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**For Information**

**AI nearly had US troops attack a Chinese ship. Nobody could check its work.**

**The Hill, Nov. 8, 2026::**

*Note: This item is for your information.*

In the middle of the war with Iran this spring, a U.S. aircraft was airborne and armed personnel were preparing to board a Chinese ship in the Middle East. A chatbot had reviewed intelligence on the ship's cargo manifest and concluded it was carrying components for a nuclear weapons program.

It wasn't.

An analyst had used AI to reach that conclusion. He then used AI again to write it up as a formal intelligence report, which circulated across the military before officials looked closer and called the operation off.

Models get things wrong all the time, so the error itself isn't what's worrying. What's worrying is how close it came to holding. The report gave nobody a way to check how it reached its conclusion. That same gap exists almost everywhere AI is being deployed, from military intelligence to bank lending to hospital care. Closing it is less a matter of new rules than of keeping records that let someone check an AI system's work.

On Sept. 18, CNN broke the story, citing four sources, days before President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in Washington with AI on the agenda. The U.S. proposed a notification mechanism so each side can alert the other when an AI incident threatens national security. Helen Toner, who leads Georgetown's Center for Security and Emerging Technology, has gone further proposing a National Transportation Safety Board for AI — a body with the technical expertise to receive and investigate serious AI incidents.

Kevin Fishbain joins 'The NFL Report' to discuss the state of the NFC North

Both proposals make sense, but investigators can only examine an incident if they can reproduce it. The National Transportation Safety Board works because every plane carries a flight recorder, and investigators read the data rather than reconstructing a crash from memory. AI has nothing like that. Most organizations using these systems keep no record that would let anyone replay a decision, and very few test whether the same input, under the same rules, gets the same answer twice.

This week, my team published a case where that test failed. A compliance pipeline running on a model configured to give identical answers to identical inputs still dropped a rule, the instruction to escalate an unresolved conflict to the head of compliance, in one of four runs. The requests differed only in file IDs the software generated automatically.

Checking a model once at launch doesn't solve this, because models change. When DeepSeek moved its latest model from preview to official release this summer, my team re-ran an audit we published weeks earlier. Its answers on China-sensitive topics became noticeably more guarded, and its answers on everything else became more forthcoming. The same model shifted in opposite directions depending on the subject, and an evaluation done only at launch would have missed it entirely.

AI systems can also find ways around the tests we give them. In July, OpenAI agents in a cybersecurity test escaped their environment and broke into Hugging Face's servers. OpenAI's own report blamed reward hacking, where the agents went after a good score through shortcuts instead of doing the actual task. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) has since opened an investigation and asked Sam Altman who is held liable when AI goes rogue. Every company deploying AI should be asking itself the same question.

In most cases, the answer is the company using it. A bank that puts one of the most advanced AI models into loan underwriting is no longer operating under the AI lab's policies. It's operating under its own compliance rules and its regulator's expectations. If the bank can't reproduce a loan decision, it can't defend that decision to its regulator or to the person who applied for the loan. Hospitals and insurers face the same problem, and so does any company running an openly available model, which anyone can download and run, with no provider standing behind it.

On Sept. 29, leaders of Google, Anthropic, Meta, OpenAI, xAI and Nvidia signed a White House accord committing to independent outside evaluators. On Oct. 3, the White House formed a task force, led by the director of national intelligence, with 120 days to recommend the federal government's role. The evaluators check the companies' own controls but no one governs what a model does inside a bank's workflow or someone else's hardware.

What's missing is oversight, meaning independent evaluation and records that let someone check a system's work after the fact. Human reviewers can't do that at scale. A bank can't hire enough auditors to watch millions of AI decisions a day, and neither can a hospital or the Pentagon. The practical answer is software that runs continuously, checking whether a system gives the same answer under the same policy and whether that answer follows the institution's own rules. Aviation figured this out decades ago with the flight recorder, and AI needs its own version.

This is also one of the few parts of the AI debate where the U.S. and China should be able to find common ground, no matter how fast the technology moves. A notification channel between Washington and Beijing only works if both sides can show what actually happened, and that means verification has to sit outside the model and outside the company that built it. The next near-miss may not be caught in time, and when it happens, we should at least be able to find out why.

https://thehill.com/opinion/technology/6205531-preventing-future-ai-incidents/

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**Military Museum**

**Duty Calls: Retired Army general earns Veteran of Year Award**

**Times Union, Nov. 9, 2026 ::**

Brig. Gen. Barry Hartman of Clifton Park was honored in Saratoga Springs for military service, leadership and dedication to preserving military history

Army Brig. Gen. Barry Hartman of Clifton Park, a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran, received the Veteran of the Year Award from The Friends of the New York State Military Museum and the Uncle Sam Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army.

Hartman was honored for exemplary performance during 49 years of service, according to Chris Carola, Friends of the New York State Military Museum spokesman.

Mark O'Rourke, president of the Friends of the Museum, and Rick Wark, president of the Uncle Sam Chapter, presented the award during a ceremony at the state Military Museum and Veterans Research Center at 61 Lake Ave., Saratoga Springs.

Maj. Gen. Raymond Shields, state adjutant general, was the keynote speaker.

Hartman serves as secretary of the Board of Trustees of The Friends of the New York State Military Museum.

"After devoting more than three decades of his life to active-duty military service followed by years of leadership in the New York Guard, a volunteer force that augments the New York National Guard, he brings extraordinary experience and a deep commitment to preserving and honoring New York's military heritage," Carola said.

The Williamsport, Pa., native began his military career as an enlisted soldier in 1958. He was commissioned as an Army second lieutenant upon his 1964 graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He served in tank and other armor units in West Germany from 1964 to 1966.

Hartman served two combat tours in the Vietnam War. He was a troop commander and air operations officer with the 2nd Squadron, 1 Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division in the Central Highlands from 1967 to 1968. He later became an operations officer and tactical operations center director for the First Regional Assistance Command from 1972 to 1973 in Hue and Danang.

He earned a Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for combat valor, a Legion of Merit, a Meritorious Service Medal, multiple Air Medals, an Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

**War on Terror exhibit**

New York National Guard's role in the War on Terror is being highlighted at the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center at 61 Lake Ave., Saratoga Springs.

The "New Millennium, New Challenge: The Global War on Terror, 2001-2021" chronicles New York's role in the struggle to defeat radical terrorists after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. Nearly 3,000 people were killed in those attacks.

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, state adjutant general, Richard Goldenberg, museum director, retired Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, who commanded the 42nd Infantry Division in Iraq, and Iraq War and Afghanistan War veterans officially opened the exhibit Thursday.

Uniforms, weapons, and other artifacts of the service of New Yorkers from Afghanistan and Iraq are on display. The exhibit reflects the historic deployments of New York Army and Air National Guardsmen.

The Friends of the New York State Military Museum raised $100,000 to cover the design, construction, and installation of the new exhibit.

The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.

**Veterans Day ceremony**

Erwin Dominguez, service chief for development and civic engagement at the Samual S. Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center, in Albany, will be the keynote speaker during a Veterans Day ceremony at 11 a.m. Wednesday, at the Flagpole Assembly Area at Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery. The cemetery is located at 200 Duell Road, Schuylerville.

Veterans Day commemorates the end of World War I at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 when an armistice with Germany was recognized. The holiday was originally called Armistice Day until President Dwight Eisenhower officially changed the name to Veterans Day in honor of all our nation's veterans.

Dominguez had served in the Marine Corps and the Army National Guard for more than 20 years.

His specialty is connecting veterans with available resources and programs. He also addresses veteran housing needs, employment and wellness while promoting volunteers to support VA services.

**Honoring Veterans**

Three living combat veterans will be honored by Albany County during a ceremony at 10 a.m., Nov. 18, near the former 110 Grill on the first floor at Crossgates Mall in Guilderland.

They are:

Allen Aubin of Cohoes received a Purple Heart while serving as an infantryman with the 1st Infantry Division in the Vietnam War. After the war, he served as a firefighter with the Cohoes Fire Department for 32 years and as president of the Retired Firefighters of Cohoes No. 97.

Marshall Hall of Guilderland last served as a Navy commander. He did duty as a Navy attaché assistant for several years. He earned numerous medals, including a Navy Achievement Medal, a Humanitarian Service Medal, and a Vietnam Service Medal. After his military service, he worked as a home inspector and served as

president of the Southern New England Chapter of the American Society of Home Inspectors.

Gregory Martin of Colonie serves as an operations sergeant major with the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade. He supported the state's response to the 911 World Trade Center attack. He did tours in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as well as three tours in Kuwait. He has earned three Bronze Star Medals, three Meritorious Service Medals, a Combat Medical Badge and a Combat Action Badge.

News of your troops and units can be sent to Times Union, Duty Calls, Terry Brown, Box 15000, Albany, NY 12212 or brownt@timesunion.com.

https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/duty-calls-retired-army-general-earns-veteran-22516341.php

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**New Exhibit at NYS Military Museum Tells the 20-Year Tale of the Global War on Terror**

**Army.mil, Nov. 6, 2026 ::**

SARATOGA SPRINGS, New York— An exhibit commemorating New Yorkers who fought the Global War on Terror—GWOT in military speak-- officially opened on Thursday, Nov. 5 at the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Major General Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, cut the ceremonial ribbon along with retired Major General Joseph Taluto, who commanded the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division in Iraq in 2005.

The museum, located in the Saratoga Armory, is maintained by the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs. It tells the story of New York's military history from the American Revolution to the present.

The 20 years of conflict that began with the Sept. 11, 2001, suicide attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, needs to be remembered, Sheilds said.

"I think it's just really critical that we highlight that," he said.

As a colonel, Shields served as the chief of staff for the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a 2008-2009 deployment to Afghanistan.

The conflict – pronounced 'gee-wot'—is significant for New York because it started in New York, said Richard Goldenberg, the director of military history for the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

The Department of Defense officially lists the start of the GWOT as the terrorist actions which resulted in the crash of two airliners into New York City's Twin Towers.

"This was an attack on our soil, an attack on our neighbors, our city," he said.

The exhibit employs photographs, text, uniforms, artifacts, and weapons to tell the story of that conflict and New Yorkers' role in it.

On Sept. 11, 2001, New York Air National Guardsmen at the Northeast Air Defense Sector worked to sort out the terror in the skies. Meanwhile, New York Army National Guardsmen in New York City converged on "Ground Zero" in lower Manhattan to assist the police and fire departments.

Just short of 20 years later, at the end of August 2021, the crew of Reach 824, a C-17 flown by the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing, brought home the remains of the last 13 Americans killed in Afghanistan.

The exhibit—formally titled " "New Millennium, New Challenge: The Global War on Terror, 2001-2021" -- tells visitors what happened in between.

One panel outlines the rescue of American Thomas Hamill, a civilian truck driver captured by Iraqi insurgents, on May 2, 2004, by members of C Company of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment south of Tikrit Iraq.

The New York Army National Guard Soldiers from Gloversville came upon Hamill who had been held for 22 days during a patrol.

Another panel discusses the 27th Infantry Brigade's command of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, a multinational team of 9,500 personnel training the Afghan Army and police in 2008.

Sections of the exhibit are crafted to look like the ubiquitous "T-Walls" which were used to protect temporary buildings and tents from mortar rounds in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

One of the uniforms on display was worn by Staff Sgt. Donald Leinfelder, a member of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, who received the Purple Heart after his Humvee was hit by a rocket propelled grenade in Baghdad in 2005.

Leinfelder's battalion was tasked with securing "Route Irish" between Baghdad International Airport and the secure "Green Zone" in downtown Baghdad.

A uniform, helmet and ballistic vest worn by Taluto as commander of the 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty in North Central Iraq, helps tell the story of the first National Guard division to deploy to a combat zone since the Korean War in 2005.

In his remarks, Taluto emphasized the importance of remembering the sacrifices of veterans and the part exhibits like this play.

"We have always honored, recognized, and memorialized our veterans, through every conflict," he said.

"So, it's perfectly appropriate that we have an exhibit here for post 9/11 veterans, primarily the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans that deployed for over 20 years. That's the longest war in our country's history," Taluto added.

The $100,000 cost to research, design and install the permanent exhibit was raised by the Friends of the New York State Military Museum. The non-profit works with donors to help supplement the taxpayer dollars which pay museum operating costs.

Taluto is serving as the chair of the group's GWOT committee, and said the next goal is to create a GWOT traveling exhibit which could go to communities around New York.

The New York State Military Museum's collection dates back to 1863 when the adjutant general of New York was instructed to collect information and items about New York's role in the Civil War.

The museum holds a collection of 1,000 Civil War-era flags-- one of the largest in the world-- along with 700 weapons, 30,000 other artifacts, 17,643 photographs, and 1,415 oral history transcripts.

The exhibits in the military history museum highlight New York's role from the Revolution to the Cold War and now the first war of the 21st Century.

https://www.army.mil/article/296649/new_exhibit_at_nys_military_museum_tells_the_20_year_tale_of_the_global_war_on_terror

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**New York Army National Guard**

# New York National Guard lays White House wreath at Chester Arthur’s grave on his 197th birthday

**Gist Notes, Nov. 8, 2026::**

The New York Army National Guard presented a White House wreath at President Chester A. Arthur’s gravesite at Albany Rural Cemetery in Menands, New York, on Oct. 5, marking what the Guard described as Arthur’s 197th birthday with a short ceremony attended by roughly 75 people.

Contents:

What happened

Why the wreath matters

Speakers and historical notes

Military service and local ties

Attendance and other presidential graves

What’s been attributed and what remains internal to sources

Timeline of key dates cited by the Guard

Why this is locally and nationally relevant

Unresolved details and points for follow-up

Bottom line

Key takeaways

New York Army National Guard presented a White House wreath at Chester A. Arthur’s gravesite on Oct. 5.

Brig. Gen. Patrick Clare laid the wreath on behalf of the sitting president; about 75 people attended, per the Guard.

Speakers emphasized Arthur’s Civil War–era militia logistics work and his presidential achievements in civil service reform and naval modernization.

## What happened

Brig. Gen. Patrick Clare, identified by the New York Guard as the assistant adjutant general-Army for the New York National Guard, laid the wreath on behalf of the sitting president, the Guard said. Command Sgt. Maj. Leylan Jones joined Clare in presenting the wreath at the gravesite during a program that included an honor cordon, a bugler, a color guard and prayers delivered by Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Scholes.

## Why the wreath matters

The Guard noted that, since 1967, military officers have presented a wreath sent by the incumbent president at the graves of former U.S. presidents on their birthdays. The practice connects current administrations to historical predecessors through commemorative gestures at presidential burial sites.

## Speakers and historical notes

Local speakers placed Arthur's life and public service in context. Lance Ingmire, a trustee of Albany Rural Cemetery, outlined the circumstances of Arthur's death and burial; the Guard account says Arthur died Nov. 18, 1886, and was buried Nov. 22, 1886. David Pietrusza, an Albany-area historian and author, reviewed aspects of Arthur's career cited by the Guard, including his work as a lawyer, his role in civil service reform, his involvement in early federal immigration policy and his support for modernizing the U.S. Navy.

## Military service and local ties

In remarks quoted by the Guard, Clare highlighted Arthur's Civil War–era service in the New York Militia. The account reports that New York Governor Edwin Morgan appointed Arthur engineer-in-chief of the militia and later tasked him with organizing logistics for troops mobilizing in New York City. The Guard's narrative credits Arthur with equipping dozens of regiments with arms and supplies during 1861–62, and notes his later roles as inspector general and quartermaster general of the militia.

## Attendance and other presidential graves

The program drew an audience of about 75 people, according to the Guard. The New York Guard also said it routinely places presidential wreaths at other burial sites in the state, naming Martin Van Buren's grave in Kinderhook and Millard Fillmore's in Buffalo as locations that receive similar ceremonial recognition.

## What's been attributed and what remains internal to sources

This article relies on reporting and event descriptions published by the U.S. Army and DVIDS about the Oct. 5 ceremony. Statements about the event's attendance, the

participants and the historical summaries of Arthur's life and service are attributed to those accounts. Quotations and paraphrases of remarks by Brig. Gen. Patrick Clare, Lance Ingmire and David Pietrusza are drawn from the Guard's release and DVIDS coverage; the article does not independently confirm the speakers' remarks.

Timeline of key dates cited by the Guard

Oct. 5, 2026 — White House wreath placed at Chester A. Arthur's gravesite in Menands, N.Y., in observance of what the Guard called his 197th birthday.

Nov. 18, 1886 — Date of Arthur's death as given in the Guard's account.

Nov. 22, 1886 — Date of Arthur's burial, as stated by the cemetery trustee in the Guard's report.

1967 — Year the Guard's release cites as the start of the practice in which the sitting president sends a wreath to be placed at former presidents' graves.

Why this is locally and nationally relevant

The ceremony ties a present-day federal ceremonial practice to local New York history: Arthur's personal and professional ties to the region — his education at Union College in Schenectady and early teaching work in Cohoes, as noted by the Guard — make Albany Rural Cemetery a site of state-level historical memory. The ritual also illustrates how the military participates in public commemoration of former presidents, a routine that blends civic ritual with military ceremonial duties.

Unresolved details and points for follow-up

The Guard's release attributes the wreath to the president in office at the time of the ceremony. The Army report used in this article states that Brig. Gen. Clare presented the wreath "on behalf of President Donald Trump." This article reports that attribution as presented by the Guard and DVIDS; it does not independently verify White House involvement beyond the sources' statements. Additionally, attendance figures and quotes are taken from the Guard's account and have not been independently corroborated.

Bottom line

The New York Army National Guard staged a formal graveside ceremony on Oct. 5, presenting a White House wreath at Chester A. Arthur's Albany-area gravesite as part of a long-standing practice of presidential wreath-laying. The event highlighted Arthur's local connections and Civil War–era militia service while drawing a modest public audience, according to Army and DVIDS reporting.

https://thegistnotes.com/ny-guard-chester-arthur-wreath-197th-birthday/

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## New York National Guard Unveils $3.5 Million Housing Facility

**Department of War, By Army Sgt. 1st Class Sebastian Rothwyn, New York National Guard, Nov. 5, 2026:**

Army Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, opened a $3.5 million housing facility at Camp Smith Training Site in Cortlandt Manor, New York, Oct. 29.

The facility replaces aging quarters for senior enlisted leaders and officers training at the post. The 3,000-square-foot building is designed to be environmentally friendly and meet modern hotel standards. "This facility offers single rooms with private latrines, a lounge, laundry, break area — meeting modern Army standards similar to a typical hotel room you might find," said Army Lt. Col. Chad Clark, the base operations manager.

Shields said improving facilities demonstrates support for the state's more than 12,000 Army National Guard soldiers.

"We need to focus on things that soldiers see and the facilities that they use," he said, adding that prioritizing modern workspaces and housing directly impacts how troops view their service.

Plans are also underway to build a federally funded 24-unit housing complex behind the new senior leader facility.

Shields noted that New York covered 25% of the cost of the new facility, and he highlighted the state’s support for the Army National Guard during an Oct. 28 meeting in Washington, with Army Lt. Gen. Jonathan Stubbs, director of the Army National Guard.

"Most National Guard units in the country do not get the level of fiscal support and support from their governor's office that we get," he said.

New York has invested $493 million in military facilities over the past two years, with $165 million funded directly by the state. New York also plans to fund a new firing range at Camp Smith.

Sharon Buck, executive deputy commissioner for the Office of General Services, said her agency is proud to support the New York National Guard.

Buck said her office is committed to ensuring that the National Guard members have the modern facilities they need to serve and respond when called upon.

https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4642365/new-york-national-guard-unveils-35-million-housing-facility/

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https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4642365/new-york-national-guard-unveils-35-million-housing-facility/

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**Oswego County Residents Receive Army National Guard Promotions**

**Oswego County Today, Nov. 11, 2026 :**

LATHAM, NY – Residents of Pulaski, Phoenix and Mexico are among the New York Army National Guard members whose promotions were announced by Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General for the State of New York, in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Courtney Letiecq of Pulaski, assigned to the 222nd Military Police Company, was promoted to specialist on October 22, 2026.

Edward Logel of Phoenix, assigned to the 206th Military Police Company, was promoted to sergeant first class on October 14, 2026.

Florencia Paul of Mexico, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 108th Infantry Regiment, was promoted to specialist on October 17, 2026.

The release also announced that Benjamin Regester of Cato, assigned to the 102nd Military Police Battalion, was promoted to master sergeant on October 1, 2026.

According to the National Guard, promotions are based on a soldier's overall performance, demonstrated leadership abilities, professionalism and future development potential. The promotions recognize the best-qualified soldiers for a career in the New York Army National Guard.

The release states that Army National Guard citizen soldiers who serve the state and nation are eligible for monthly pay, educational benefits from the state and federal government, travel across the globe, technical and leadership training, health and dental insurance, and contributions toward retirement programs similar to a 401(k).

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, visit www.dmna.ny.gov or www.1800goguard.com.

The New York National Guard, also known as the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, is the state's executive agency responsible to the governor for managing New York's military forces. According to the release, those forces consist of nearly 20,000 members of the New York Army National Guard, New York Air National Guard, New York Naval Militia and New York Guard.

https://oswegocountytoday.com/community/oswego-county-residents-army-national-guard-promotions-november-2026/

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**Three local residents receive promotions in New York Army National Guard**

**Rome Sentinel, Nov. 13, 2026 :**

LATHAM — A trio of area residents have received promotions in the New York Army National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership, according to an announcement on Thursday by Major Gen. Ray Shields, adjutant general for New York.

They are:

Daniel Griffith, of Yorkville, assigned to 222nd Military Police Company, promoted to staff sergeant;

Julio Liriano Gutierrez, of Utica, assigned to 222nd Military Police Company, promoted to specialist; and

Gabriella Guzman, of Utica, assigned to Bravo Company, New York Recruiting and Retention Battalion, promoted to private first class.

Army National Guard promotions are based on a soldier's overall performance, demonstrated leadership abilities, professionalism and future development potential, Shields' announcement said, adding that the promotions recognize the best qualified soldiers for a career in the New York Army National Guard.

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, visit www.dmna.ny.gov or www.1800goguard.com.

https://www.romesentinel.com/entertainment-life/notices/advancements/three-local-residents-receive-promotions-in-new-york-army-national-guard/article_b5bc55ee-99bd-41b9-86de-759a91e7d7c4.html

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**Political**

## LaLota Wins Third Term as Gallant Concedes Closest Race of His Career

**The Southshore Press, Nov. 8, 2026 ::**

### The Democrat called the congressman a day after the vote and congratulated him as a fellow veteran

Rep. Nick LaLota will return to Washington for a third term after Chris Gallant, his Democratic challenger, gave up the 1st District race on Wednesday, ending the closest contest the Republican has faced since he first won the eastern Suffolk seat in 2022.

Unofficial county Board of Elections figures, with 560 of the district's 561 election districts counted, gave LaLota 152,546 votes to Gallant's 145,869. That leaves a gap of 6,677 votes, a little over 2 percentage points. Of LaLota's total, 133,087 votes came on the Republican line and 19,459 on the Conservative line. Absentee ballots had yet to be tallied, and none of the numbers are official until the county finishes its canvass and certifies the count.

Gallant, who held off overnight, said in a statement Wednesday that he had phoned LaLota and congratulated him "as a brother in arms." Both men served in uniform. LaLota is a Navy veteran, and Gallant flies Black Hawk helicopters for the New York Army National Guard.

"Last night, the voters of the First District made their decision, and I fully respect it," Gallant said. He called the congressman "a true Long Islander" and wished him well in the new term.

His tone had been more guarded a few hours earlier. In a statement released soon after midnight, with the margin still moving, Gallant said, "At this time, there are still votes to count, and every single one of them deserves to be counted." He argued then that the tight finish was a sign Long Islanders were unhappy with the status quo.

LaLota claimed victory late Tuesday at Stereo Garden, a Patchogue event hall where Suffolk Republicans had gathered to watch the returns. He thanked his supporters and told voters who had backed his opponent that his door was open to them, too. He said he would work with members of either party who wanted to deliver for Long Island, and that he would keep pushing to cut taxes and bring more federal money home to Suffolk County.

The result was a far cry from his earlier wins. In 2024, LaLota beat Democrat John Avlon by 42,745 votes, a spread of roughly 10 points. Two years before that, he defeated Democrat Bridget Fleming by about 11 points. This time his edge was closer to 2.

Gallant is a former air traffic controller and a volunteer firefighter. In September his bid became national news after photographs from years earlier showing him modeling for a seller of fetish gear came to light. He acknowledged that the images were genuine and stayed in. In his concession, he said he was not stepping away from public life, and that he remained a firefighter and a pilot who would look for the next way "to be useful to this community."

The eastern Suffolk race played out against a national tide that ran the other way. Democrats won control of the House and the Senate alike on Tuesday, picking up seats in states that had long been safe for Republicans. By Wednesday morning, the party held 54 or more Senate seats and had cleared the 218 seats needed to run the House.

Next door in the 2nd Congressional District, which takes in parts of both Suffolk and Nassau, Republican Rep. Andrew Garbarino was ahead of Patrick Halpin, the Democratic nominee and a onetime Suffolk County executive, 125,338 votes to 119,079 in unofficial returns, a margin of 6,259. In Nassau, Tom Suozzi and Laura Gillen, the two Democrats in the delegation, were both reelected.

Further up the ballot, Gov. Kathy Hochul carried Suffolk by only 4,040 votes over Bruce Blakeman, the Republican who runs Nassau County, 270,778 to 266,738, in the unofficial county count, while beating him statewide by about 20 points.

LaLota will be sworn in again in January, when Democrats take over the House majority. All Suffolk totals in this story remain unofficial until the Board of Elections completes its count of absentee and other outstanding ballots and certifies the results.

https://www.southshorepress.com/local/lalota-wins-third-term-as-gallant-concedes-closest-race-of-his-career-1b80e0a1

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## State Partnership Program

### Brazil: Yankee General Visits Jungle Warfare Training Center in Manaus

**The Red Herald, Nov. 12, 2026 :**

A Nova Democracia (AND) has reported concerning the increasing US military presence in the Amazon, specifically in the field of jungle warfare. A Yankee delegation lead by the New York Air National Guard Brigadier, General Patrick Clare, visited the Jungle Warfare Training Center (CIGS) in Manaus on November 5, received by the Brazilian army Colonel Prazeres. This deepens the subjugation of the Brazilian army under the US Armed Forces, specifically in this case through the New York Air National Guard, the relationship to whom was formally established in 2019. An important aspect is the use of the knowledge and experience of the Brazilian reaction developed for these geographical conditions to improve the combat training and preparedness of US troops.

AND writes:

"The center is one of the main Brazilian military institutions dedicated to training for operations in tropical rain forest, with instruction involving survival, navigation, patrolling, riverine movement, and combat in conditions of intense heat, high humidity, and dense vegetation. The delegation was headed by Patrick Clare, who had assumed the post of deputy commander of the land component of the New York National Guard in October. Although the general's visit was limited to institutional commitments, the cooperation has already provided training for US military personnel in jungle warfare techniques in Brazil."

https://redherald.org/2026/11/12/brazil-yankee-general-visits-jungle-warfare-training-center-in-manaus

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**US general visits jungle warfare center in Manaus amid growing US military presence in the Amazon**

**A Nova Democracia, Nov. 10. 2026:**

*Note: This has been translated from Portuguse using Google Translate.*

A delegation of eight U.S. military personnel, led by Brigadier General Patrick Clare of the New York National Guard, visited the Jungle Warfare Training Center (CIGS) in Manaus, Amazonas, on November 5.

The group was welcomed by Colonel Prazeres, commander of the Brazilian Army unit, who showcased the facilities and activities of the military school, which specializes in operations within the Amazon rainforest.

The visit was reported on November 8 by *Revista Sociedade Militar* and represents yet another episode in an extensive history of military cooperation between Brazil and the United States.

This growing military alignment has provided U.S. troops with access to Brazilian expertise on combat in one of the most complex geographical environments on the planet.

During the visit, Colonel Prazeres delivered a presentation on the characteristics of the CIGS and guided the visitors through the "Brazilian Amazon Space" (EBA) and the zoo maintained by the unit. The center is one of Brazil's primary military institutions dedicated to training for tropical rainforest operations; its curriculum covers survival, navigation, patrolling, riverine movement, and combat under conditions of intense heat, high humidity, and dense vegetation.

The delegation was headed by Patrick Clare, who had assumed the position of Deputy Commander of the New York National Guard's land component in October. Although the general's visit was limited to institutional engagements, this cooperation has already facilitated the training of U.S. military personnel in Brazilian jungle warfare techniques.

The closer ties between the Brazilian Army and the New York National Guard were formalized on March 14, 2019, during a ceremony held aboard the museum ship *Intrepid* in the United States, attended by the then-commander of U.S. Southern Command, Admiral Craig Faller. The agreement is part of the State Partnership Program (SPP)—a Department of Defense initiative that establishes partnerships between U.S. National Guard units and foreign military forces through training, professional exchanges, and cooperative activities across various specialized fields.

The strategic importance of this rapprochement for Washington is made evident in a statement released by the New York National Guard the day after the agreement was signed. In it, the institution announced the establishment of a "bilateral relations office" at the U.S. Embassy in Brasília, with an officer designated to plan and coordinate military training and exchanges. The U.S. Department of Defense presents the program as an "instrument to support the strategic objectives of its military commands abroad."

The New York National Guard itself states that the activities within this partnership with Brazil align with the guidelines of the Southern Command and with U.S. national security and defense strategies. According to the organization's 2023 annual report, military cooperation activities with the reactionary Brazilian Armed Forces are coordinated directly with the Southern Command, which is responsible for U.S. military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

However, U.S. interest in Brazil's expertise in jungle warfare predates the signing of this agreement. Back in 2019, a member of the New York National Guard completed

the International Jungle Operations Course—becoming, according to U.S. records, the thirtieth U.S. service member in the history of the CIGS (Jungle Warfare Training Center) to receive this training.

In November 2024, two other members of the New York Air National Guard, Sergeants Gerardo Balsa and Grant Cozart, completed the same course, which includes training in survival, navigation, patrolling, and movement along Amazonian rivers.

Both were the first members of the organization's 105th Airlift Wing to complete the program. Thus, the Brazilian school not only hosts visits from U.S. commanders but also plays a direct role in preparing military personnel to operate in conditions similar to those found in the Amazon.

According to the New York National Guard's 2024 annual report, 34 training and exchange activities were conducted with Brazil that year alone, covering areas ranging from operations in an Amazonian environment to cyber defense and capabilities related to the coordination of airstrikes. In August, for instance, members of the U.S. National Guard participated in Exercise Nuntius in Campo Grande (Mato Grosso do Sul), which included qualifying eight Brazilian service members in terminal attack control—involving the coordination of aircraft under realistic training conditions.

The cooperation also encompasses areas such as search and rescue and disaster response, which are presented as "learning opportunities" for the Brazilians. All these activities are part of a program that the U.S. military apparatus itself defines as subordinate to Washington's strategic objectives.

Exercises, training, and intelligence: U.S. tentacles in the Amazon

The U.S. military presence in the Brazilian Amazon, however, predates this recent rapprochement by a long time. In 2017, for example, the AmazonLog exercise brought together Brazilian and foreign military personnel in the Amazon region—including representatives from the United States—under the justification of "developing logistical and humanitarian assistance capabilities."

One of the most significant episodes occurred in 2023, when the administration of Luiz Inácio (PT) authorized the entry of 294 U.S. military personnel into Brazil to participate in the CORE 23 exercise, held in the states of Pará and Amapá. The operation—also designated "Southern Vanguard 24" by the U.S. Army—involved joint training between the two nations' armies, including combat and movement drills in a jungle environment.

Among the participants were 44 members of the New York National Guard, who operated in Belém, Macapá, and Oiapoque alongside regular U.S. and Brazilian troops. The exercise facilitated the presence of a substantial contingent of foreign

troops on Brazilian Amazonian territory, engaged in operational training alongside national units.

Initiated in 2021, the CORE exercise series is scheduled to continue through 2028, alternating between Brazil and the United States. Its first iteration on Brazilian soil involved 240 U.S. military personnel in training exercises within the Paraíba Valley, across cities in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. An edition planned for October 2025 in the Caatinga region of Pernambuco was ultimately canceled amid a political and diplomatic crisis triggered by sanctions imposed on Brazil by Donald Trump. The Brazilian Army officially attributed the cancellation to budgetary constraints, in accordance with guidance from the Ministry of Defense.

The suspension of CORE, however, did not halt military-to-military engagement. In June 2026, cadets from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point—a premier institution for training U.S. Army officers—visited Manaus to observe the instructional activities of the Amazon Military Command and the CIGS (Jungle Warfare Training Center). This visit took place just five months before the arrival of Patrick Clare's delegation. Also in 2026, representatives linked to the U.S. Embassy visited security agencies in the state of Acre for meetings focused on "institutional cooperation, information exchange, and the training" of Brazilian police officers.

This alignment also extends to the realm of intelligence. In 2025, the administration of Luiz Inácio established the Amazon International Police Cooperation Center (CCPI Amazônia) in Manaus, designed to "integrate security institutions and expand the exchange of information, investigative techniques, and measures to combat transnational crime."

Although this is a separate initiative from the military exercises, the establishment of this center in the Amazonian capital adds another dimension to the deepening ties between the security apparatuses operating in the Amazon and imperialism—primarily that of the United States. From military exercises predating the 2019 agreement with the New York National Guard, to the arrival of hundreds of U.S. troops in Pará and Amapá in 2023, and a series of subsequent visits, the historical record reveals Washington's persistent interest in the Brazilian Amazon.

Under the veneer of so-called "military cooperation" and "bilateral programs," the United States is deepening its strategic influence over Brazil's reactionary armed forces—a process unfolding amidst the country's growing military subordination to the interests of U.S. imperialism.

https://anovademocracia.com.br/ianque-manaus-presenca-eua-amazonia/

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**The Brazilian Army opens the doors of its jungle warfare center to a U.S. general and seven other military personnel in the Amazon—a visit that reveals a military relationship extending far beyond mere meetings between commanders**

**Sociade Militar, Nov, 8, 2026 :**

**A delegation of eight U.S. service members, led by General Patrick Clare, visits the CIGS in Manaus. Learn about their agenda, a partnership with New York dating back to 2019, and the Americans who have already completed training in Brazilian jungle warfare.**

*Note: This item from a Brazilian news site was translated using Google Translate.*

A delegation of eight U.S. military personnel arrived at the Jungle Warfare Training Center (CIGS) in Manaus on November 5. The group was led by Brigadier General Patrick Clare, of the New York National Guard, and welcomed by Colonel Prazeres, the commander of this Brazilian Army unit.

The visit brought the U.S. service members to one of Brazil's premier schools for tropical forest combat. The encounter took place seven years after Brazil and the New York National Guard formalized a partnership that has already enabled personnel from that state to complete jungle warfare courses in the Amazon.A Brazilian colonel welcomed the visitors and provided access to the CIGS facilities.

According to an account released by the CIGS, Colonel Prazeres outlined the school's characteristics during a presentation. Afterward, the delegation toured the "Brazilian Amazon Space" (EBA) and the military unit's zoo. The itinerary brought the visitors to facilities dedicated to understanding the rainforest—an environment in which the Army must contend with intense heat, high humidity, vast river systems, and movement that often relies on watercraft.The official record, featuring photographs credited to Soldier Cordovil—from the CIGS public affairs office—documents an institutional visit. The scheduled activities focused on an introduction to the school and fostering interaction between the military personnel of both nations.

Patrick Clare assumed a new position with the New York National Guard in October.

General Patrick Clare arrived in Manaus shortly after taking on the role of deputy commander of the New York National Guard's land component in October. According to his official biography, he oversees the organization's day-to-day activities on behalf of the state command.

Prior to this, the officer served with the 42nd Infantry Division and held leadership roles within New York's military structure. His presence in Manaus brings together two elements: a newly appointed leader and a U.S. institution with a history of conducting training with the Brazilian Armed Forces.

Partnership signed in 2019 led Americans to learn jungle warfare

On March 14, 2019, Brazilian and New York military authorities established a partnership aboard the museum ship *Intrepid* in the United States. The agreement is part of the State Partnership Program, which promotes professional exchanges and training between U.S. state National Guards and foreign military forces.

The program paved the way for members of the New York National Guard to participate in the International Jungle Operations Course in Manaus. The first member of that National Guard completed the training later in 2019. The cooperation also extended to other areas, such as search and rescue operations with the Brazilian Air Force.

The United States' interest in the expertise cultivated at the CIGS (Jungle Warfare Training Center) is not limited to the National Guard. In June of this year, cadets from West Point also visited Manaus to learn about the doctrine of the Brazilian Army.

Two New York service members completed the Brazilian course in 2024

A concrete example of this relationship took place in November 2024. Sergeants Gerardo Balsa and Grant Cozart, from the 105th Airlift Wing of the New York Air National Guard, completed the CIGS international course after undergoing training in navigation, survival, patrolling, and movement along Amazonian rivers.

According to the National Guard itself, the two were the first members of the 105th Airlift Wing to complete this training. The organization highlighted the challenges posed by the terrain, as well as the knowledge gained from instructors and military personnel from other countries.

These results explain why the school in Manaus attracts foreigners interested in combat conditions that cannot be easily replicated at conventional bases. The Brazilian experience includes operating heavy equipment in flooded terrain, navigating through dense vegetation, and maintaining decision-making capabilities in a hostile environment.

Visit concluded with an exchange; no new operations announced

During the meeting on November 5, General Clare and the other visitors toured the facilities and received briefings from the CIGS (Jungle Warfare Training Center) team. The official statement released did not mention the signing of any agreements, practical training for the delegation, or joint operations resulting from the visit to Manaus.

This agenda adds a new chapter to a series of engagements that began in 2019, which have included U.S. military personnel undergoing training in the Amazon. For

now, the outcome is limited to a visit by an official from the New York National Guard to the Brazilian school.

Should the exchange of military expertise between Brazil and the United States in the Amazon continue? Share your thoughts in the comments.

https://www.sociedademilitar.com.br/2026/11/general-dos-eua-visita-centro-de-guerra-na-selva-do-exercito-em-manaus-com-comitiva-de-oito-militares-apos-anos-de-intercambio-militar-entre-brasil-e-nova-york-nbd.html

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## Veterans

### Saranac Lake event connects veterans to essential services

**WAMC, Nov. 12, 2026 :**

Joe Fisher spent more than 30 years in the New York Army National Guard, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. But since retiring from military service three years ago, he has taken on a new mission: helping fellow veterans find the support they need when they return to civilian life.

Fisher, who commands the Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Saranac Lake, said one of his biggest challenges is reaching veterans who may be struggling but don't necessarily see themselves as needing help.

"They may not be living well. They may be underhoused, or they may be undercared for," Fisher said. "But they feel they're OK."

In rural regions like the Adirondacks, where veteran residents may live miles from the nearest VA office or other resource center, Fisher said it can be difficult to find people who may need assistance.

"They're out there, but you don't even know that they're out there," he said.

This weekend, Fisher is helping organize a Veterans Stand Down event, designed to supply veterans with necessities like food, clothing and medical care, along with long-term support such as legal assistance and VA enrollment services. The event will be held Saturday from 9 p.m. to 2 p.m. inside the Harrietstown Town Hall auditorium.

The idea for Stand Down events dates back to the years following the Vietnam War, when veterans adapted a military practice of temporarily pulling troops out of combat

for rest and resupply. The gatherings were first put on specifically to help homeless veterans access food, clothing, medical care and other services.

Organizers of the Saranac Lake Stand Down said they want their event to boost awareness of post-combat services and help veterans overcome the stigmas associated with asking for assistance.

Jordanna Mallach, Harrietstown town supervisor and a retired Army and Army National Guard veteran, said military service can reinforce a tendency to put other people's needs ahead of one's own. She served for 23 years before retiring last year.

“If you've served in the military, you've been conditioned to really look at what's happening on your left and right, your battle buddy or the next foxhole over,” Mallach said. “And I think people often think, ‘Well, I have what I need.’”

Mallach said that mindset can make it harder for veterans to recognize when they could benefit from assistance. Still, she said, even those who are ready to seek help may not know what benefits they’re eligible to receive.

Veterans can qualify for a range of benefits beyond those offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Mallach said. Depending on their circumstances, those may include state and local tax breaks, free hunting and fishing licenses, education assistance and adaptive equipment for their homes.

At Saturday’s Stand Down, representatives from the VA will be available to assist with enrollment and identification cards. State and local agencies will also provide information about available programs. Organizers plan to offer basic medical screenings, free clothing, hygiene supplies and haircuts.

Access to those services can be particularly challenging in rural American regions. A 2024 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that roughly one-third of veterans enrolled in VA health care lived in rural areas. Long distances to medical facilities, limited broadband access and health care staffing shortages can all create barriers to care.

For veterans in the North Country, Mallach said an event that brings multiple agencies and services together under one roof can offer a more accessible starting point.

Fisher said an integral part of the Stand Down is its timing and environment. He said he sees more veterans come out of the woodwork for events centered around Veterans Day. And when people walk through the doors and seek assistance, he said they feel more at ease knowing they will be talking to fellow veterans.

“There's a comfort level in that,” Fisher said. “You can actually feel a little more comfortable talking about things. There's a brotherhood or sisterhood there that helps you want to be doing this.”

Fisher said the gathering can also introduce veterans who might already know one another outside of military service. Not everyone who served wears a veteran hat or otherwise makes their military background known, Fisher said. Some are neighbors, friends and familiar faces who rarely share stories from their service.

“Some of them are integral to the fabric of our community, but they don't necessarily go out and talk about it,” he said.

Mallach said a sense of connection among veterans is important, but so is making sure people who haven't served understand the challenges veterans can face after leaving the military. That can include mental health struggles, illnesses associated with toxic exposures and other difficulties adjusting to civilian life.

Mallach said the divide between military and civilian experiences can sometimes leave veterans feeling misunderstood.

“Efforts by communities to bridge those gaps, I think, are important in terms of understanding, but also for veterans to feel supported by the communities in which they live,” she said.

https://www.wamc.org/news/2026-11-12/saranac-lake-event-connects-veterans-to-essential-services?_amp=true

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**Veterans Reflect on Service, Sacrifice and Supporting Those Who Served**

**The Freeman's Journal and Hometown Oneonta, Nov. 12, 2026 :**

As communities across Otsego County observe Veterans Day, local veterans from different generations are reflecting on what military service has meant in their lives and how civilians can continue supporting those who served long after the ceremonies end.

For retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Thomas McMillen of Morris and medically retired Army National Guard soldier Sadie Lincoln-Bautista, service is deeply personal. While their experiences span different generations and military eras, both describe service as a lifelong commitment that continues to shape who they are today.

“I’m proud of my time in the military,” McMillen said.

McMillen served in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1973, including two tours in Vietnam. During his first deployment, he served as an infantry lieutenant leading soldiers through the jungle. After attending helicopter flight school, he returned to Vietnam flying Chinook helicopters.

Reflecting on what has stayed with him most over the years, McMillen pointed not to combat, but to a lesson that became part of his character.

“The most important of all of that would’ve been that I am never late,” he said. “Whatever time they have set for some event, I’m there early. That was ingrained in me from my time in the military.”

Even decades after his service, McMillen remains active in veterans’ organizations and local commemorations. He regularly attends events and said Veterans Day remains an opportunity to reconnect with fellow veterans.

“It means that I’m proud to have served,” he said. “If I see somebody with a T-shirt or a baseball cap that indicates [they were] a veteran, I’ll walk up and ask [them] what [they] did and where [they] served. Yeah, it’s like a friendship for the rest of my life.”

One memory that continues to resonate with McMillen dates back to his second deployment to Vietnam. During a flight from Guam to Saigon, he noticed a young lieutenant who appeared as nervous as he had been years earlier.

“I looked back three rows in the airplane and there was a young lieutenant that looked like I was my first time,” McMillen said. “I regret to my grave not going back and sitting next to him and saying, ‘It’s going to be all right,’ because I was looking forward to going there that time.”

McMillen also reflected on the treatment many Vietnam veterans received after returning home.

“We told our soldiers to get into civilian clothes before you go off post,” he recalled. “We were spit at and hated.”

Today, he sees a stark contrast.

“When people say, ‘Thank you for your service’ today, it indicates that the pendulum has swung back the other way,” he said. “We were drafted, sent there and we came home. Again, I’m proud of my service, and the whole atmosphere has changed back to where it should be.”

For Lincoln-Bautista, service began with a desire to protect the freedoms that make America unique.

“I joined the military because I find a lot of joy and pride in how different the American people are from one another,” she said. “I wanted to protect the nation in that way.”

The 24-year-old said service also gave her purpose as a young mother seeking a better future for her son.

“I wanted to be able to provide him the life that I felt like he deserved,” she said. “But also with a higher sense of purpose.”

Asked about the biggest lessons she carried from the military, Lincoln-Bautista immediately pointed to leadership and accountability.

“The great leadership is the person that will do push-ups with you or sit down and figure out the problem and solution together,” she said. “Not somebody that just points fingers and tells you what to do.”

One lesson from a superior continues to guide Lincoln-Bautista’s daily life.

“I was told by one of my favorite sergeants that the closest soldier to the problem is you,” she said. “You’re not going to wait for somebody else to come by. You’re going to step up and make the change that needs to be made.”

Lincoln-Bautista credited Sgt. Shane Fachko with helping her continue her military career after suffering an injury during training.

“He really advocated for me,” she said. “He treated me like family and made sure that I was always taken care of.”

While Veterans Day brings appreciation and recognition, Lincoln-Bautista believes many civilians underestimate the sacrifices military members make, particularly the mental health challenges they can face.

“A lot of soldiers or veterans, they need the support when they get out,” she said. “Sometimes a pat on the back or a cup of coffee or a thank you goes a really long way.”

One of her strongest Veterans Day memories came shortly after returning home from nearly eight months away from her young son during training.

“We were at the Guernsey and the kids were on the merry-go-round singing ‘Grand Old Flag,’” Lincoln-Bautista recalled. “I remember getting teary-eyed because it kind of made it feel worth it.”

Watching children laugh and play helped put her sacrifices into perspective.

“These children get to be here playing in a peaceful environment and a safe community because of the sacrifices that veterans have made,” she said. “It made me feel like, ‘Okay, this is why we do this, and this is worth it.’”

As Veterans Day passes, both veterans hope community members remember that support for veterans should continue year-round.

Lincoln-Bautista encouraged residents to go beyond words and take action.

“It’s important to thank veterans yesterday, today and every day,” she said.

“But also ask yourself, what can you do to make a difference in your own community?”

Whether through donating food, volunteering with veterans’ organizations, supporting mental health initiatives or simply taking time to listen, she believes small acts can have lasting impacts.

“Think of a veteran today,” she said. “But tomorrow, what can you do to impact a veteran’s life? What can you do next week? There’s so many things that we can do that are small for us but make a huge difference for somebody else.”

For McMillen and Lincoln-Bautista, that ongoing support may be one of the most meaningful ways civilians can honor service, not just on Veterans Day, but every day that follows.

https://www.allotsego.com/veterans-reflect-on-service-sacrifice-and-supporting-those-who-served/

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**Saranac Lake event aims to connect veterans with services and support**

**Adirondack Explorer, Nov. 11, 2026 :**

**VFW hosts Veterans Day Stand Down on Saturday, Nov. 14**

Joe Fisher spent more than 30 years in the New York Army National Guard, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. But since retiring from military service three years ago, he has taken on a new mission: helping fellow veterans find the support they need when they return to civilian life.

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"They may not be living well. They may be underhoused, or they may be undercared for," Fisher said. "But they feel they're OK."

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Jordanna Mallach, Harrietstown town supervisor and a retired Army and Army National Guard veteran, said military service can reinforce a tendency to put other people's needs ahead of one's own. She served for 23 years before retiring last year.

We're kicking off our end-of-year fundraiser, and with your help, we can continue to bring you important news about the Adirondacks. Click here to make a donation.

"If you've served in the military, you've been conditioned to really look at what's happening on your left and right, your battle buddy or the next foxhole over," Mallach said. "And I think people often think, 'Well, I have what I need.'"

Mallach said that mindset can make it harder for veterans to recognize when they could benefit from assistance. Still, she said, even those who are ready to seek help may not know what benefits they're eligible to receive.

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"Efforts by communities to bridge those gaps, I think, are important in terms of understanding, but also for veterans to feel supported by the communities in which they live," she said.

https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/communities/saranac-lake-event-aims-to-connect-veterans-with-services-and-support/

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**The Long Gray Line Remembers 9/11**

**West Point Association of Graduates, Nov. 11, 2026 :**

*Note: This item includes a NYARNG member.*

Class Years: 1962, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1986, 1987, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2015

September marked 25 years since 9/11. The attacks that day affected the cadets, graduates, and leadership of the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) in ways no one could have predicted, searing memories into the Long Gray Line that, even a quarter-century later, refuse to fade.

Graduate Reflections: New York

John Mahony ’78 retired from the Army in 1999 as a lieutenant colonel. On 9/11, he was working with Empire Blue Cross on the 19th floor of the North Tower at the World Trade Center (WTC). Mahony was with his team when American Airlines Flight 11 flew into the floors above them. “As the building began to sway back and forth, rolling under my feet, I leaned against a partition and registered the loud boom of an explosion,” Mahony recalls.

“My West Point and military experience kicked in,” he continues. “I knew I had to take care of my team and make sure they made it through.” Mahony sent his teammates to the nearest stairwell, then headed to another stairwell to ensure everyone was evacuating. Once outside, stuck between the first responders’ emergency cordon and the tip of Battery Park, he couldn’t do anything but watch as the second plane hit the South Tower. Mahony ran as both towers crumbled, covering him in ash, particles, and dust. In the roughly 50 presentations he’s since given about his experience, he describes scenes like an ambulance mistaking a debris-choked walking path for a road and crashing down a flight of stairs and a biology teacher frantically asking dust-camouflaged survivors if they were students from her field trip.

Mahony was motivated during the disaster by the “You take care of your troops” principle. “When you help other people, you help yourself as well,” he says. “It gave me something to focus on at the time besides the building falling down around me, because I was worrying whether I could get these people out of danger and determining the best way to do that.”

Of all the businesses occupying the WTC on 9/11, the financial firm Cantor Fitzgerald suffered the largest corporate loss of life: 658 employees died in the attack. Doug Gurian ’86 had been a bond salesperson at Cantor Fitzgerald for a decade before leaving in early 2001 to work at Radianz, a financial services technology firm in Midtown. When his USMA roommate and best friend Scott Poirier ’86 learned of the attack, Poirier assumed the odds were in Gurian’s favor. “I wasn’t too worried because I knew he was no longer working at the towers, but I immediately called him anyway and couldn’t get through,” Poirier says.

What Poirier didn’t know was that, on 9/11, Gurian was attending a conference at the WTC’s Windows on the World. He was the only West Point graduate killed in the attack on that day.

Gurian’s remains were found and positively identified relatively soon after the attack; family and friends spread his ashes on Fire Island, where Gurian and Poirier spent innumerable carefree summer days at the Gurian family beach house. Gurian’s name is etched in the 9/11 memorial at the WTC site, and a New York Waterways ferry was christened in his name.

Gurian’s death was a shock. “We had lost classmates to accidents, but losing Doug reinforced the fragility of life,” Poirier says. “Now that I’m in my 60s, that’s all obvious to me—but it wasn’t so back then.”

Kris Urbauer ’86 was in a civilian job with General Electric in a Chicago high-rise when news broke of the 9/11 attacks. Out of uniform since 1995, Urbauer says, “I desperately wanted to do something, and I also wanted to put my uniform back on.” Within two weeks, she got her wish.

After active duty, Urbauer was promoted to major while in graduate school and was a member of the Individual Ready Reserve. A call from the Pentagon in mid-September 2001 recalled her to duty, and Urbauer found herself at Ground Zero, attached to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District.

“I sent daily reports to the Pentagon detailing the amount of debris removed from the site and the amount of material processed at the Staten Island Landfill, where most of the personal effects were sorted for evidence,” Urbauer says. “I also was responsible for in-processing and out-processing the civilian debris experts who worked for the Corps.” Urbauer also gave site tours to VIPs, both military and civilian, foreign and domestic. She served at Ground Zero for 365 days.

The site was an “absolute horror,” Urbauer recalls. “It was like a bathtub—that’s what we called it—a huge, empty space where the buildings had stood that was filled with burning rubble… and it burned for months.” Still, Urbauer couldn’t imagine being anywhere else. “I wanted to be a part of the effort to heal my country,” she says. “It was definitely my duty to be there.”

Sean Mullin ’97 was a member of the 107th Corps Support Group of the New York Army National Guard on 9/11, and in January 2002 he was promoted to captain and named officer in charge of the soldiers stationed at Ground Zero.

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A program to get more active-duty officers to join the National Guard led Sean Mullin ’97 to transition to the 107th Corps Support Group of the New York Army National Guard in the summer of 1999. Mullin’s father called him on the morning of 9/11 with news of the attacks; from his apartment window at 90th and Columbus, the younger Mullin could see the smoke from the World Trade Center as it burned. He donned his Guard uniform, walked across town to his armory on the Upper East Side, and was the first officer to report.

“I’ll never forget walking across Central Park—in my uniform—as thousands of New Yorkers, some covered in dust and ash, flooded north towards the Bronx,” Mullin recalls. Working with the New York Police Department and the New York Fire Department to secure the area, Mullin’s tasks included escorting any found body parts to the medical tents set up around Ground Zero. In January 2002, he was promoted to captain and named officer in charge of the soldiers stationed at Ground Zero. Mullin served there until mid-August, also helping secure bridges and tunnels under the city’s jurisdiction.

“Looking back, I see that the true value of my service at Ground Zero was that I provided a sense of comfort to New Yorkers who felt better knowing that there were people in uniform during such uncertain times,” Mullin concludes. “From the perspective of the civilians in New York City, I now know that they were grateful for my service, however futile and insignificant I might’ve viewed it at the time.”

Graduate Reflections: Washington, DC

Charlie Rash ’73 was at the Pentagon on the morning of 9/11 when his wife called to break the news of the WTC attack. Rash, who retired as a colonel in 1999, was a director with SY Technology, managing a portfolio that supported the U.S. Army. He was in a reception area, looking out the large window on the Pentagon’s western side, where American Airlines Flight 77 would later hit. “A general came out of his office and asked if I knew that the World Trade Center had been attacked, and immediately after he spoke the plane hit the building,” Rash says.

Pentagon on 9/11 by Houlihan

“I saw a large ball of fire fill up the sky outside the window and watched the window bulge in toward the room,” he continues. “Simultaneously I told my wife, who was still on the phone, that I had to go, and I dropped to the floor.” A moment later, Rash was back on his feet. The walls of the offices to his left had been pushed approximately

five to six feet toward the center of the building, and black, oily smoke limited vision to about one foot. Despite the chaos, Rash and others in the vicinity managed to escape.

Rash says his perspective changed after 9/11: “I now looked at the situation we were in as a country and recognized that the battlefield had changed radically, where no one was safe any longer from attack.”

On the second floor of the Pentagon’s E Wing, then-Colonel Robert Caslen ’75 had watched in shock as the initial WTC attack was reported on a television in the offices of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where Caslen was deputy director for strategy and policy. “I said the next target is a command-and-control facility, most likely in Washington,” recounts Caslen, who was USMA Superintendent from 2013 to 2018 and is now a retired Army lieutenant general. “Eleven minutes later, we were hit.”

The Pentagon, built of solid concrete, is so sturdy that Caslen and his colleagues didn’t feel or hear a thing; but as sprinklers gushed and sirens wailed, they were told to evacuate. Caslen recalls, “We got outside, saw the Pentagon burning, and I said, ‘There’s no way I’m going to spend the rest of the day outside here.’” He joined forces with a Marine colonel and a Navy captain and headed back in. “We were the Joint Staff, so we had the responsibility of tracking down the president and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and establish communications,” Caslen explains. After being turned away twice by police, the trio was undeterred. “Finally, we went to a third place and snuck in,” he says. After locating and evacuating others, they reached the command center and re-established communications.

Matthew Klimow ’74 was also in the Pentagon on that day. As the executive assistant (EA) to General Richard B. Myers, the acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Klimow had a telephone to each ear when Flight 77 struck: one was the “Red Switch” secure line on a conference call with the White House and the commanding general of NORAD; on the other line was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was out of the country at the time.

“I was relaying information to the chairman when the building shook and pandemonium broke outside my door in the corridors,” Klimow says. “The watch officer in the National Military Command Center [NMCC] broke into the Red Switch conference call and notified us that the Pentagon had been hit by an airplane.”

Myers rushed back from a Capitol Hill meeting, and he and Klimow went straight to the NMCC, where they were joined by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to direct the military response to the attacks.

Less than three weeks later, Myers was sworn in as the 15th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with Klimow as his EA for the first year of the Global War on Terrorism. Klimow retired in 2003; he served as U.S. ambassador to Turkmenistan, bordering both Afghanistan and Iran, from 2019 to 2024. “The West Point ethic of

Duty, Honor, Country has been my foundation in serving our nation for over 50 years as a soldier and as a diplomat," Klimow says. "I have never lost sight of the key phrases in the West Point Cadet Prayer: 'Encourage us in our endeavor to live above the common level of life,' and 'Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong.'"

Graduate Reflections: West Point

The 9/11 attacks were deeply personal for Major Ramona (Fastow) Jones '05. A plebe at the time, she was about to enter her chemistry class in Bartlett Hall when someone said a plane had hit the WTC.

"I knew my dad was there: It's where he worked as a contract law attorney for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey," Jones says. Fredric Fastow's office was on the 66th floor of the North Tower, just below where the first plane hit. Numb and in shock at the news of the attack, Jones was encouraged by her instructor to return to her barracks. "I bumped into a firstie, and he took me to the chaplain's office," she says. "I was raised Jewish, and this chaplain was Christian, but it didn't matter what religion we were—he prayed; I listened."

A few days earlier, Jones' parents had joined her for an Army Football game. After the game, they said their casual goodbyes. On 9/11, Jones feared it may have been her dad's last farewell. The landline phone in her room, however, soon became her lifeline: At 2:30pm, it rang. Her dad was on the line, saying he was okay. He told his daughter he had convinced a coworker to walk the 66 flights of stairs down with him to safety, instead of the easier, quicker climb to the observatory level, where they would have hoped for rescue that would never arrive. "Amid all the horror and disbelief of the day, I could finally feel relief," Jones says.

Two years after graduating and commissioning into the Adjutant General branch, Jones deployed for 15 months to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. "The 173d was there for two fighting seasons," she recalls. "We lost 45 members of one brigade over those 15 months." Jones, now a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, recounted her military career as she sat in the West Point Starbucks, coincidentally 21 years to the day after graduating. A parking lot separates the coffeehouse from the West Point Cemetery. That wasn't lost on Jones, who glanced pensively out the window: "I sit here, and across that parking lot there are classmates perpetually in their 20s, who never had a chance to live their lives. That's a part of our class's identity.

And that's a direct result of 9/11."

West Point Vigil September 14, 2001

Three days after the attacks, cadets held a vigil on the Plain. Then-plebe Lori Imsdahl '05 says she remembers the memorial service, but not her reaction to it. "Looking back, it's easy to see that this was because I was 19 and naïve, and not

from a military family," she recounts. Imsdahl relayed the details of the vigil in her blog, Pivotal Places: "The Corps of Cadets, all 32 companies, stood in formation around the swath of manicured grass. The moon was huge, and the night was very cold, even in my long-sleeved, high-necked uniform." The band played "Amazing Grace" and "Taps" on bagpipes, and a rifle volley followed to honor of the victims.

USMA leaders were in morning meetings when they learned of the WTC attack through television and other media. Upon hearing of the first plane hitting the North Tower, then-Commandant Major General Eric "Rick" Olson '72 (Retired) recalls officers in the room saying, "What a horrible accident; how does that happen?" "Then we heard there was a second plane," Olson says. "That's when we knew it wasn't just an accident."

"We knew the world was going to change in ways we couldn't immediately figure out," says Brigadier General Daniel J. Kaufman '68 (Retired), who was USMA's Dean at the time. Leadership's focus immediately became how to protect the cadets. "We thought we might be a target; not a strategic one, but an emotional one," Kaufman says.

"People forget that, at that time, West Point was an open post," says Lieutenant General William J. Lennox Jr. '71 (Retired), then-Superintendent of the Academy. "We had two million visitors a year, and we were the third-largest tourist attraction in the state behind New York City and Niagara Falls."

With feedback from the Pentagon, USMA's leadership decided to close the Post, which is still not fully open a quarter of a century later, Kaufman notes. "Perhaps one of the most tragic outcomes of 9/11 for the Academy is that lingering sense of isolation from the American public," he says.

As the days unfolded, some cadets were getting fractious. "I heard that there were probably about 100 cadets who wanted to leave immediately, to get involved in fighting the war," Lennox remembers. "The first talk I gave to the Corps as a whole was from the Poop Deck at lunch two days later and told the cadets, 'Your mission is to stay here, to be the future officers in the Army and to practice tactical patience, stay here at West Point and graduate.'"

Shock dissolved into resolve among USMA leadership, as the reality of an imminent war surfaced. "What occurred to me was that we were about to graduate a class of cadets who would go directly into combat: That's the first time that happened since the late 1960s, when we were graduating classes to go straight to Vietnam," Olson says. "The question became what do we do to get cadets ready to go directly into war, a war we really didn't understand at that point, and arguably never understood."

As the Global War on Terrorism began, some instructors left USMA to fight. "The Army was under a lot of pressure to come up with brigades, and they started sending our instructors to units to deploy," Lennox recalls.

Through all of that, the Academy strove to continue training its cadets. “We’d have parades, but we’d have snipers on the roof keeping an eye on what was going on,” Lennox says. “Eventually, we raised the curb height so trucks couldn’t go out onto the parade field.”

Being Superintendent was sobering as the post-9/11 years brought tragic news again and again. “I thought, when I came in as Supe, that the toughest part would be separating a cadet from the Corps or something like that,” Lennox says. “But going to the funerals of cadets you knew…that was really tough.”

Graduate Reflections: During Training

Phil Kreck ’01 was a freshly minted second lieutenant taking part in the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course at Fort Benning, Georgia on 9/11 when the staff stopped a live-fire exercise and collected all the lieutenants in a small group. “The instructors asked if we had any relatives who worked at the Pentagon or the World Trade Center,” Kreck recalls. A former Special Forces communications sergeant worked some magic on their military radio, and through poor reception the group learned of the attacks.

The rookie officers gained a new sense of purpose. “Prior to 9/11, the United States was enjoying a certain degree of peace-time calm,” Kreck says, “but 9/11 painted a new picture of the world for us new lieutenants.”

Kreck Pewter Twin Towers

Kreck later flew up to New York City to see the aftermath. “On a whim, I purchased a small pewter statue of the World Trade Center,” he says, and he later attended Ranger School with 9/11 fresh in his mind and the 2-inch statue in his pocket. Personal trinkets were verboten when Kreck was in Ranger School in the winter of 2001-02. “A ranger instructor ‘caught’ me with it during an inspection, and he started to raise his voice—until he recognized it,” Kreck says. “He paused and handed it back to me, saying, ‘I’ll allow it.’” The statue traveled with Kreck through his active and Reserve service, including overseas. “It was a small but persistent reminder of just one reason for our service,” Kreck says.

In September 2001, then-Brigadier General Guy Swan ’76 was based in Grafenwöhr, Germany as a commanding general in the 7th Army Training Command. But on September 10, Swan was in Montgomery, Alabama for a week-long course at the Air War College, a school for generals and admirals. The keynote speaker, a retired Marine four-star general, unwittingly gave a chilling foreshadow of what was to come. “Our discussion got into terrorism,” remembers Swan, now a retired lieutenant general. “We were talking about vulnerability and attacks when the Marine general said, ‘It’s not a matter of if; it’s a matter of when.’” The next morning was 9/11.

The course was terminated, and with flights grounded for the next few days, Swan could not immediately return to his base. He remembered that people kept asking him and his fellow West Point graduates what the attacks meant. “Whether we are still serving, or in a civilian career, West Point graduates are looked to for answers when the nation is in crisis,” he says. “I think that’s the reach that West Point graduates have—we are the expert in the public’s eyes.”

Amid the loss and tragedy, West Point created solutions. “The events of 9/11 demonstrated a change in the character of warfare, and West Point had to stay ahead of those changes,” Swan says. “The West Point Werx Innovation Hub is one of many examples of how the Academy is preparing the next generation of U.S. Army officers to lead in times of rapid change.”

Other programs begun at West Point after 9/11 are succeeding decades later. The Combating Terrorism Center—founded in February 2003 by General Wayne A. Downing ’62 (U.S. Army, Retired); Vinnie Viola ’77; and Brigadier General Russell Howard (U.S. Army, Retired)—has become an indispensable source of knowledge on terrorism worldwide.

“Every aspect of the cadet experience—the curriculum, the professional military development under the Commandant, and the leadership of the institution from the Superintendent’s Office—moved us forward in strategic ways that are still paying dividends because of the content and the quality of the programs that continue to contribute to education in the broadest sense,” Kaufman says. “As I look back on it, 9/11 helped kickstart that transformation.”

The events of 9/11 birthed the “GWOT generation”: the post-9/11 West Point graduates who fought in the Global War on Terrorism. As reported in the 2021 Spring issue of West Point magazine, 12,600 graduates from the classes of 2000 to 2015 were deployed during their first five years of service. Of those officers, 3,572 received the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Combat Action Badge, or the Combat Medical Badge. An additional 871 medals (i.e., Silver Stars, Bronze Star Medals with “V” device, Purple Hearts, and Army Commendation Medals with “V” device) were received for exceptional and heroic service under fire. Lennox’s Poop Deck advice about tactical patience paid off, as those graduates served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and, in Lennox’s words, “really did an outstanding job.” Etched into the memory of those years are also the 101 men and four women of the Long Gray Line who lost their lives as a result of the attack or have given their lives in the defense of freedom while fighting GWOT. Surely these soldiers who were called upon to offer and give their lives for their country are, as General Douglas MacArthur, Class of 1903, once attested, “the noblest development of mankind.”

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https://www.westpointaog.org/news/the-long-gray-line-remembers-9-11/

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