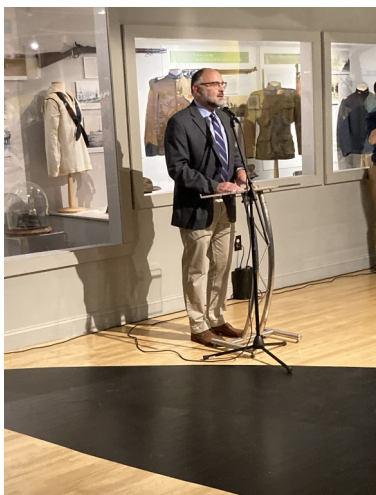




Nuclear Propulsion Exhibit Debuts with Reception and Grand Opening

The New York State Military Museum was proud to host the Opening Reception for the Museum's new exhibit, "From New York to the Nuclear Navy," on Friday, June 28, 2024. The Reception was attended by various public officials, individuals from Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in Niskayuna and the Kenneth A. Kesselring Site in West Milton, as well as various people connected with the Museum. In total, there were over 100 guests at the Reception.

The attendees were greeted by Museum Director Courtney Burns and by Bill Johnson, Executive Director of the Kesselring Site.



Courtney Burns, left, and Bill Johnson, right, address the gathering at the Opening Reception for the Museum's exhibit on the U.S. Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program



Officials at the Opening Reception



From left to right: Courtney Burns, Bill Johnson, NYS Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, and Rear Admiral Michael Perry of the NYS Naval Militia

The exhibit opened to the public on Saturday, June 29th. The opening featured performances by the Neutron Factory Band (a brass band from Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory), as well as free ice cream provided by Stewart's.

The weather started out reasonably well, but it turned rainy by the afternoon, moving the outdoor activities indoors. Even so, over 300 people came to the Museum on that day to see the new exhibit. In addition, many visitors to the Museum since the opening have reported that their primary purpose for visiting was to see the Naval Nuclear exhibit.



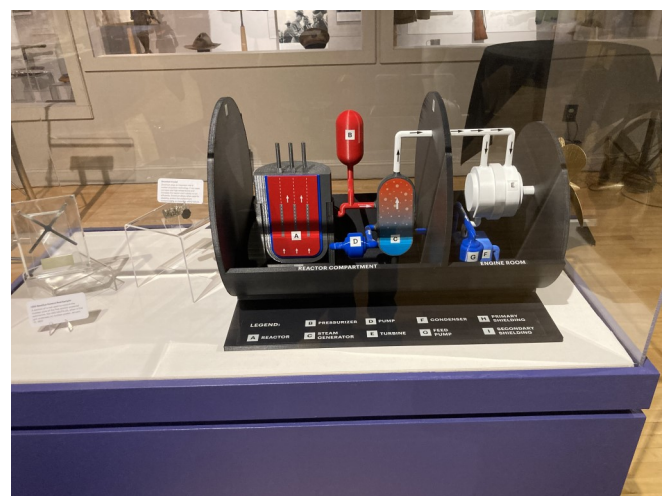
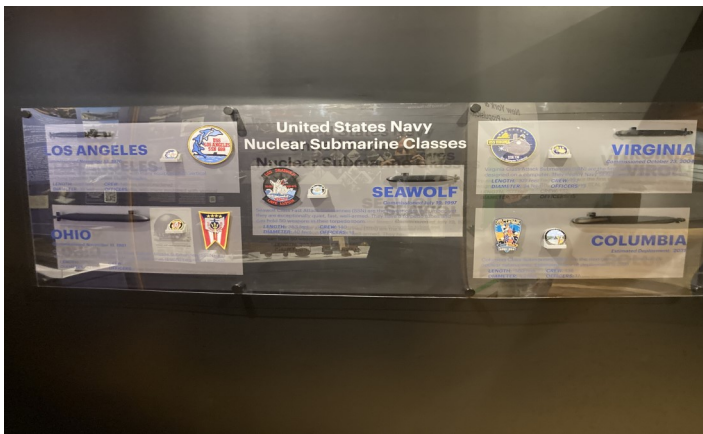
Left and above — visitors looking at some of the exhibit features

Below left — brass band from Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory

Below right — some of the Docents who served at the opening



Here are some additional highlights of the exhibit, “From New York to the Nuclear Navy,” which tells the story of New York’s connection to America’s fleet of nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers:



Reminder: The exhibit is expected to continue at the Museum through June 2025.

Oral History Interviews

Charles “Rick” Harrienger, Jr. - Interviewed on July 16, 2024

Charles F. Harrienger, Jr., better known as Rick, served in the United States Army from April 20, 1967 to April 23, 1970.

Harrienger was born in 1949 in Syracuse. Both of his parents had served during World War II.

Harrienger served two tours in Vietnam. Initially, he was part of the 173rd Airborne, located mainly in the Central Highlands. As he describes it, Harrienger was part of a group that replaced a unit that got wiped out. He was one of the replacements, and as he puts it, “it was powerful being part of a unit with a bone to pick.”

Later, Harrienger served as a medical records specialist. After that, he was a clerk in a P.O.W. hospital which housed enemy prisoners; as Harrienger says, he was the “Radar” of that group.

Harrienger has published a book of poems about his service in Vietnam. The book is called Caverns of the Soul. The poems in the book examine the impact of war on its soldiers, not only on the body, but on the mind and the soul.

Video of the interview with Rick Harrienger, and the Museum’s other oral history interviews, can be found on the Museum’s website at the Research tab on the left of the page. Videos are sorted alphabetically.



Photo courtesy of Jim Gandy

Charles “Rick“ Harrienger, Jr.:

Left, during his oral history interview at the New York State Military Museum on July 16, 2024

Right, during his service in the United States Army



Photo courtesy of Charles “Rick” Harrienger, Jr.

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

Richard H. Comstock, Jr. - Interviewed on August 29, 2024

Richard Comstock came from a military family. His father was a career Army officer, who served in various locations during World War II, and his grandfather served in Belgium and France in World War I.

Comstock spent part of his childhood in Vietnam. His father was U.S. Army Attache to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Comstock attended middle school in Vietnam, and he learned both the French and Vietnamese languages.

After graduating from college, Comstock joined the Army. He was on active duty in Vietnam from 1969 to 1973, serving two tours of duty in Vietnam and one in Korea.

In Vietnam, Comstock was assigned as an Advisor to the South Vietnamese Army, advising Field Artillery, Infantry Battalions and local militia forces. He felt that he “needed to do something. We stood the chance of losing ground in the war.” After the two sides negotiated an agreement to end the fighting, Comstock worked to monitor the cease fire.

After leaving the regular Army, Comstock joined the NY Army National Guard, serving from 1974 to 1990. He served in the 1st Battalion, 258th Artillery in New York City, where he became the Battalion Commander and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He retired from the National Guard in 1990.

Comstock recalls that when he returned from Vietnam, some people treated him with apprehension, because of the controversial nature of the war. He is happy that the sacrifices of today’s soldiers are being properly recognized.

Richard Comstock being interviewed at the New York State Military Museum on August 29, 2024



Photo courtesy of Wayne Rozen

A Trip to Normandy for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day

Robert Kazalski and Terri DiGiacomo took a trip to Normandy for the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion in World War II. As usual, there were many world leaders also present on this occasion, to remember and honor the heroic deeds that were performed by Allied forces in the invasion.

This is the fourth trip that Robert and Terri have taken to mark the anniversary of the invasion; they were also present for the 65th, 70th and 75th anniversaries of D-Day.

Robert and Terri have graciously provided us with the photos below from the recent trip. The pictures were taken by Robert, who has also provided the commentary which accompanies the pictures. We thank Robert and Terri for sharing their experience with us.



Above: Two views of the “Standing with Giants” Memorial at the British Memorial on Gold Beach in Normandy.

Each figure represents a fallen Commonwealth soldier, sailor or airman who died on D-Day. There are 1,475 figures at the Memorial, which is adjacent to Gold Beach, Normandy. Each figure is over five feet high and is made of metal.



At left — Statue of Lt. Gen. James M. “Iron Mike” Gavin at La Fiere Bridge Memorial outside of Ste. Mere Eglise

The mortal ferocity of the four-day battle for control of the small stone bridge over the Merderet River at La Fière in Normandy is testament to the bridge’s strategic importance in the D-Day invasion of June 1944. Without control of the bridge and its vital causeway, American forces coming from Utah Beach would not have been able to force their way inland. The battle was fought largely by paratroopers and glidermen from the 82nd Airborne Division; the battle is described as probably the bloodiest small unit struggle in the experience of American forces. Victory at La Fière cost more than 250 American lives, and yet the fateful engagement’s story is largely untold. Paratroopers from the 101st also participated.



Above: The La Fiere Bridge is in the center of the background.

The road going to the right farther down is where the German Army was positioned during D-Day and afterwards. Both fields on the side of this road were flooded by the German Army to hinder the D-Day landings. American troops were positioned to guard this bridge and prevent the German Army from crossing; the troops were positioned where this photo was taken.



At left is a statue of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe.

The statue is situated in the courtyard next to the famous church mentioned with regard to D-Day activity in Ste. Mere Eglise, Normandy.

The statue was unveiled in a ceremony in Ste. Mere Eglise on June 3, 2024.



Above is a memorial at the Polish War Cemetery in Normandy, formally opened in 1946.

The cemetery contains 615 graves of soldiers belonging to the 1st Armoured Division, commanded by Major-General Stanislaw Maczek. Most of the soldiers were killed during the battle to take Caen during Operation Totalize or the battles to close the Falaise Gap in August 1944. The remaining 81 graves belong mainly to re-interred Polish Armed Forces in the West and soldiers who died in other parts of France, including a few from the Battle of France in 1940.

A large V-shaped monument dominates one end of the cemetery, on top of which there is a large stylised aluminium Polish eagle sculpture. The sculpture was designed by Charles Gianferrari and Jacques Bertoux. Small tokens are left on many of the graves, including a considerable number of rosary beads. The Federation of French War Veterans maintains the cemetery. The entrance gates feature the insignia of the Polish 1st Armoured Division — the headgear of the Polish hussars. There is also a small building at the site, which contains a register of the graves there.

Volunteer/Docent Picnic — Summer 2024

The 2024 Volunteer/Docent Picnic was held on Thursday, August 8, 2024, at the home of Melissa Thompson-Flynn and Diana Flynn in Saratoga. We thank the Friends for contributing to payment of the costs for the picnic. Here are some photos from the event:



Sean Luchsinger, Colleen Maheux, Mark Koziol and Lisa Munday



Lisa Munday, Melissa Thompson-Flynn, Diana Flynn, Garth Lloyd and Terri DiGiacomo



Curt Auerbach, Karen Rozen and Wayne Rozen

TRIVIA NIGHT

with Chad From Albany

To Benefit *the Friends of*
NEW YORK STATE
MILITARY MUSEUM

Sat. Sept. 14, 2024

5pm to 10pm @ Elks Colonial Hall

Trivia @ 7pm

\$50 per player with Dinner Buffet Included

Teams Will Be Placed in Tables of 8

5 Rounds- Prizes Each Round with One Grand Prize!

Limited Seating Available!
Contact Dave Cummings
To Reserve Today!

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61 Lake Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
Phone: (518) 581-5100
Website: www.museum.dmna.ny.gov

Museum Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM—4:00 PM

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