COL James H. Shaw – ARMY & NATIONAL GUARD

COL James H. Shaw was born in Schenectady on February 20, 1924. He attended Schenectady City Schools, graduated from Nott Terrace High School in 1942, and still resides in Schenectady’s Goose Hill. COL Shaw enlisted in the Army Air Force on November 24, 1942, and served as a radio operator and gunner in 10th Air Force in the China-Burma-India Theater. COL Shaw was honorably discharged on October 10, 1945, with the Rank of T SGT. On March 1, 1949, COL Shaw enlisted in Company H of the 105th Infantry, 27th Infantry Division of the National Guard. During his 30 years with National Guard, COL Shaw held many commands; his latest assignment before his retirement was as Chief of Staff at Command and Control HQ. COL Shaw’s decorations and awards include: Army Commendation Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with cluster, Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, and NYS Long and Faithful Service Medal. At his retirement on March 13, 1979, he was placed on the NYS retired list with the rank of Brigadier General.

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LTJG Dr. Hugo V. Isabella – NAVY

LTJG Dr. Hugo V. Isabella was born on June 23, 1920 to parents who emigrated from Italy. Hugo graduated from Mont Pleasant High School in 1939 and found his way to Louisiana State University until his country called his name, and he entered the U.S. Navy on June 8, 1942. LTJG Isabella served with distinction as a Fighter Pilot flying a F6F Hellcat plane off the Aircraft Carrier USS Hornet. LTJG Isabella’s stations were NAS, New Orleans, LA; NAS, Corpus Christi, TX; Bombing Squadron Two, Wildwood, NJ; Quonset Point, RI; and Santa Rosa, CA. During WWII, he flew numerous missions over the Pacific Ocean. His time spent with Bombing Squadron Two was later chronicled in the book “Chock to Chock.” The book reads “A veritable hornet’s nest of A/A guns that the bombers had to blast out, it was there we found out that those red spots whizzing by were not ping pong balls.” The tight-knit group referred to LTJG Isabella by his nickname, Izzy, and also called him “The little flower in full bloom.” They mixed hard work with hard play for one common goal – to fight for their country. “Duty flew hand in hand with danger,” the book reads. LTJG Isabella was honorably released from Active Duty on October 30, 1945. LTJG Isabella’s decorations and awards include: Air Medal, Presidential Citation, American Theatre Ribbon, Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon (4 Stars). After his Navy life was over, he entered dental school at the University at Buffalo and, upon graduation, returned home to his beloved Schenectady to begin his career as an orthodontist until his death on April 20, 1979. He and his brothers’ dental and medical practices were located in Downtown Schenectady in what is now the home of Manhattan Exchange Restaurant. He married the love of his life, Kathleen Casey, and raised six children in the Mont Pleasant neighborhood of Schenectady.

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BT2 William T. Tiernan, Jr. – NAVY

BT2 William T. Tiernan, Jr. enlisted in the Navy on December 6, 1950, and served as a Boiler Technician on the USS Casa Grande (LSD-13) until his honorable discharge on October 20, 1954. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal and the Navy Occupation Service Medal.

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SP4 Michael Angehr – ARMY

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CDR James Fraser – NAVY

CDR Jim Fraser retired from the U.S. Navy in 2002 after serving over 23 years of active and reserve duty. In his last assignment at the Pentagon in Washington, DC, he served as the Director for Senate Affairs in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. In addition to a wide range of responsibilities for all Senate issues, including political nominations, he also maintained primary responsibility for international security policy issues, including National Missile Defense, Cooperative Threat Reduction, Export Controls, Foreign Military Sales, and National Strategic Policy. Prior to this assignment, CDR Fraser was a Senior Policy Advisor assigned to the Balkans Task Force in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. His duties for the Task Force included responsibility for policy review of NATO military planning for the Balkans, congressional liaison, and public affairs liaison. Designated a Naval Aviator in March 1981, CDR Fraser spent the majority of his active duty Naval career flying the P-3 Orion, specializing in anti-submarine warfare and surveillance. Leaving active duty in November 1986, he affiliated with the Naval Reserve in Willow Grove, PA. In April 1997, Mr. Fraser was recalled to active duty in support of Operation Joint Guard in Sarajevo, Bosnia. In this assignment, he served as a Senior Staff Officer at Stabilization Force (SFOR) Headquarters, responsible for coordination of all P-3 overland surveillance and reconnaissance flights. Following this tour, he was offered a full recall to active duty, bringing him to the Pentagon and his assignment in the Balkans Task Force. CDR Fraser has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the United States Naval Academy and a Master of Arts Degree in Legislative Affairs from George Washington University. From 1988 to 1994, while serving in the Navy Reserves, CDR Fraser returned home to work as a Project Manager with Schenectady Hardware and Electric, Inc. He is married to the former Maureen Amazon of Schenectady, NY.

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LTJG Donald Spraragen – NAVY

Donald Spraragen was born and raised in Schenectady. After he graduated from high school he went on to obtain his Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering from RPI in 1945. LTJG Spraragen is a World War II Navy Veteran, who served his country from 1942 to 1945. He was honorably discharged in 1945 and moved to Seattle, WA to apply his education in aeronautical engineering and work at Boeing. In 1950 LTJG Spraragen returned to Schenectady to work at the family business, Schenectady Hardware & Electric. For 42 years, LTJG Spraragen was responsible for overseeing the electrical phase of commercial and industrial construction. A few of his major accomplishments to our local area are Saratoga Performing Art Center (SPAC), Albany Medical Center, the Schenectady Library, as well as a number of area schools, hospitals, and prisons. He has six children, eleven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren, and currently resides in Florida. His Grandson, Chris, continues to run the family business in Schenectady.

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SGT Robert G. Briere Sr. – ARMY

SGT Robert G. Briere Sr. was a highly decorated veteran of the U.S. Army, serving in Vietnam with the 82nd Airborne Green Beret Path Finder Division Special Forces. SGT Briere was given a meritorious commendation from the regiment for his devotedness and excellent service in accomplishing his entrusted missions specifically at the attack of the Viet Cong at Vinh Long Airbase on the night of September 7, 1968. SGT Briere bravely volunteered to guard and secure the Good Shepherd Convent of Vinh Long. From the first moments with a skillful observation, he spotted out the enemies’ post so as to help the gunship in the plotting of the enemy. He was a member of the Carpenters Local #370 in Albany and worked for Bast Hatfield Co. for 22 years.

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CPT William Horsfall – ARMY

CPT William Horsfall was born April 7, 1816, and baptized on May 25, 1816, at the Reformed Dutch Church, Schenectady, NY. CPT Horsfall enlisted in the spring of 1861; was elected captain of a company in the 18th Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry; and met his death on September 14, 1862, while gallantly leading his men during the bloody battle of Antietam in Sharpsburg, MD. He was killed instantly, from a bullet piercing his heart. He is buried in Vale Cemetery, Schenectady, NY.

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T SGT Steven D. Zapf – AIR FORCE

T SGT Steven D. Zapf was born in 1935 at Ellis Hospital and attended school in both Schenectady and Scotia. After graduating in the spring of 1953, he was a lifeguard at Collins Lake. In the fall of 1953, he joined the USAF and served as a meteorologist. He was stationed in Korea, Texas, Illinois, and Washington D.C., and also served two tours in Vietnam during the 1960s. Retiring from the Air Force after 20 years of service, he returned to Schenectady and has lived here ever since. He enjoys fishing, boating, traveling, and spending time with his family. T SGT Zapf is also a former commander of VFW Post 1895 Schenectady, NY.

Banner Sponsored by: The Zapf Family
Technical Sergeant Nicholas V. Pallota was born and raised in Schenectady and attended school in the Schenectady City School District. The only period of time that he did not live in Schenectady, before his death in 2012, was from January of 1942 through August of 1945 while serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. Nicholas was awarded several medals for his service in Africa, Sicily, Italy, and the China-Burma-India Theater, including the Bronze Star. After World War II, he returned to Schenectady, started a family, and took advantage on the GI Bill to graduate from Siena College. From that point on, he spent his life working hard and raising his own family in Schenectady. One of his proudest days was in May of 2004 when he attended the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. Although he would tell funny stories about his and his buddies’ activities during the war, it was obvious that day in May 2004 that there was a lot he never spoke about. There is no doubt that his time spent serving his country was instrumental in shaping his life, and that it gave him an appreciation for where he was from and a reason to return to his hometown, Schenectady.