

NEW YORK NAVAL MILITIA NEWSLETTER



2026

Quarter 2

Royal Swedish Chief of the Navy RADM Johan Norlen & RDML Nolan

COMMANDER'S CORNER

A Message from RDML MaryEtta Nolan



Congratulations on the appointment of our new Western Regional Commander, CAPT James W. Gerlach. See his biography in this newsletter. Thank you for volunteering and welcome.
RECRUITMENT, RECRUITMENT, RECRUITMENT. My priority is recruiting drilling reservists to strengthen our ranks. A recent manpower audit identified more than 1,000 members who had moved out of New York, stopped drilling, or no longer wished to remain in the NYNM. This significantly reduced the number of 900-series members—retirees and veterans—we may enroll. By law, 95% of NYNM members must be drilling reservists from the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, while retirees and veterans may comprise no more than 5%. Currently, 900-series members account for 7% of our membership. Actions to achieve this goal:

- N1 (ADMIN), led by LTJG Steve Dombroski, has added two members.
- NCC (sel) Anthony Balfour, a Navy recruiter with 14 years of experience, has volunteered to lead a recruitment training team with representatives from every Reserve Center. We need members to step forward—volunteerism is central to Militia service. Recruiting one member is also the simplest way to earn a Recruitment Medal.
- GySgt Anthony Egan, our new Manpower Officer, will oversee training and evaluations for the "5%ers." He will work closely with HQ Readiness Officer, BMCS Elizebeth Spain to maintain an accurate, engaged militia. Gunny Egan is also developing the Automated Personnel & Evaluation Exchange (APEX), a fully automated, online platform for evaluating enlisted members and officers. Additional information and training will be provided when the system launches.
- Naval Militia leaders held meet-and-greet visits at Navy Reserve Centers in New York City and Long Island, as well as Marine Corps 6th COM, to welcome new commanding officers and explain the benefits New York State provides to their members. Each command enthusiastically authorized the Naval Militia to recruit at its facility.
- While HQ has temporarily paused enrollment of additional 900-series members, faithful and active members who retire this year or reach high-year tenure may transition to "5%er" status. This transition is not automatic or guaranteed; action is required. Contact BMCS Spain with your retirement or enlistment-end date. A physical examination or other documentation may be requested. Members removed from the NYNM after a status change that was not reported to HQ must reapply as veterans if they wish to continue serving. Veteran enrollment will resume once our membership percentage returns to the authorized level. Members are strongly encouraged to remain active in NYNM activities.

PROMOTIONS

It is my pleasure to announce the 2026 promotion board results. I would like to thank the Board President, CAPT Jay Dutcher and all the members who gave up their precious time to carefully examine 25 packages, engage in discussions and make informed decisions. For those who were not selected this year, talk to your Senior Leadership on actions that will make you shine next year. My suggestion is to get involved in the NYNM with collateral duties, not just the Mission.

Congratulations to our selectees: LtCol Michael Golden, Major Recordo Demetrius, WO1 David Prescott, NCC Anthony Balfour, GySgt Miguel Martinez, SSgt George Diaz, SSgt Aubyn Duckett, SSgt Carlson Thompson, Sgt Wilyin Gao, Sgt Angel Martoral, Sgt Andre Seunaraine and BM3 Brian Davis. Promotion ceremonies will be held in October. Details will be forthcoming.

AWARDS

Congratulations to the recipients of the New York Naval Militia Josephthal Award. Chosen for Militiaman of the Year is EMC John Gerard who CAPT Don McKnight says “is the most productive and dedicated MEBS person in the greater Buffalo area of Western New York. He is the go-to person for planning and arranging logistics and operational support in Region V. Most of what he accomplishes is performed in a non-pay status.” This is the epitome of a true Militiaman. I thank him for the years of dedicated service to MEBS and the NYNM.

The Unit of the Year goes to Alpha Co., S3 Section, AO West, JTF Sentinel consisting of Naval Militia members: Cpl Wilyin Gao, Cpl Dorton Lindsey, Sgt Chris Phengthavone, SSgt Giovanni Shenouda, GySgt Ming Yu and MSgt Leonel Rivas. Additional team members not eligible for the award are NYARNG, Captain Malysa Mae Clark, SPC Samuel Jung and NYG CPL Daniel Collado.
Alpha Company planned and coordinated over 4,000 personnel movements in support of mission requirements across Western New York, ensuring eight correctional facilities remained adequately staffed.

I want to thank members of the Josephthal Ribbon Committee, LTJG Steve Dombroski, GySgt Anthony Egan and GySgt Erik Tjornhom for designing the new Josephthal Ribbon and developing protocols for DMNA’s review and acceptance to be added to the NYNM Awards. The ribbon will be in production in the near future and distributed to all members who earned the Josephthal Award.

Executive Officer:

LtCol Michael Golden

Congratulations to those selected for advancement during the 2026 promotion cycle. Everyone who is eligible is encouraged to apply each year when applications are called for. Our Headquarters operations continue at full speed as we support several additional ceremonies, recruiting visits, 250th events, MEBS turnover, and State Partnership Program operations. With so much going on for the Naval Militia in 2026, it is important to be efficient. This is where the Chain of Command comes into play.

The Chain of Command is the formal line of authority, responsibility, and communication within an organization that shows who reports to whom. It creates clear accountability, speeds up problem-solving, and reduces role confusion. Naval Militia members are something responsible to multiple chains of command it is important to know what issue to resolve with which chain:

Federal Drilling Unit: To be retained in the Naval Militia, you must be in good standing with your federal drilling unit. This includes medical readiness, attendance to drills, and informing your unit of your involvement with the Naval Militia. Federal drills or activations take priority over state active duty. You cannot be paid or receive entitlements by New York State when you are in any federal status. It is never acceptable to use state active duty or service with the Naval Militia to be excused from drill requirements.

Mission Unit: You will use your assigned unit chain of command when on state active duty to resolve assignment issues, operations concerns, scheduling and to initiate pay change requests. While on a mission change in home of records, dependency status, rank advancement, etc., must be worked through your local S1 and with the Naval Militia HQ.

Naval Militia: Naval Militia HQ is contacted to update your rank, HOR, dependency status, medical readiness, and for updating your membership status. You must inform Naval Militia HQ 180 days in advance if you are retiring or separating from your drilling unit. You can also request awards such as Long and Faithful or recruiting medals and for initial issue of uniform patches or pins. Naval Militia HQ is contacted first to apply to join a State Active-Duty mission for pre-screening.

Your Naval Militia Command (Northern, Southers, Western, MEBS, or MECS) is contacted for information on 5% drillers, approval for regular State Active Duty orders for training or meetings. You will contact your Command if you have questions regarding our Naval Militia Instructors, general questions, and for grievances. Resolving conflict at the lowest level is the best method for a positive resolution. You may continue up your chain of command if you still feel that your issues were not resolved. Answer shopping, or calling around to different chain of commands, for routine matters until you get the answer you want is never acceptable and ties up limited resources.

JULY 4TH 250 CELEBRATION



"The Team": Commander NY Naval Militia, RDML MaryEtta Nolan; Incoming MEBS CDR, Major Frank Cinturati; Force Senior Enlisted Leader, MGySgt Salvatore Rignola and Admiral's Aide, GySgt Erik Tjornhom, Jr.
I was honored to participate in America's 250th Celebration along with "the team", the State Partnership Program Coordinator LtCol Melanie Padilla and representatives from the Royal Swedish Navy and Marine Corps including our special guest, RADM Johan Norlen, Chief of the Royal Swedish Navy.



The four day event started on July 2nd, rendezvousing with Naval Militia PB300, piloted by CWO2 Christopher Ward and crewed by EM1 Glen Malik, to conduct a reconnaissance of the harbor and view the ships moored for Sail4th250. July 3rd was an eventful day for the team and the PB440 crew: BMCS Michael Nilsen, MKC Ken Stefandel and BM1 Kurt Schneider who provided an assortment of pastries, bagels, and beverages for the Swedish tradition of Fika.



First order of business was to pick up NYNG SPP Coordinator LtCol Melanie Padilla and the armed escorts, then proceed to pier 81 to meet the Royal Swedish Chief of the Navy RADM Johan Norlen, his spouse, and the Swedish delegation. Introductions, gifts and coins were presented to RADM Norlen by RDML Nolan.

The delegation was then divided into two groups: Major Cinturati hosted six NCOs aboard Landing Craft 350 piloted by BMC Tracy Sandavol and crewed by BMC Ben Flad, MK1 Tim Nugent and EM1 Glen Malik. RDML Nolan and LtCol Padilla hosted RADM Norlen and his staff aboard Patrol Boat 440.
Both groups participated in a harbor tour that included photo opportunities at the Statue of Liberty and USS Aircraft Carrier Nimitz. Sail4th250, the year's premier event, featured the largest Parade of Sails and Military Aircraft Flyover in New York Harbor history. PB440 again hosted the Royal Swedish Armed Forces, LtCol Padilla, Master Sgt Jessica Clary-Dubik, NYNG shooters, and the team. The international aircraft and tall ships made an impressive sight.







Swedish tall ship *HMS Gladan* made her appearance to the delight of our guests.





Captain's reception onboard the *HMS Gladan*.
A magnificent evening, RDML Nolan and MGySgt Rignola joined NY Adjutant General, Major General Raymond Shields, National Air Guard Major General Gary Charlton and LtCol Melanie Padilla onboard the Royal Swedish Tall Ship *HMS Gladan* for an evening reception hosted by Commanding Officer, Peter Jeppsson. TAG presented gifts including a bottle of fine Irish whiskey *The Fighting 69th*, honoring the US Army infantry regiment.









The event provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships formed during earlier engagements.

The Royal Swedish Navy Band performed both national anthems flawlessly, followed by remarks Swedish dignitaries, Rear Admiral Johan Norlen and Vice Admiral Doug Perry, Commanding Officer of the United States Second Fleet. Rear Admiral Norlen presented NY Naval Militia with a plaque in appreciation for the role NYNM made in making a memorable event.



Bravo Zulu to Major Cinturati and the crews of the Military Emergency Boat Service.



FDNY fireboat saluting the arrival of USS Nimitz (CVN-68), America's oldest aircraft carrier,

SOUTHCOM NEWS

Commander, Southern Command, CDR John Curran

SOUTHCOM strength stands at 1,406 members, including 140 Officers, 11 Warrant Officers and 1,255 Enlisted. By service affiliation, SOUTHCOM includes 505 Navy, 678 Marine, 100 Coast Guard and 121 State Active List members, consisting of 70 Prior Service and 51 Retired. This quarter SOUTHCOM was busy verifying our membership to ensure an accurate accounting of our force.

In the second quarter, SOUTHCOM was busy planning leadership visits for the Commander, New York Naval Militia with three SOUTHCOM federal installations. The planned visits will include meetings with their command triads and senior enlisted leaders to establish open communication between the New York Naval Militia and our federal partners and to re-engage the installations in support of NYNM recruiting efforts.

SOUTHCOM participated in the 2026 promotion cycle, resulting in nine candidates selected for promotion, and provided board trends, standards and expectations to all SOUTHCOM members to prepare them for future boards. Standards and discipline remain a top priority for New York Military Forces and SOUTHCOM. Members were reminded this quarter of the importance of maintaining up-to-date administrative and medical readiness, motor vehicle safety, and proper use of the chain of command.

SOUTHCOM continues to provide critical support to New York through State Active-Duty missions and is currently supplying 350+ SOUTHCOM members to the DOCCS mission. SOUTHCOM also recognized its members for receiving the Josepthal Team of the Year Award for Calendar Year 2026.

WESTCOM NEWS

Commander, Western Command, CPT James Gerlach



Captain Jim Gerlach is a native of Buffalo, New York. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Rochester and received his commission through the NROTC program in 1988. He retired from the U.S. Navy Reserve in October 2020 after 32 years of service. He retired from Navy Civilian service in August 2026 after serving as the Innovation and Future Capabilities Branch Head in the Navy Office of Culture and Force Resilience on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations.

His active duty Navy assignments included Combat Information Center Officer and Damage Control Assistant on USS Newport (LST 1179); Executive Assistant to the Director for Joint Training, U.S. Atlantic Command (J7); Intelligence Collection Manager, U.S. Atlantic Command (J2); Executive Officer, Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center Buffalo; Garrison Commander, Camp Mike Spann, Afghanistan; Maritime Security Division Chief, Joint Staff (J5); Director, Navy Operations Center (OPNAV N310); Deputy Director, Industry Best Practices Working Group; Innovation and Future Operations, 21st Century Sailor Office (OPNAV N17); and Deputy Chief of Staff, Task Force One Navy.

His Navy Reserve assignments included Training Officer and Intelligence Analyst, Defense Intelligence Agency Headquarters 0705; Executive Officer, NR AD-41 DET 23; Executive Officer, NR COMPHIBRON SIX DET 605; Executive Officer, Supreme Allied Command Transformation (SACT) DET 205; Commanding Officer, COMLOG WESTPAC DET 610; Lead Facilitator, COMNAVSURFLANT Afloat Culture Workshop Detachment; Commanding Officer, COMNAVSURFPAC Readiness HQ; Chief of Staff, Surface Reserve Component (SRC) Executive Committee (EXCOM); Chief Staff Officer for Operations & Plans, CNO Management Analysis Unit; and Lead Facilitator, COMNAVSURFPAC Afloat Culture Workshop Detachment.

Captain Gerlach holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Troy State University, a Juris Doctor degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the United States Army War College. He completed Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) Phase I through the United States Air Force Air Command and Staff College and JPME Phase II through Army War College.

Among his campaign and unit awards, his personal decorations include the Legion of Merit (2), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2), Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (2), Navy Achievement Medal (2) and Army Achievement Medal. He is also a recipient of the Department of the Navy Superior Civilian Service Medal.

Readiness Officer

BMCS(EXW) Elizebeth Spain

To join the Naval Militia, you must prove you live or drill in New York State. Be aware there are additional requirements to prove home of record (HOR) to come on State Active Duty (SAD).

RECOMMENDED HOR PROOF DOCS

- Copies of 3 utilities bills (electric, gas, water). If the address change necessitates backpay while on SAD, multiple utility bills are required. The first month BAH is being claimed. The second from the midpoint between the first month claimed and the present. Final bill from this current month or month of REFRAD from SAD
- A complete copy of your signed lease, preferably notarized. Some leases may not be accepted due to suspected fraudulent documentation. This is at the discretion of NYS Human Recourses (MNHS)
- A mortgage statement
- Automobile insurance cards reflecting address and month BAH change is being claimed.
- Real or Enhanced Drivers Licenses.
- Certified mail received to that address in service member's name.

NOT ACCEPTED FORMS OF HOR PROOF

Bank statements, cell phone bills, credit card bills, other non-utility bills.

Maintaining our membership at a healthy level will ensure we can continue to support current and future SAD opportunities. Help me keep our forces ready to respond by sending me any **changes to your status, pay grade, address, cell or email**. Remember, your federal branch of service does not share information with NYNM or the State pay office. If you retire or separate you can reapply for membership as prior service. We currently have a wait list for prior service members. Updates can be uploaded to our document portal on the website: **https://dmna.ny.gov/nynm/?id=contact**
Or sent to: **ng.ny.nyarng.mbx.nynavalmilitia@army.mil**
Thank you all!

EDUCATION

The Recruitment Incentive & Retention Program (RIRP) represents one of the most valuable financial benefits available to active members of the New York Naval Militia. Fully funded by the State of New York, this specialized tuition assistance program is designed to recruit and retain dedicated, drilling reservists within the state's military forces. For service members navigating the rising costs of higher education, RIRP offers a powerful incentive: if your application is approved, New York State will pay directly to your institution up to the current State University of New York's (SUNY) maximum in-state undergraduate tuition per semester. This funding can be applied toward undergraduate studies at any recognized college, university, or community-technical college throughout New York State, provided the institution is officially approved by the State University of New York or the New York State Board of Regents.

To take advantage of this state-funded tuition program, you must satisfy the eligibility guidelines set forth in DMNA REG 621-1. First and foremost, you must maintain active drilling status and remain in good standing with both your Federal reserve component and the New York Naval Militia for the entire duration of the semester in which you receive the benefit. Academically, you must be admitted in an undergraduate program working toward your first Bachelor's degree, or up to six semesters for an Associate's degree, while maintaining a course load of at least six credit hours per semester or four credit hours per quarter. Finally, you must have completed a minimum of 30 days of service within the New York Naval Militia prior to the established application deadline for the semester in which you wish to enroll.

Because the RIRP operates strictly on a semester-to-semester basis, you must completely re-apply every term. The program only funds the traditional Fall and Spring semesters; there are no benefits available for winter terms or summer sessions. To secure your funding, you must meet two critical deadlines each year. For the Spring semester, your completed DMNA Form 96-1 must be received by the Naval Militia Education Officer no later than 1600 on December 13th. For the Fall semester, this primary application form must be received no later than 1600 on August 13th. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. However, once your primary DMNA Form 96-1 is submitted by the deadline, you are granted a 60-day grace period to gather and submit your final supporting documents, such as your completed FAFSA and TAP applications. While FAFSA and TAP can be used for two consecutive semesters to cover an entire academic year, all other documentation must be fresh. You must submit these support files ASAP. Your school will not be notified of your award until New York Naval Militia Headquarters has fully processed and approved your complete packet.