



Friends of the
**NEW YORK STATE
MILITARY MUSEUM**
Preserving Our Military Heritage

Winter Newsletter

December 2018

“Hot Spots in the Cold War” - Korean/Vietnam War Exhibit unveiled. Now open to the public.



This exhibit examines the origins and outcomes of America's involvement in Korea and Vietnam, with a particular emphasis on the contributions and experiences of New York veterans. In addition, the exhibition explores the domestic impact of the Cold War from the pervasive fear of global nuclear warfare to the debates and protests that divided the nation at the height of the war in Vietnam. (Photo left: section of Vietnam exhibit)



The Friends of the New York State Military Museum again expresses it's thanks to the following organizations that have provided funding for this exhibit: the Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust, Stewarts Foundation, the Saratoga Foundation, Saratoga County Board of Supervisors and the Holowach Charitable Trust. This exhibit would not exist but due to the generous support of these organizations. (Photo left: front section of Korean/Vietnam exhibit)

New exhibit tells the story of the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

A new permanent exhibit highlights the history of the Cold War and the hot wars in Korea and Vietnam.

The exhibit employs pictures and artifacts to tell the story of New Yorkers in combat from 1950 to 1973, the Cold War here at home, and the civil strife in the United States that the Vietnam War caused. Oral history videos are also part of the new exhibit.

Artifacts used to illustrate the history of the Korean War, which began in 1950 and ended in 1953, include an M 1911A 1 .45 caliber pistol, the A-frame pack Korean porters used to transport supplies, water purification tablets, and a 155 artillery shell like those fired in combat by the New York Army National Guard's 955th Field Artillery Battalion.

The history of the Cold War section of the exhibit includes a Civil Defense sanitation kit provided to be used in bomb shelters, a radiation detector which would have been used after an atomic bomb attack and survival ration crackers. (Article courtesy DMNA). (Photo below: portion of Korean war exhibit).



Fifth Annual Trivia Night Fundraiser at Elks Lodge.

The Friends of the New York State Military Museum held their fifth annual Trivia Night Fundraiser on Friday, November Ninth at the Elks Lodge in Saratoga Springs.

An energetic audience participated and at the end of the evening after several rounds of trivia questions first prize was awarded to the “Ancient Order of Hibernians” team. Scott Jeffers is Team Leader. (team pictured right).

The winning team was awarded six passes to the Saratoga National Golf Club.

Participants were treated to a dinner and dessert. A cash bar was available.

Several other prizes were awarded to second and third prize winners, and a 50/50 raffle rounded out the evening.

This fundraiser supports the Military Museum mission of providing new and updated exhibits while preserving, interpreting and disseminating the story, history and records of New York State’s military forces and veterans.

[photos: Paul Fanning]



**Veteran of the Year Ceremony for 2018
held on Saturday, Oct. 27th at the Military
Museum.**



A Vietnam veteran and Purple Heart recipient was honored by the Friends of the New York State Military Museum as Veteran of the Year for 2018.

Lt. Colonel (ret.) Nicholas M. Laiacona of Bolton Landing, NY was presented the Veteran of the Year plaque at a ceremony on Saturday, October 27th. An alumnus of LaSalle Institute of Troy, Laiacona joined the Army in 1966, graduated from Infantry Officer Candidate School in 1967 and served in Vietnam as a platoon leader and company commander in the Mobile Riverine Force, 9th Infantry Division, in the Mekong Delta region.

After returning home from Vietnam, he transferred to the Ordnance Corps and held numerous assignments in the U.S., Korea and Germany.

Laiacona retired on January 31, 1991 after more than 24 years of service in the U.S. Army. His awards and decorations include the Combat Infantry Badge, Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star for Valor with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, three Air Medals and Army Commendation Medal for Valor with four Oak Leaf Clusters.

Also present at the ceremony were Colonel John Andonie, Chief of Staff to the Adjutant General, NY National Guard and U.S. Representative Elise Stefanik of the 21st Congressional District who presented Lt. Colonel Laiacona a proclamation from the U.S. House of Representatives

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday - Saturday
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

(Closed Sunday & Monday)

**RESEARCH CENTER
HOURS**

Appointments are required.

Tuesday – Friday
11:00 am to 4:00 pm

The museum is closed
on
all New York State &
Federal Holidays.

61 Lake Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY
12866
(518) 581-5100

Museum Store
(518) 226-0490

(Tuesday thru Saturday,
11:00am to 4:00pm)

www.friendsofthenysmilitarymuseum.com

“Like” us on Facebook—
“New York State Military
Museum” and “Friends of
the New York State Military
Museum”.

Celebrations and death marked last day of World War I at home and in France.

The last American Soldier to die in World War I-and the last Soldier of any of the warring powers to die during the war-was a member of the 313th Infantry Regiment, made up of draftee Soldiers from Baltimore, Maryland. No one really knows what possessed Sgt. Henry Gunther to charge a German outpost near Chaumont-devant-Damvillers at 10:59 a.m. on the morning on November 11, 1918. The Armistice ending the fighting was to take effect at 11 a.m.-the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. But Gunther ignored the orders to stop. He fired at the Germans and kept coming at them with his bayonet fixed. The Germans fired back and killed him. But although it was the last day of World War I, Gunther was joined in death by other Soldiers-about 320 Americans -- including 56 New Yorkers, according to the roster of World War I casualties maintained by the New York State Military Museum.

Although the Armistice had been signed at 5:10 the morning of Nov. 11, French General Ferdinand Foch, the allied commander in chief, wanted to give his generals six hours to get the word out to stop fighting. American commander John J. Pershing had wanted to push the Germans back into Germany and force a surrender on Germany territory. He told his generals to keep the pressure on until 11 a.m.

So Corporal Francis P. Bergen, a member of Company H, 9th Infantry Regiment, part of the 2nd Division, who lived at 18981 Daly Ave. in New York City was killed in action in the battle of Meuse Argonne. So was 2nd Lt. Alfred Fawner from Brooklyn, killed while leading a platoon of Company I, 321st Infantry of the 81st Division.

Also killed in action on the last day of the war was 2nd Lt. Ernest Holden, a New York City resident and platoon leader in Company A of the 369th Infantry, the Harlem Hell Fighters. The African-American New York National Guard infantry regiment was still attached to the French Army and stationed in a relatively quiet sector of the Vosges Mountains but where bullets still flew.

Corporal Bryan Chamberlain, a member of the New York National Guard's Company E, 105th Infantry from Schenectady, had been wounded as the 27th Division attacked German positions in the Somme area. He died of his wounds on Nov. 11, 1918. Another death recorded on Nov. 11, 1918 was that of Pvt. George Leonardi who lived at 326 East 61st Street in New York. Leonardi was assigned to the Army's 114th Spruce Squadron and was stationed in Joyce, Washington. During World War I spruce lumber, a light and strong wood, was a strategic material. Spruce was used to make airplanes. So the Army set up logging camps manned by 10,000 Soldiers to harvest the vital wood. Leonardi died of pneumonia; a result of the influenza pandemic which swept the globe in 1918.

Also dead of influenza and pneumonia on Nov. 11, 1918 was Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute student and Soldier Pvt. Percy T. Keator. Keator was assigned to the Student Army Training Corps. This predecessor to ROTC allowed men who had been inducted into the Army to continue their college education while preparing to enter the military. Keator, from Tillison, N. Y., was one of 550 students at RPI enrolled in the program.

News of the Armistice came to New Yorkers back home at when they woke on the morning of Monday, Nov. 11. The State Department had announced the deal at 2:45 a.m. In New York City, according to the New York Times, workers on night shifts saw the posters that went up outside newspaper offices -- the 1918 version of a "we interrupt this program"-announcing the end of the war and began celebrating.

"Before the celebration had lasted more than a few minutes a tall, fresh-faced English girl with the Devonshire bloom still on her cheeks, climbed to the platform of "Liberty Hall" at the meeting point of Broadway and Seventh Avenue," the New York Times reported. "Then in a clear silvery voice the girl sang the Doxology." She then went on to sing the French national anthem, the British national anthem, and the Star Spangled Banner, the times reported. In Syracuse, the Syracuse Herald reported that "Rome never howled as Syracuse did" following a celebration that included a two mile parade. "Every band in the city played. It seemed as every person in the city marched," the Herald reported. The paper also noted that at the 208 Clairmonte Avenue home of Malcom Dorian, the family put up the same patriotic bunting to signal the end of the World War that had been used to herald General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox in the Civil War in 1865. (DMNA.NY.GOV)

Please remember to renew your Friends of the New York State Military Museum Membership.

You may renew your membership at our museum store, or by phone at 518-226-0490 or on-line at:

<http://www.friendsofthenysmilitarymuseum.com/index.php/store>.

Benefits of membership include:

E-mail alerts on events,

Membership card,

Invitations to special events and lectures,

Special discounts on purchases at museum store, and most importantly our Friends newsletter.

Your financial support helps us improve and introduce new exhibits.

Please support the military museum.

Your support is sincerely appreciated.

Holiday greetings and best wishes from the staff and volunteers at the New York State Military Museum:

Staff: Courtney Burns, Museum Director, Mark Koziol, Chief Curator, Christopher Morton, Curator, Eric Stott, Military Technician, Jim Gandy, Research Librarian, Colleen Maheux, Office Manager.

Docent Volunteers (starting dates noted): Herb Kopper – Oct. 2002, Brian McVay-Jan. 2003, Len Wasserman-Jan. 2004, Gary Morris-Jan. 2005, Mike Carney-Jan. 2006, Phil Imbarrato-Feb. 2006, Jim Brown-Nov. 2007, Stan Urbaetis-June 2007, Bill Watkins-Dec. 2007, John Kelly-May 2007, Howie Young-Jan. 2008, Janice Kissick-Oct. 2008, Jim Seffren-Dec. 2009, Curt Auerbach-Dec. 2010, Paul McCarthy-Sept. 2010, Richard Straight-Feb. 2011, Robert Kazalski-Aug. 2011, Joe Dewey, Nov. 2011, Ben Ford-Mar. 2012, Fred McCarney-Feb. 2012, Garth Lloyd-Jan. 2013, John and Wilma Jozwiak-Feb. 2013, Mark Pollock, Mar. 2014, Mary Lou Cusma-Oct. 2014, Michael Moran-July 2014, Brennan Corcoran-June 2015, Michael Hare-Sept. 2015, Diane Kurtz-Apr. 2015, Sam Mastrianni-Oct. 2015, Ben Round-Sept. 2015, Jim Spring-Apr. 2015, Brenda Verardi-Oct. 2015, Walter Blair-May 2016, John Lemyre-Nov. 2016, Mary Ann Ling-Aug. 2016, Jim Morzillo-Dec. 2016, Ed Salzman-Nov. 2016, Tim Sinnott-Nov. 2016, Darren Baker-Mar. 2017, Bobby Danison-Apr. 2017, Bill Schmeelcke-Jan. 2017, William Wardell-Feb. 2017, Therese DiGiacomo, Nov. 2018, Margie Herman, Nov. 2018.

Board of Trustees, Friends of the New York State Military Museum: Mark W. Folger, Peter K. Goebel, Barry Hartman, Robert J. Kazalski, David J. Kissick, Roy McDonald, David Molik, Bill Schmeelcke, Louis Schneider, Ernest A. Verni, David T. Wallingford, President. Advisory Council, Friends of the New York State Military Museum: Larry J. Arnold, Michael Audette, Suzanne Carpenter, Paul Fanning, Joseph Murphy, Michelle Taylor, Charles Wheeler.

Thank you is acknowledged to Brainworks Studios, Paul Fanning, Colleen Maheux, and Robert Kazalski for assistance in the production of this newsletter.

Please “like” us on Facebook: New York State Military Museum and Friends of the New York State Military Museum, We are also on Twitter at: @NYMuseumFriends and stay updated for museum events and news on our website: FriendsoftheNYSMilitaryMuseum.com.