



## Exhibit to Open on America's Nuclear Submarines

Beginning on Saturday, June 29, 2024, the New York State Military Museum will be hosting an exhibit highlighting the history of the U.S. Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, as well as the contributions to the Program in the State of New York.

The exhibit, entitled “From New York to the Nuclear Navy,” was created by the Naval Nuclear Laboratory, Naval Reactors and the USS Nautilus Museum in Groton, Connecticut, along with the New York State Military Museum. A Press Release announcing the exhibit notes that the exhibit provides “an immersive experience,” including “over 60 artifacts from across the Program,” as well as activities for children and “QR codes that provide a portal to films, presentations and websites with additional information” related to the Nuclear Propulsion Program.

To celebrate the opening of the exhibit on June 29th, there will be free ice cream at the Museum on that day. In addition, a brass band will be present to provide musical entertainment. Also on hand will be representatives from the U.S. Navy and the Naval Nuclear Laboratory.

According to the Press Release, information on the Naval Nuclear Laboratory is available at <https://navalnuclearlab.energy.gov>, and information on the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program can be found at <https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/powering-navy>.

The exhibit is expected to continue through June 2025 at the New York State Military Museum, where it will be available to be seen during the Museum's regular hours — Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, as well as Mondays from 10:00 to 4:00 from mid-July through Labor Day. Admission to the Museum is free.

## Former Student Docent Returns With His Own Students

Sam Perkins has, you might say, come full circle in his involvement with the New York State Military Museum. Nearly 20 years ago, Sam was a student docent at the Museum. His father, Scott, was a Museum volunteer, and he interested Sam in becoming a docent.

Sam's family had a history with the military. According to Sam, his father had served in the Reserves for nine years, his uncle attended West Point and later taught there, and his grandfather fought in the Pacific in World War II and was part of the staff of General Douglas MacArthur.

Sam had been home-schooled through middle school, and he then attended Ballston Spa High School. As Sam recalls, he began as a student docent when he was about 14 years old. He found it hard to come to the Museum during the school year, due to various commitments, but for a couple of summers he came to the Museum fairly regularly — typically twice per week, says Sam. As Sam tells it, the older docents took him around the Museum, telling him stories which he could then share with Museum visitors. On slow days, Sam says, he would walk around and study the Museum's exhibits.



Former Museum student docent Sam Perkins, with his father, former Museum volunteer Scott Perkins

Photo courtesy  
Colleen Maheux

Fast forward to the present day. After graduating from the University of Richmond and working at various jobs, Sam became a teacher in New York State, with a certification in Social Studies. He now teaches at the Lynch Middle School in Amsterdam, NY (also known as the Wilbur H. Lynch Literacy Academy).

On May 10th, Sam — along with three other teachers and a teaching assistant — brought a class of 14 from the school's Learning to Excel and Achieve Program to the New York State Military Museum. The students are 7th and 8th graders.

According to Sam, several of his students are interested in military history. His positive experience at the Museum in his younger days led him to want to bring his students to also see the Museum.

Sam reports that the reaction of the students to the Museum was mostly positive. At the end of the visit, students shared with each other what they had seen and learned in the exhibits. Several students even said that they wished they had had more time to see the exhibits.

Sam hopes to come back to the Museum with students next year and spend even more time than they were able to spend this year.



Photo courtesy  
Colleen Maheux

Sam Perkins (back left) visiting the NYS Military Museum  
with students from Lynch Middle School (Amsterdam, NY)

Thank you to the following people for their efforts in creating and/or distributing this issue of the Newsletter: Fred Katz, Robert Kazalski, Tim Sinnott, Curt Auerbach, Courtney Burns, Jim Gandy, Colleen Maheux, Bill Watkins, Bruce Farley and Francis Crandall (Flight Creative Group).

## Oral History Interview — Mathew Giltner

Mathew Giltner gave an oral history interview about his service on May 7, 2024. Giltner currently lives in Nevada, but he was in Saratoga in May, and he came to the Museum to do the interview as well as to deliver various materials to the Museum's Veterans Research Center.

Giltner served in the United States Coast Guard for 20 years, from 1983 to 2003. The highest rank he held was E6 Quartermaster 1st class.

As Giltner recounts, when he joined the Coast Guard, he thought that the Coast Guard was an afterthought in the priority of the federal budget. But that had changed for the better by the time he left the service. He adds that it was also interesting to see the change, during his time in the Coast Guard, from analog navigation to digital.

For much of his service, Giltner was involved in drug interdiction and in search and rescue operations. As he mentioned in his written comments, his work dealing with people trying to leave conditions of squalor to come to America “opens a window of reflection from time to time.”

Giltner was serving as command duty officer for NYC on September 11, 2001. He says that he is extremely proud of the trained team he served with on that day. Despite losing all communications, he says they were “monumentally successful in coordinating the commercial traffic in evacuating nearly a million people off Manhattan in about 18 hours.”

The interview with Mathew Giltner can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/WHL3yYdMjgU>.



Photo courtesy  
Jim Gandy

Mathew Giltner during his oral  
history interview at the  
New York State Military  
Museum on May 7, 2024

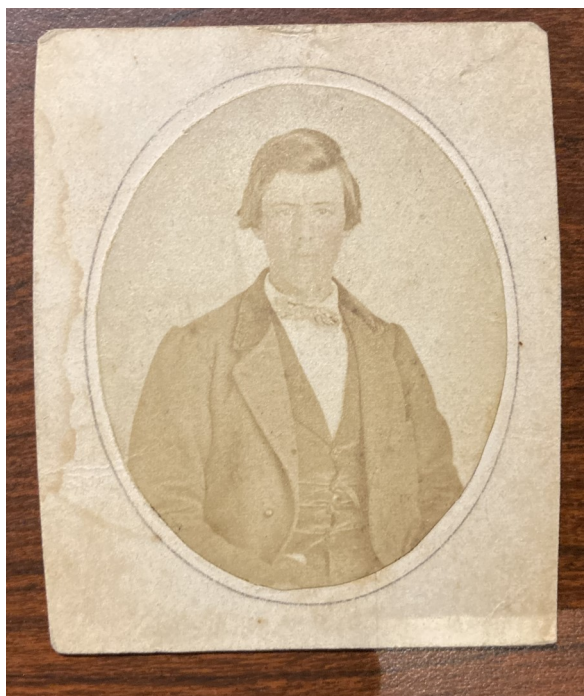
## Highlights from the Research Center

We are highlighting here material from three recent donations to the Museum's Veterans Research Center. Two of the donations relate to World War II, and the other relates to the Civil War.

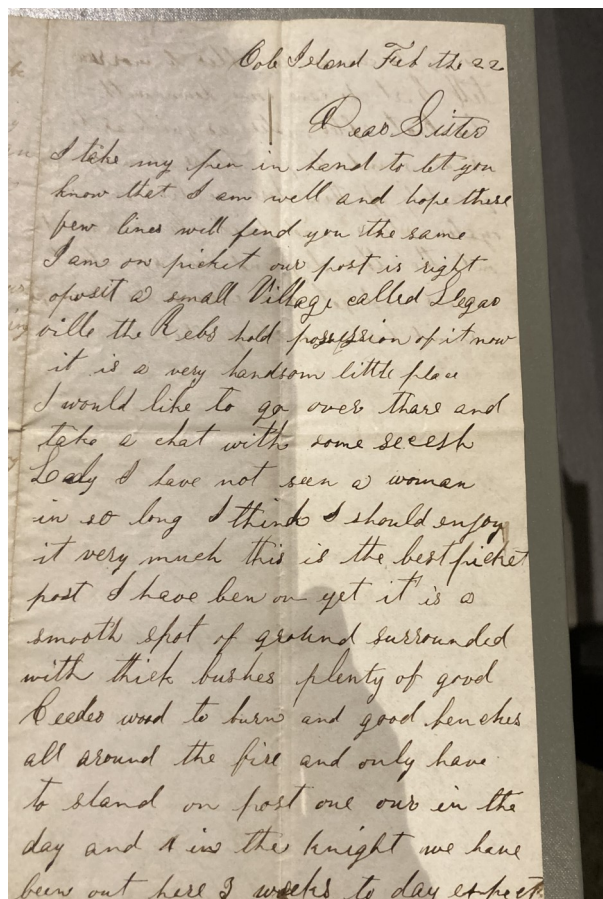
### Soldiers Staying in Touch with Their Sisters

Two recent files sent in to the Research Center have a common theme, despite the fact that they are from time periods approximately 80 years apart: The soldiers engaged in voluminous correspondence with a sister while they were fighting for their country. Each file contains scores, or even hundreds, of letters between the soldier and his sister.

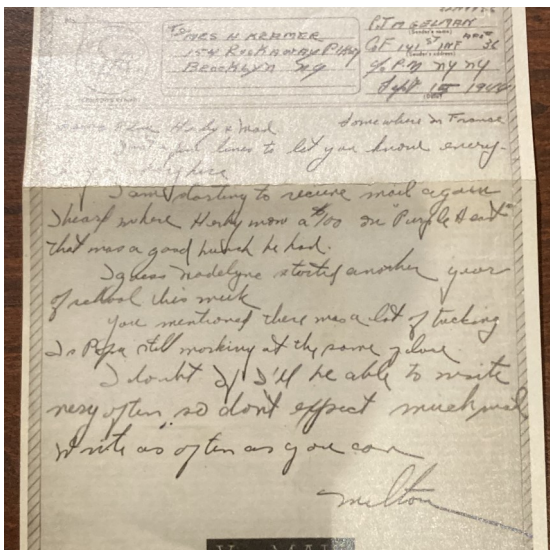
The first file, from the Civil War, was donated by Mathew Giltner, the veteran whose oral history interview is described on the prior page. It contains letters between Union soldier Wilson Wells and his sister, Cordilia, from 1862 to 1864. Wells was wounded on November 30, 1864 at Honey Hill, SC and died of his wounds two days later.



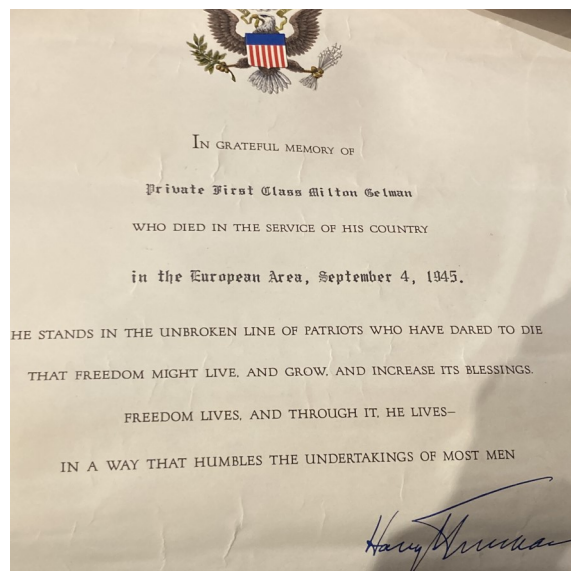
Union soldier Wilson Wells and a letter to his sister, Cordilia



The second file contains letters between World War II soldier Milton Gelman and his married sister, Edna Kramer. Gelman served in the ETO in Italy, North Africa, France and Germany. He survived the War but was killed in a truck accident on his way to the port of embarkation for his trip home in September 1945.



V-Mail from WWII soldier Milton Gelman to his sister Edna Kramer, and a certificate from President Harry Truman regarding Gelman's death in the service of his country



## Eisenhower Safe Conduct Pass



The item on the left is a Safe Conduct Pass, bearing the signature of Dwight David Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander. As the Pass shows, its purpose was to allow German soldiers to voluntarily surrender, in which case they would be given “food and medical attention as required” and would “be removed from the danger zone as soon as possible.”

According to Museum Archivist Jim Gandy, Allied airplanes dropped these Safe Conduct Passes over German-held territory, hoping to get as many German soldiers as possible to give up. Research on these passes shows that they were used by the Allies beginning shortly after the Normandy invasion in June 1944.

# Education Program Has Busy Spring

The Museum's Education Outreach Program has continued to be very active this Spring. The Program has hosted the following school groups to the Museum in recent weeks:

May 10: 14 students from Lynch Middle School in Amsterdam (7th and 8th grades); this is the group mentioned in the story about former Student Docent Sam Perkins, which is found earlier in this Newsletter

May 30: Approximately 40 students from Stillwater schools (5th grade)

May 31: Again, approximately 40 Stillwater students (5th grade)

June 4: 42 students from Schuylerville schools (5th grade)

June 5: 60 students from Schuylerville schools (5th grade)

June 6: 22 students from Mechanicville schools (5th and 6th grades)

The following Docents and Volunteers directed the students through the Museum exhibits on one or more of these occasions: Bill Watkins (head of the Education Outreach Program), Bill Cooney, Hady Finch, Paul Hauschen, Garth Lloyd, Lisa Munday and Tim Sinnott.



Photo courtesy Colleen Maheux

Students from Lynch Middle School visit the Museum in May 2024



Photo courtesy Colleen Maheux

Fifth graders from the Schuylerville School District visit the Museum in June 2024

## Important Dates for Upcoming Activities

The New York and Naval Nuclear Propulsion Exhibit opens to the Public on Saturday, June 29th. See page 1 for more details about the Exhibit and the opening.

The annual Flag Day Parade in Saratoga is taking place this year on July 4th, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. The Museum has acquired a new banner for the Parade, which is shown here:



Picture courtesy  
Tim Sinnott

Please let Colleen know if you are interested in taking part in this year's Parade.

The Friends of the New York State Military Museum are planning a Trivia Night for Saturday, September 14th — Save the Date.

New York State Military Museum & Veterans Research Center  
61 Lake Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
Phone: (518) 581-5100  
Website: [www.museum.dmna.ny.gov](http://www.museum.dmna.ny.gov)

Museum Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM—4:00 PM  
Also open on Mondays from mid-July through Labor Day,  
10:00 AM—4:00 PM

Museum Bookstore and Shop: Tuesday through Saturday,  
11:00 AM — 4:00 PM