In May 2010 Connecticut became the second state in the nation to pass legislation designating March 30 (the day that the last combat troops withdrew from Vietnam) as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.” Several additional states have since followed suit, recognizing the need to right an injustice.

To this end, the Connecticut Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Veterans History Project at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) are partnering with corporations and Connecticut citizens to thank and welcome home Connecticut’s Vietnam veterans on the evening of March 31, 2012 at the Governor William A. O’Neill Armory in Hartford, CT. We want to give our heroes the “Welcome Home” they never received and hope that you will help to honor these men and women for their service and sacrifice. Please follow our website at www.ccsu.edu/welcomehome for regular updates. Most importantly, spread the word to all Vietnam veterans, so they may be honored.

On November 13, 2011, the Plainville Wind Ensemble will once again honor all Connecticut veterans, past and present, with a “Hymn to the Fallen.” The Wind Ensemble’s popular annual performances at Central Connecticut State University showcase veterans’ advocacy groups, with this year’s performance featuring the Veterans History Project. During the live performance of patriotic selections, there will be special recognition for the 612 Connecticut men who were killed in action in Vietnam.

This year’s concert will be held at CCSU’s Welte auditorium on Sunday, November 13th, 2011 at 2:00 PM. The cost of entry is an unwrapped toy. Members of the United States Marine Corps will be on hand to collect the toys for the “Toys for Tots” program. Those who attend are encouraged to bring photographs of loved ones who were lost during the Vietnam War. These images will be reproduced and sent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (most commonly known as “The Wall”) in Washington, D.C.

Each year Central Connecticut State University honors a student veteran with the CCSU Student Veteran Excellence Award, recognizing those who have distinguished themselves in the classroom and in service to our country. The University has recently created a special scholarship fund for that award. With your financial support of this fund, CCSU can acknowledge its veterans’ selfless service and open a world of opportunities for them. To make an online contribution, go to www.ccsu.edu/give. To learn more about the scholarship, contact Christopher J. Galligan at 860-832-1764 or galliganc@ccsu.edu.
In partnership with the Iwo Jima Survivors Association, the First Company Governor’s Foot Guard of Hartford, Connecticut will host a collection of artifacts accumulated from the battle for Iwo Jima. These relics from the American War in the Pacific include an Imperial Japanese sword, signal lamps, an Arisaka rifle, and several battle flags, which will be permanently displayed in several prominent showcases. In addition to these original materials, a miniature model of the Iwo Jima Memorial was recently donated to the Foot Guard and was the centerpiece of a formal rededication ceremony on November 7th, 2011, a date that honored Iwo Jima veterans, as well as the commemoration of the United States Marine Corps.

In addition to objects acquired from the Pacific Campaign of World War II, the museum also displays materials confiscated from Nazi Germany. Incidentally, all objects in the museum were acquired from personal donations. At the present, the museum will accession items from either theatre of operations and seeks to house war memorabilia ranging from photographs to firearms. The donations may be either conditional or permanent, by request of the donor.

The museum is located in the headquarters of the First Company Governor’s Foot Guard at 159 High Street, in Hartford, Connecticut. For more information, visit www.governorsfootguard.com/history.

From ninth grade through her college years at Virginia Tech, Captain Elisa Raney’s ambition was to join the Peace Corps. Fate intervened, however, when a military recruiter stopped her on campus. Initially, she was disinterested, but he persisted, asking for her preferred military profession. She replied that she would like to be a pilot, imagining – since she is a woman and the year was 1986- that this was an impossible request. Rather than turning Raney away, however, the recruiter told her exactly what she would need to do to become a naval aviator. She realized that this was an opportunity that ought not to be refused. After graduating from Virginia Tech with a Civil Engineering degree, Raney went to Aviation Officer Candidate School (AOCS) at Naval Air Station Pensacola, in Florida.

Breaking new ground, Raney could not take AOCS lightly. In preparation for new challenges, she reviewed all available military literature and talked to people who had either endured it or were enduring it still. She even received permission to exercise alongside the Marine Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) unit every morning. If AOCS was not to be underestimated, though, neither was Elisa Raney. In the end, Raney’s attendance was higher than that of the marines, for whom the sessions were mandatory. She reflects that while drill instructors could do many things to discourage her, “I knew they couldn’t make me quit.”

After getting her wings, Raney went to San Diego, CA, where she was trained to fly H-46s. As they deployed from supply ships, a non-combat role, women were fully integrated into these helicopter units. Raney’s mission was to deliver anything from food to ammunition, in preparation for a deployment to the Red Sea for Operation Desert Storm. During preparations, however, the only other woman who would have deployed with her – also a pilot – died in a helicopter crash. Considering her status as a one-person minority, Raney was given the chance to withdraw from the deployment. She refused: “A guy wouldn’t have the choice. Why should I?”

Being the only woman in her detachment was not easy. In the beginning, no one knew how to treat her. Yet, she says, “By the end I felt like I had five big brothers.”
Edward Barzda, 87, of Cheshire, CT, passed away on August 22, 2011. A veteran of the U.S. Army, Barzda was a bronze star recipient as well as a veteran of both the Normandy landing and the Battle of the Bulge. A left handed shooter, he specialized in both heavy and light weapons, a skill that allowed him, along with a few other American soldiers to dispel an assault from twenty five German paratroopers during the Army’s winter campaign in Belgium. As a testament to his skills, he earned a position as a test shooter at the High Standard Weapons and Arms Manufacturing Company.

Guy Colella, 86, of Waterbury, CT, passed away on March 8, 2011. Assigned to a naval aircrew aboard a Martin “Mariner” patrol bomber, he earned three battle stars for his service during the campaign for Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. He was a radar operator, as well as a machine gunner aboard the aircraft. After achieving the rank of Petty Officer First Class, Colella retired from the Navy and enrolled in the University of Connecticut, from which he graduated with a degree in business administration, followed by a second career as a high school educator.

Rose Delmonico Murphy, 99, of Hamden, CT, passed away on June 11, 2011. A Captain in the Army Nurse Corps, Murphy left her position at Yale University and entered active military service immediately after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. She set out for the Pacific with the mantra that she was not there to simply “roll bandages.” As a result, her duties encompassed amputation for combat inflicted wounds, malaria, and physical therapy. After four years in the South Pacific, she returned to the United States, where she worked at both SNET and the Connecticut Hard Rubber corporations, treating many injuries attributed to the dangerous work environment.

Roger Jeanfaivre, 87, of West Hartford, CT, passed away on June 4, 2011. As an electricians mate, he served the US Navy in an eclectic fashion, servicing everything from electrically controlled gun turrets to captured Japanese stoves. His service career spanned from the Aleutian Islands to the Far East, where he endured the environmental extremes of both arctic and jungle warfare. Following the war, he utilized the GI Bill and attended the University of Connecticut and eventually joined the Internal Revenue Service as a treasury agent.

Arthur Neriani, 91, of Avon, CT, passed away July 15, 2011. He enlisted in the National Guard prior to World War II, and as a result, was one of the first soldiers called to active military service. Serving in the European Theatre of Operations, he was a veteran of both the Normandy campaign, as well as the grueling Hürtgen Forest, which produced thirty three thousand Allied casualties. After the war, he reentered civilian life as an insurance agent and became the first commander of the VFW post in Avon, CT.

John “Jack” Pease, 87, of Broad Brook, CT, passed away on July 4, 2011. Jack was a proud marine and a veteran of the “Bloody Tarawa” campaign, in which he served as a machine gunner. Jack spent several weeks on Tarawa, which was one of the bloodiest engagements in the Pacific. For their contributions to the Gilbert Island campaign, his unit received the Presidential Unit Citation. After the war, he worked for the Resolute Life Insurance Corporation, eventually retiring as senior vice president in 1983.
The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), in partnership with the National Park Service, is working to build an Education Center near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. By adding faces, stories, and remembrances to the names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (most commonly referred to as “the Wall”), the Center will educate visitors about the Vietnam War and its impact on every community in the United States. The Center will also provide information about the history and the significance of the Wall and preserve the legacy of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. The Education Center will tell the stories of those who served and died in Vietnam through programming that will include interactive exhibits, primary source information and educational programs. The Center will not convey any political messages about the Vietnam War related issues.

To ensure that 100% of Connecticut’s fallen are remembered, the Connecticut Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Veterans History Project at Central Connecticut State University are working with volunteers and teachers to collect photos and remembrances of any of Connecticut’s 612 fallen.

Kristen Duke’s Modern Military History class at Coventry High School learned firsthand about some of Connecticut’s fallen heroes when each student researched a different Connecticut name on the Wall. In addition to obtaining photos to submit to the Wall, the students learned a great deal about

“Participating in the Call for Photos was incredibly enriching for my students. Not only did they engage in historical inquiry and research, but they most importantly made personal connections with local heroes who perished in the Vietnam War. These connections placed a more human emphasis on a conflict that was previously out of their scope of understanding, literally putting faces to the names of the fallen. The students reached out to families, veterans’ organizations, and other local groups to find as much information as possible about their assigned serviceman. Many of the students came into contact with old friends and family members who were eager to share memories and stories of their loved one, and the Coventry students were grateful to participate in honoring the memory of so many.”
We need your help to get the word out!

If you know someone who has any connection to any of the 612 Connecticut fallen, please pass this information on to them.

How citizens and organizations can participate:

To upload a photo directly to the Virtual Wall:

1. Scan a photo of the veteran into your computer at the highest quality setting possible.
2. Go to www.vvmf.org and click on the “Virtual Wall” tab. Search for the service member’s name. Then click on their “profile”. Click on “Post a remembrance”.
3. After providing all of the requested information, select “Attach an Image from my computer”. Attach the scanned image from your computer.

To submit a photo by mail:

1. Make a copy of your photo. Do not send original photos, as the VVMF cannot return photos. Photos should be reproduced in an 8 x 10 format at the highest quality possible with a glossy finish.
2. Complete the photo submission form (available at VVMF website) and include with the photo.
**IN MEMORIAM**

**Steven Stupak**, 91, of Watertown, CT, passed away on September 5th, 2011. Stupak served in the Army Air Corps during World War II as a flight engineer and top turret gunner aboard a Boeing B-17 bomber. Shot down over Germany on his 17th mission, Stupak and his crew were interned in Stalag Luft IV in Goss Tychow, Poland. As the Red Army advanced into occupied territory, he and fellow POWs endured a forced march during one of the worst winters in European history. After the war, he began working at the Timex corporation, where he completed thirty four years of service.

**Timothy Curran**, 97, of Avon, CT, passed away on August 28th, 2011. After graduating from Boston University Medical School, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and served as a flight surgeon in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Following the war, he became an Ear, Nose, and Throat specialist at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, where he practiced for forty years. During his retirement, Curran completed an autobiography titled “The Joys and Tears of a Doctor,” in which he detailed the events of both his military and civilian medical service.

**E L I S A R A N E Y**

*(continued from page 2)*

During her deployment to the Red Sea, an engine explosion and subsequent fire sent Raney and her crew crashing into the water at night. While underwater, she became disoriented and dared not use her HEED (Helicopter Emergency Egress Device) scuba bottle. In order to function, it needed to be upright. Uncertain as to whether she had exited the helicopter, she could not inflate her life vest. If she was still in the aircraft, the vest’s buoyancy would ensure that she would never get out.

After several attempts at egress, spreading her arms wide around her experimentally, she did not touch the fuselage. Taking this as a good sign, she continued to swim outward and eventually surfaced and inflated her vest. Others were not so lucky, as one crewmember was killed in the mishap.

Raney was deployed again to Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was after this assignment that she was promoted to Captain. To this day, she is on active duty while working for Defense Contract Management Agency. Her ambition, determination, and clear-headedness provide her with a past of which she, all women, and indeed all military members, can be proud. She has done much for her country and, once she retires, she still intends to join the Peace Corps.

**CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY & SOCIAL RESEARCH AT CCSU**

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Visit the Veterans History Project!

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