE SENATE
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EUGENE J. VAVREK

Buchanan

Eugene J. Vavrek, from the Village of Buchanan, served our country during World War II with honor and valor. He earned rank of Technician Fourth Grade, 74th Signal Corp (SP) and received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army on October 26, 1945.

He was decorated with the President's Citation, the Medal for Liberation of Eastern and Southern France, the European, African, Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the Meritorious Unit Emblem, the World War II Victory Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, the Liberation of the Jews at Daccare Medal, and the World War II Honorable Lapel Button.



NEW YORK STATE SENATE **VETERANS'** HALL OF FAME

ROY WESTMORELAND

Pleasantville

US Navy: 3rd class petty officer (YN3) at time of discharge

National Defense Medal

Naval Expeditionary medal (for service at the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba)

I am pleased to nominate Roy Westmoreland for the 40th Senate District Veterans Hall of Fame. Roy served with distinction in the United States Navy and received the Naval Expeditionary Medal for service at the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba.

After discharge from the Navy, Roy had a 32-year career at IBM, retiring in 1994. He served as president of the IBM Quarter Century Club, both during his IBM career and post-retirement. After retiring from IBM, he launched a new business (ASAP Messenger), which continues to serve businesses in the region.

Roy's many volunteer activities include service as a youth basketball and baseball coach; Scout leader; advisory board member for the Byram Hills School District and Masters School in Dobbs Ferry; warehouse manager Hillside Food Pantry; and volunteer for the Rockefeller State Park Preserve and Briarcliff Animal Shelter.

A key member of Pleasantville's Fancher Nicoll American Legion Post 77, Roy has provided extraordinary service—serving his fellow veterans, raising funds for Legion and community projects, organizing chili dinner fundraisers, assisting vets at the Montrose Hospital, and leading numerous Legion initiatives. The Legion flag project, conceived and executed by Roy, turned Pleasantville's Bedford Road into a "Corridor of Honor" – with American flags displayed along the entire length of our central artery from Memorial Day through Veterans Day.





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

By Elizabeth Claire Palmer

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

A profound statement...a catalyst for thought.

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

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

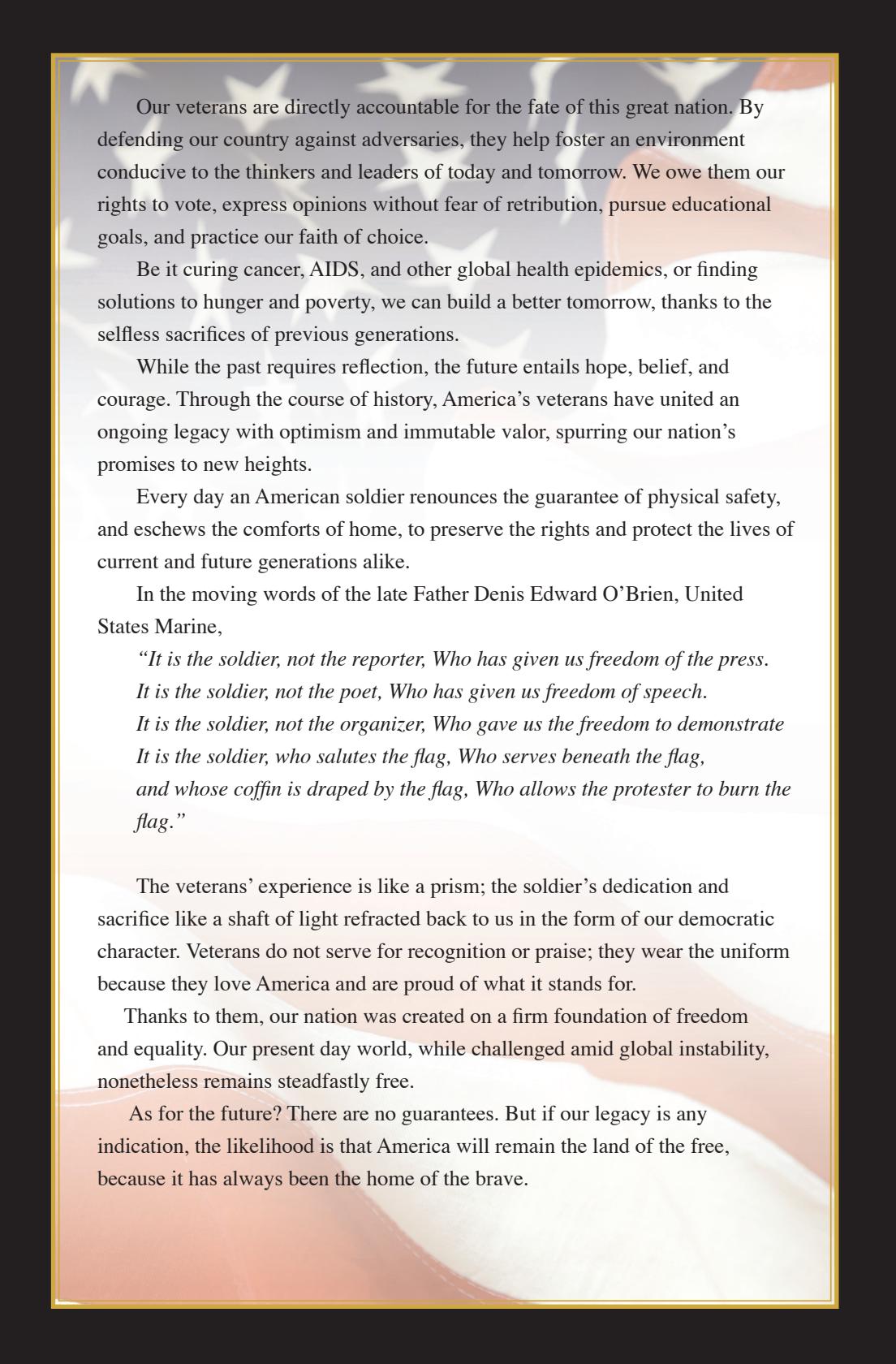
William Shakespeare once mused, "What is past is prologue."

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

From the young marine in Normandy to the tanker in Kuwait, the ensign at Leyte Gulf to the transport pilot at Khe Sanh, veterans have unfailingly defended our honor, meeting every crisis with poise and perseverance. As the Air Force motto declares,

"The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer."

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



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

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

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

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

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

*"It is the soldier, not the reporter, Who has given us freedom of the press.
It is the soldier, not the poet, Who has given us freedom of speech.
It is the soldier, not the organizer, Who gave us the freedom to demonstrate
It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, Who serves beneath the flag,
and whose coffin is draped by the flag, Who allows the protester to burn the flag."*

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

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

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

