

DOWNTOWN
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2026

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Unified Military Affairs Council

The mission of the Unified Military Affairs Council is to highlight the importance of the military presence in the Capital Region and Tech Valley. Its number one goal is to ensure the long term viability and success of Stratton Air National Guard Base and the Navy Operation Support Center in Glenville, N.Y., as well as other military units in the Capital Region which have a profound effect on our local economy.

UMAC strives to facilitate a symbiotic partnership between the community and military by increasing public knowledge of the contributions made by local military units in the Capital Region, all of which impact our global, national, state, and regional economy. UMAC highlights positive partnerships that the military has already formed with State and Federal agencies so all parties understand the vital role our Capital Region military units play in securing our nation.

UMAC also brings attention to the wide community support and pride for our local military units, as well as their significant local volunteer contributions, such as:

- Mentorship Program at Yates Elementary School
- Educational Partnership with Proctors
- Schenectady Holiday Parade Marshals
- Schenectady Inner City Ministries Summer Lunch Program
- Salvation Army Holiday Food Basket Delivery
- Naval Sea Cadet Corps
- Capital District Construction Career Days
- American Red Cross Blood Drives
- Greater Capital Region Science and Engineering Fair
- Caps for Kids Program



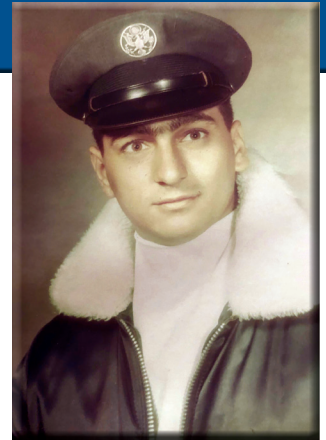
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SGT Joseph Barratiere – AIR FORCE

SGT Joseph Barratiere was born in Schenectady, New York, February 2, 1949. He attended school and graduated from Mount Pleasant High School in 1967 where he signed up for a delayed enlistment in the Air Force in his senior year. He was shipped out to basic training in August of 1967 and was stationed at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was a crew chief on the F11 supersonic swept wing jet. After the service he began working at General Electric and started a family. Joseph worked at GE for 34 years and is now happily retired, still residing in Schenectady.

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SGT Robert Brandolino – MARINE CORPS

SGT Robert Brandolino: In 1989, at age 18, Robert enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, following in his father's footsteps. He completed boot camp at Parris Island where he became a WSQ scout swimmer and trained at Camp Lejeune where he attended the School of Infantry as an 0311 rifleman and became a demolition expert. From 1990 to 1993, he was stationed in Washington, D.C., with A Company, 2nd Platoon, where he guarded the President of the United States and participated in ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Pentagon. He was also deployed to Camp David. He was promoted to Corporal during this time. In 1991, he deployed to the Gulf War, participating in the breach and the Battle of Khafji, serving on a TRAP team, and assisting in the capture of 467 enemy prisoners and an Iraqi tank. In 1993, he joined FAST Company in Norfolk, Virginia, attended sniper school, and deployed to Somalia while also securing embassies worldwide. In 1995, he deployed to Bosnia and was promoted to Sergeant. After his honorable discharge in 1997, he returned to Schenectady, worked in the trades, and has been with General Electric since 2008. He received numerous commendations throughout his service.

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LCPL James H. Chillis – MARINE CORPS

LCPL James H. Chillis, Jr. was born in Albany, NY in 1970 to James and Phyllis Chillis and moved to Schenectady at an early age. He received his primary and secondary education through the Schenectady City School System and graduated from Mont Pleasant High School in 1988. During his time in high school James was very athletic and was a member of the football, indoor, and outdoor track teams from his freshman through senior years. Three weeks after graduation James enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1988 where he was stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina and Camp Foster in Okinawa, Japan. James served his country during Operation Desert Shield/Storm in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from 1990-1991 and was honorably discharged in 1992. James later enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1993 and was honorably discharged in 1996. He later attended Schenectady County Community College and attained his associate's degree in criminal justice. James actively serves as a Deacon, Usher and Sunday School Teacher at his church. He is happily married to his wife Marilyn and is a loving father and grandfather. During his free time James enjoys baking, working out, running and spending time with family and friends. He is currently employed at General Electric.

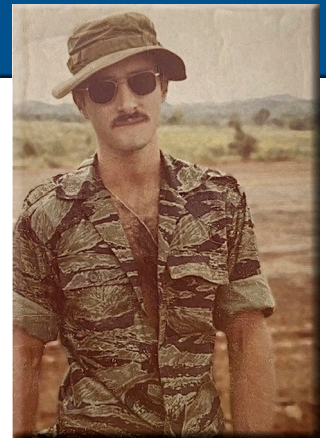


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SP4 Paul D. Davis – ARMY

SP4 Paul D. Davis was born in Schenectady at Ellis Hospital to the late Alex and Thelma Davis. Paul attended Craig Elementary, VanAntwerp Middle School and Niskayuna High School. He graduated in 1967. Paul was drafted into the Army in 1969. He completed basic training at Ft. Dix, NJ. From there, he went to Ft. Rucker, AL for advanced individual aviation training. Paul was then sent to Quang Tri, Vietnam and served with the 1st Brigade 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized Aviation Detachment). He received numerous air medals for combat. Paul completed his enlistment at Homestead Air Force Base, FL. Returning home, he worked for several years for his family-owned business of Food Circus grocery stores. Paul attended SUNY Oswego graduating in 1986 Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor's of Science in Education. While at Oswego, he worked for NY State until 1990. Paul then returned to Schenectady where he worked for various schools as an Industrial Arts/Technology Teacher until his retirement. Today, Paul enjoys spending time on various hobbies he loves, especially his favorite- riding motorcycles.



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LT Bartholomew Schermerhorn DeForest – ARMY

LT Bartholomew Schermerhorn DeForest was born in Rotterdam on February 9, 1823, the second child of Jacob and Anna DeForest. He worked as an architect in Albany before enlisting on August 26, 1862, at the age of 39. He obtained the rank of First Lieutenant, was assigned to the 81st New York Infantry, and served as Quartermaster from September 1, 1862, to September 19, 1864. He was injured in battle and mustered out with a discharge disability on September 19, 1864. Bartholomew married Elizabeth Walker in 1847 and had two daughters. The family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, after the war where Bartholomew continued his architectural career. He died in Cleveland on April 30, 1886, at the age of 63 and is buried in Vale Cemetery in Schenectady.



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CPL John J. Ettore – AIR FORCE

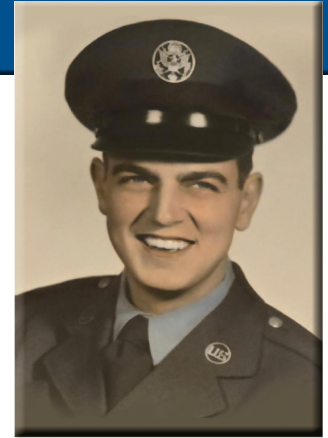
CPL John J. Ettore was born on March 23, 1923. He was one of eight children. John attended Draper High School where he excelled in basketball and baseball, and graduated in 1941. John was a proud American who loved his country. His story of WWII was featured on the front page of the Schenectady Gazette on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2014. He was one of five brothers, Frank, Albert, Stephen, and Harold, who were called to duty after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Remarkably, they all returned home after the war ended. John married the love of his life, Loretta, in 1952, and they later adopted their daughter Lori in 1966. He loved baseball and was a loyal Yankees fan who hardly ever missed a game. John died on April 14, 2015, he was 92. His wonderful sense of humor will be forever remembered. John is survived by his daughter Lori Lapi, her husband Joseph, and his grandson Joseph.



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SGT Roger Farley – AIR FORCE

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SA Raymond A. Feurstein – NAVY

SA Ray Feurstein was drafted the year he graduated and went on a deferred enlistment to the United States Navy in 1971. He took his boot camp at the Orlando Florida Naval Training Center. From there he went to his duty station in Little Creek Virginia Amphibious Base where he entered the School of Music program along with other duties. During his stay there, Ray was injured on duty and was treated at the Norfolk Naval Hospital for six months. There he was given an Honorable release from duty in 1973 and returned home. After his release, Ray became an electronic engineering assistant at Environment One Corp. Macrodyne Corp., Teleresources Corp, and Contel Com., which turned into GTE and later Verizon Networks. In 1987 he landed a position with Contel. /GTE which later became Verizon Networks rising to Senior Field Engineer then Director of field engineering for Verizon Networks (30 years 2010). In 2008 Ray joined the Schenectady County Auxiliary Police and in 2010 was made the Chief. He was also employed by the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office as a Special Patrol Deputy conducting search and seizure in county buildings. During that time, Ray became a Master Instructor in General Topics through the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services, and he worked in the Police academy and formed his own academy within the Auxiliary Police Dept. Ray is a schooled musician and teaches music as well. He owns a local electronics repair business and is a published author of four books (available on Amazon). Ray credits who he is and how he is, to his time in the military. "I wouldn't be the person I am today if not for the training I received while serving our country."

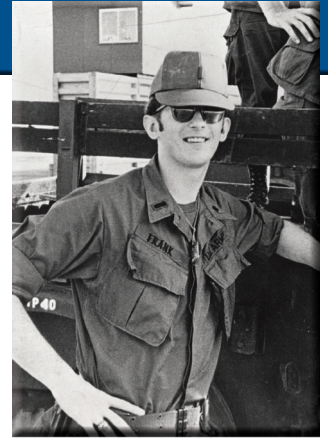


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CPT William F. Frank – ARMY

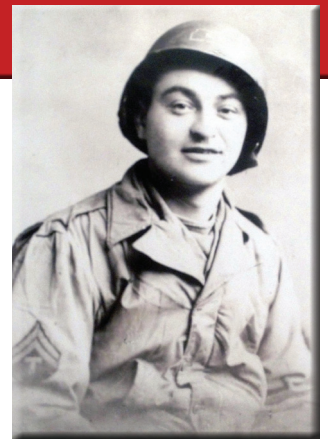
CPT William F. Frank attended Niagara University from 1965 to 1969. While he was there, he enrolled in Army ROTC. Upon graduation, he received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Finance Corps. In April of 1970, he began his active duty by attending basic and advanced Finance Officers Training in Indianapolis, IN. In June 1970, he was assigned to Fort Jackson in Columbia, SC. While at Fort Jackson, he was assigned as the Officer-in-Charge of a Branch Office. This was a position normally staffed by a Captain. Bill received orders to go to Vietnam beginning in July 1971. When he landed in Vietnam, he was assigned to the Finance Office in Cam Ranh Bay (CRB) as a Disbursing Officer. He signed for a vault containing \$6 million in currencies; all troops assigned in II Corps, received their monthly pay from the CRB office which was assigned to the units' pay officers. The picture on Bill's banner is one of him at the CRB airport waiting for a currency delivery of about \$1 million from the Saigon Finance office. Bill was assigned as the Officer-in-Charge of the Finance office in Nha Trang his last 2 months in Vietnam. This position, too, was normally filled by a Captain. Upon leaving Vietnam, during his exit interview, his boss, Col. Bente asked if he would consider staying in the Army. He respectfully declined, saying his ultimate goal was to receive his CPA license, which he attained in 1974. Upon retirement from a career in auditing and tax enforcement, he volunteered as a van driver for Schenectady County veterans to the VA Hospital in Albany. After 3 years he was appointed as the Director of the Schenectady County Veterans Service Agency, in which he served for 13 years. As Director, the agency served about 10,000 Schenectady County veterans.



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T-5 Harold Hochvert – ARMY

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CPT John Lontrato – ARMY

CPT John Lontrato was a lifetime resident of Schenectady County. Upon graduation from Schalmont High School in 1978, he enlisted in the US Air Force where he served 9 years on active duty. His tours of duty in Security Forces and Resource Management took him to Texas, Arizona, and Colorado, then to England and Germany. His Air Force decorations include - AF Achievement Medal, AF Good Conduct Medal and Small Arms Expert Ribbon. After his honorable discharge from the Air Force in 1987, he returned home to Schenectady to complete his education, while continuing his military career with the New York National Guard. Upon graduation from the Empire State Military Academy, he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant and assigned to Joint Forces Headquarters, New York National Guard, Latham NY. His duty assignments included - Mobilization/Readiness Officer, NYNG Counter-drug Staff Officer and JFHQ Finance and Logistics Officer. His NYARNG awards include - National Defense Service Medal, Army Reserve Forces Achievement Medal and New York National Guard Service Medal. A veteran of the Cold War Era, Desert Storm/Desert Shield and 911, he holds an Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree and two Graduate Certificates. Captain Lontrato retired in 2003 after 25 years of service to his State and Nation. Married for 38 years, he and his wife Cheri (Brassard) currently live in Surfside Beach SC and have two children and four grandchildren.



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SP4 Bruce A. Martin – ARMY

SP4 Bruce A. Martin was born in Niskayuna, New York on July 26, 1951, to Catherine (Mantello) and John Douglas Martin. He graduated from Draper High School in 1971 and then was drafted into the United States Army and began service as a Private First Class on January 22, 1971. He was stationed in Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division from July 18, 1971, to April 24, 1972, and on November 18, 1971, was promoted to SP4. Bruce received several medals: Vietnam Service Medal with three Bronze Service Stars, National Defense Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Expert (Grenade) and Sharpshooter (Rifle). After his overseas duty, he was assigned to 15th Adjutant Company, 1st Cavalry Division in Fort Hood, Texas until his honorable discharge on March 8, 1974. He served in the Army Reserve for three years until January 21, 1977, when he was fully discharged from the United States Army. Bruce retired from Gurley Precision Instruments in Troy, New York after 45 years of dedicated service. He currently resides in Rotterdam, New York with his wife of 45 years, Janice (ra) Martin. They have two children and three grandchildren: son, Jonathan Douglas Martin, Daughter, Katherine Elizabeth (Martin) Ragule, daughter-in-law, Crystal VanAlstyne Martin, son-in-law, Kyle Ragule, granddaughter, Ava Rose Martin, grandson, Leon James Ragule and grandson, Jonathan James Martin



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LT COL John R. Meachem – AIR NATIONAL GUARD

LT COL John Robert Meachem was born and raised in Schenectady. A proud veteran and dedicated community member, John lived a life of service, family, and remarkable achievement. John was a lifelong Schenectady resident who graduated from Mont Pleasant High School in 1947, where he served as senior class president and excelled in track and cross country. After studying at the American Academy of Mortuary Science, he worked as a licensed funeral director at Griswold's Funeral Home on State Steet. John's military service defined much of his life. Joining the Air National Guard in October 1950, he trained as a jet pilot at Marana Air Base in Arizona, graduated from Williams Air Force Base, and became a pilot instructor at Craig Air Force Base. A veteran of the Vietnam War, he served with distinction in the Schenectady 109th Air National Guard, eventually becoming First Safety Officer. Over his career, he logged 10,000 flight hours piloting eight different aircraft, including the F-86, C-130, and P-51 and flew many supply missions to Greenland for the 109th. He retired with honor as a Lieutenant Colonel in March 1984. In Schenectady, John and his mother owned M's Diner on State Street for 10 years beginning in 1958. After military retirement, he worked in real estate for Purdy and Caldwell Banker for 20 years. John and his beloved wife, Mary Powers, also of Schenectady, married in 1958. They have four children Matthew, Kevin, Elizabeth, and Mark; 11 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.



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CPO Merced Mercado Thomas – NAVY

Banner Sponsored by: Your Dad & Mom



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SGT Thomas E. Miakisz – ARMY

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MSGT Joseph Ottati – AIR FORCE | ARMY

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CSM Nicholas J. Pardi – ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

CSM Nicholas Pardi enlisted in the New York Army National Guard in 2002 and has built a distinguished career within the Military Police Corps. He deployed to Iraq in 2004 and again in 2009, later serving with the 42nd Infantry Division as an Assistant Inspector General. Over the course of his service, CSM Pardi has held key leadership roles including First Sergeant of the 206th Military Police Company and Operations Sergeant Major for the 104th Military Police Battalion. He has led numerous emergency response missions, including major storm activations, COVID-19 operations—most notably at the Javits Center Medical Station—and security support in Washington, D.C. following January 6, 2021. He now serves as Command Sergeant Major of the 104th Military Police Battalion. In his civilian career, CSM Pardi joined the Town of Niskayuna Police Department in 2008 and currently serves as a Sergeant, overseeing the department's accreditation program. He resides in Niskayuna with his wife and three children.



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PFC James L. Pavoldi – ARMY

PFC James Louis Pavoldi was born in Schenectady, New York on August 28, 1922, to Maria (Micco) and James Pavoldi. He graduated from Mont Pleasant High School in 1941. James enlisted in the United States Army on November 19, 1942. He began his service as a Private First Class, in Battery A, 411th AAA Battalion in the Continental USA as a radio operator for eight months. He served in battle during WWII in Central Europe, Naples-Foggia, North Apennines, Rhineland, Rome-Arno from August 1943 until October 1945. He received the following medals during his service: European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal and Good Conduct Medal. He was honorably discharged from the United State Army on October 27, 1945. After his service, he married Reafeala (Larizza) Pavoldi on August 28, 1948. They lived in the City of Schenectady and the Town of Rotterdam and raised five children: Lucille, James, Carol, Susan and Janice. He received his Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) from Siena College while also working for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in Schenectady, New York until his retirement in 1974. A CLU is a prestigious, specialized designation for financial professionals focusing on life insurance, estate planning, and risk management. James loved his dog, Velvet, and enjoyed his time playing poker on Friday nights, rotating between his home and the homes of his brother, Ray, his friends, and ultimately his son James and James' friends. James had strong moral values and passed them on to his children. He strived for excellence.



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SP4 Stanley Pawlak – ARMY

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SGM Jeffrey D. Quivey – ARMY

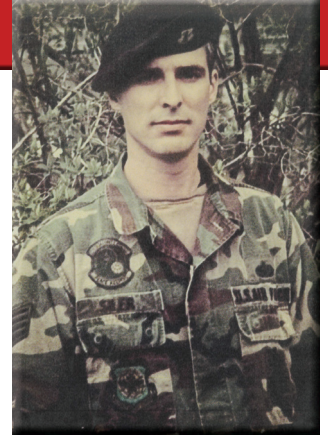
SGM Jeffrey Quivey enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2002. After basic training he was sent to Fort Drum to mobilize. SGM Quivey then spent 17 months preparing for and serving in Iraq. Upon returning from Iraq SGM Quivey missed the commodity and service, so he applied and was hired as a full-time, Active Guard Reserve with the New York National Guard. There he served in different positions including Team Leader, Platoon Sergeant, First Sergeant, and at the pinnical of his career he served as the New York Army National G1 Sergeant Major, and the New York National Guard J1 Sergeant Major during both the COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Asylum Seeker Support. SGM Quivey retired with over 20 years of active service in March of 2024.

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TSGT Robert W. Siler – AIR FORCE

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SGT Nicholas Smith – ARMY

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PFC Warren Smith – ARMY

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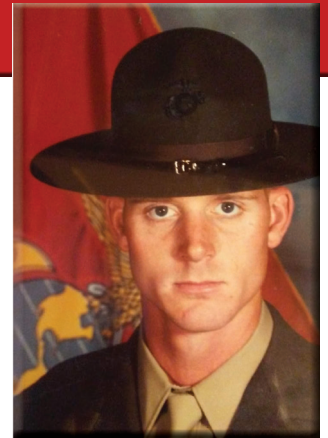
SP4 Steven Struffolino – ARMY

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MSGT Michael A. Sturgess – MARINE CORPS

MSGT Michael Sturgess, from the moment he stepped onto the yellow footprints in July 1984, MSGT Michael A. Sturgess' Marine Corps career was defined by rapid growth and high-impact leadership. After proving his technical grit in the supply field at Camp Lejeune and Camp Smith he took on one of the toughest mantles in the Corps: the Campaign Cover. As a Drill Instructor for Fox Company and a Senior Drill Instructor for Golf Company at MCRD San Diego, MSGT Sturgess personally guided the transformation of over 700 recruits into United States Marines. His legacy isn't just in the medals he earned, like the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, but in the generation of leaders he molded on the drill field. After 22 years of dedicated service in supply leadership and as a Substance Abuse Counseling Officer, MSGT Sturgess' mission hasn't changed. Even today, he continues to embody the ethos and stand by his brothers-in-arms as part of the Marine Corps League, proving that 'Once a Marine, Always a Marine' isn't just a motto—it's how he lives his life. Semper Fi, MSGT Sturgess!

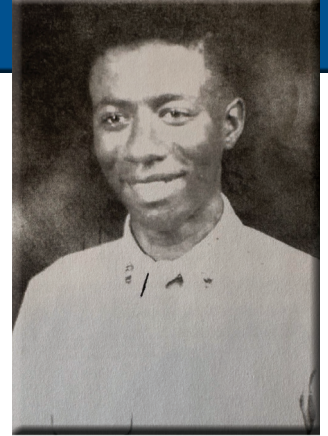


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PVT A2C John B. Terry Jr. – MARINE CORPS | AIR FORCE

PVT |A2C John B. Terry Jr. was born on February 6, 1937, in Warm Springs, GA. John was raised alongside five siblings. In 1946, at the age of nine, he moved with his family to Schenectady, NY, where he became a well-respected, loved, and known resident among family, close friends, and co-workers. He and his late wife, Jean Mae Terry, shared four daughters (one of whom is deceased), five grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. John began his military career by entering the Air Force in July 1957. He was stationed in New Jersey with the 3970th MATRON (SAC)/Strategic Air Command. During his service, he traveled to Spain and England and received the Air Force Longevity Service Award AFR 900-10 before transferring out in August 1959. He then entered the Marine Corps Reserve, serving as a private and working as an airplane mechanic. He was stationed in Santa Ana, California, and attended schools in Jacksonville, Florida, and Memphis, Tennessee, to study airman and mechanical training. He was awarded a National Defense Service Medal before concluding his service in June 1962. After his military career, John returned home to his family and embarked on a long civilian career. He worked and retired from General Electric in Schenectady, NY, after over 30 years of service. Driven by a desire to remain social and connected with the community, he later worked for many years for Schenectady and Albany City School District School Bus Companies, from which he retired in the summer of 2024.

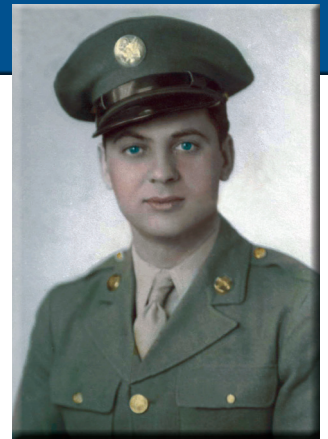


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PVT Dominick F. Tiscione – ARMY

PVT Dominick F. Tiscione was born in Schenectady on July 13, 1913, one of seven children born to Italian immigrants, and was a lifelong resident of Schenectady County. He entered service in the US Army on May 15, 1943, where he served as a military policeman, and was honorably discharged on December 2, 1944. He believed in God, his country, and family. Dom was a member of St. Gabriel's Church in Rotterdam, where he was an usher for 35 years. He was also a member and past commander of DAV Post 88 for 60 years. He was most proud of his serving as a two-time Grand Marshall of the Rotterdam Memorial Parade. Dom, and Adelaide, his wife of 60 years, were devoted to their one son, Frederick. He was the proud grandfather of Matthew and Marcus, and the proud great-grandfather of Matteo and Lorenzo. He was a letter carrier for the USPS for many years, retiring in 1975. Dom passed away on June 22, 2010, three weeks shy of his 97th birthday.

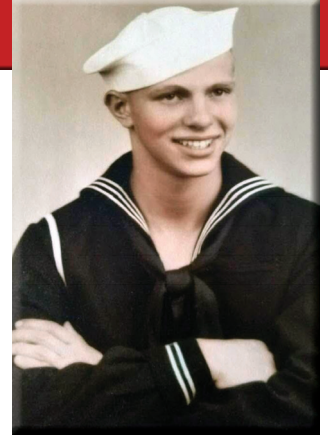


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EM2 Bernard Valachovic – NAVY

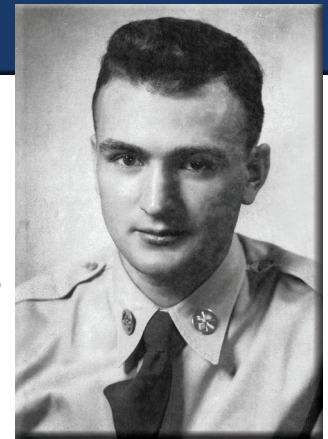
EM2 Bernard Valachovic was born in Schenectady, NY. He graduated from Mont Pleasant High School. Bernard served in the U.S Navy from 1943 - 1946. He served aboard multiple LCIs in the South Pacific. Bernard was awarded the American Area Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon (4), the Good Conduct Medal, the World War II Victory Medal and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon (2). After returning home Bernard was employed by General Electric for 39 years, retiring in 1986. He was a member of the GE Quarter Century Club and the Schenectady County Civil Defense. He was an amateur CB radio operator. Bernard married the love of his life Elizabeth Stillwell in 1955 and started their family having four children, two boys and two girls. Bernard (aka "Poppy" to his grandchildren and their friends) participated and supported his children and grandchildren in their many activities. He never missed an event that any of them were in. He also enjoyed traveling the world with his wife by his side and good friends. Serving his country was one of the great joys of his life and a source of tremendous honor and pride. Bernard passed away October 23, 2010.



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PFC Edward A. Villano – ARMY

PFC Edward A Villano was born in Schenectady on May 9, 1936. After graduating Simmon's School of Mortuary Science, Ed proudly served his country by enlisting in the US Army, where he was a Communications Specialist in the 10th Special Forces. Before being honorably discharged in 1956, Ed was awarded the Army of Occupation Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. Ed then returned to Rotterdam, where he and his wife Patty, raised their family. Ed worked at St. Clare's hospital where he was the Chief of Chemistry, for many years. After retirement, Ed went on to open his own business, Villano Automotive, in Schenectady. Ed was always happy to serve and was involved in many of the local service organizations, VFW Post 357, Schenectady Polish American Veterans, American Legion Post 1485, Rotterdam Eagles and the National Kidney Foundation.



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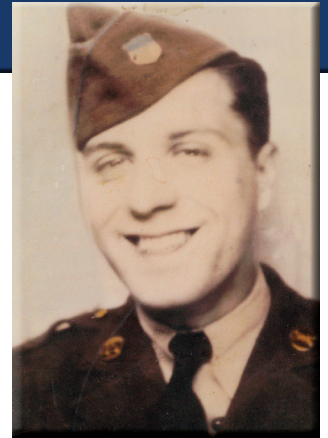
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PV T Dominick F. Villanova – ARMY

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SN Peter J. Wajda – COAST GUARD

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A2C Fred Whelan – NAVY

A2C Fred Whelan was born and raised in Rotterdam, NY. He graduated from Mohonasen in May of 1961, and enlisted in September of the same year, alongside two close high school friends. He began his Navy journey in boot camp at Great Lakes in Illinois. After a few months, he boarded the USS Edisto AGB-2 in 1961 and concluded his service in 1965 after voyage on the USS Tanner AGS-15. He served as an aviation electronics technician on non-aviation ships as a detachment for 4.5 years after schooling through the Navy. During Fred's time in the Navy, he got to travel to various parts of the world as part of his active service, including Iceland, Greenland, Norway, Spain, Italy, Greece, Chile, and Antarctica. It was in Antarctica while working on Operation Deep Freeze 65 that he was bitten by a penguin on his face after attempting to take a photo with it. Along with numerous helicopter flights and walking among the penguins, one of his other favorite memories of the Navy was when he and the crew crossed over and were able to see where the Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean meet. After serving, he eventually operated his own company that sold and serviced x-ray machines. With his background in helicopter technology, he later learned about x-ray machine technology and often serviced the x-ray machines himself. His wife, two daughters, sons-in-laws, and four grandchildren are so very proud of everything that he's accomplished, and love hearing all of his Navy stories and memories!



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