MAINE VETERANS

MAGAZINE

Veteran Owned and Operated In Turner, Maine
November - December - Volume 1 - Edition 1



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THE MEASURE OF SERVICE

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MAINE VETERANS
MAGAZINE

Turner Publishing INCORPORATED

PRODUCTION/ADMINISTRATION



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Kathlene, a former veterinary technician for 30 years, helps businesses discover their "why" and navigate advertising at Turner Publishing. She loves family, golf, skiing, snowshoeing, and binge-watching.



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A marketing professional who is committed to excellence, teamwork, and achieving company goals. Dedicated to continuous learning, delivering quality results, and contributing to the overall success. I love my family, cooking, travel and culture! Dabbling in affiliate programs, collaborations, skincare, and social media in my free time!



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Sawyer has worked in sales for over a decade and helps local businesses connect with their communities through advertising at Turner Publishing. Born and raised in Maine, he loves spending time with his son, Jaxon, his fiancée, Kelcie, and their dog, Barkley. His other interests include basketball, art, music, and being outdoors.



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Semi-retired sales professional who enjoys the connections developed during the sales process. Earning the trust of customers and following through with outstanding communication are guidelines within which excellence is produced. I enjoy my Catholic Faith, all things Family, golf, hiking and adventures with Finnegan, my 93 pound rescue dog.

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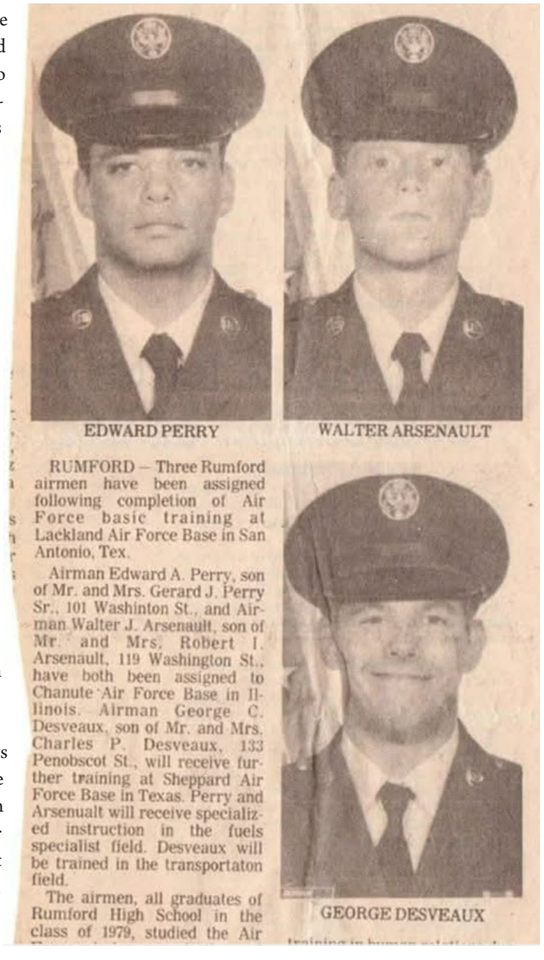
CERTIFIED VETERAN OWNED

TWO ENLISTMENTS, ONE UNFORGETTABLE VOYAGE



By Beverly Ann Soucy

There is a particular kind of humility that makes a writer lean a little closer, and it belongs to men who have done difficult things, carried responsibilities most of us will never encounter. These are people who still see themselves as ordinary. Ed Perry has that kind of humility. After nearly fourteen years of military service, first in the United States Air Force and then in the Navy, including years aboard submarines, he offers a modest assessment of himself: "I'm nobody special." Those who grew up alongside him in western Maine will tell you he was never that kind of man at all. In high school he was the funny one, the kid everybody wanted nearby, just a regular guy in the neighborhood whose humor never left him no matter where the service sent him. For a young man in western Maine, military service offered a way into a wider world, and Ed remembers active recruiters in the region and plenty of local young people answering their invitation. He signed up for the Air Force while still in high school through a buddy program, joining up with two friends. There is something recognizable and appealing about that beginning with an adventurous desire to travel and learn something useful, and to face it all with a familiar person nearby. Their journey took them to Lackland Air Force Base, where Ed trained to become a firefighter, a profession built around responding when other people need help most urgently. His original orders were for Greenland, which would have satisfied his wish to put some real distance between himself and his hometown, but a decision to keep Loring Air Force Base operating changed his assignment to northern Maine, and the young man who had imagined going much farther away found himself serving in his own state.



EDWARD PERRY

WALTER ARSENAULT

RUMFORD — Three Rumford airmen have been assigned following completion of Air Force basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Tex.

Airman Edward A. Perry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerard J. Perry Sr., 101 Washinton St., and Airman Walter J. Arsenault, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert I. Arsenault, 119 Washington St., have both been assigned to Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. Airman George C. Desveaux, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Desveaux, 133 Penobscot St., will receive further training at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas. Perry and Arsenault will receive specialized instruction in the fuels specialist field. Desveaux will be trained in the transportaton field.

The airmen, all graduates of Rumford High School in the class of 1979, studied the Air

GEORGE DESVEAUX

It was at Loring that another, more lasting chapter began. It was there, through a friend Ed met Faith, the woman who would become his wife. His plan to leave Maine behind had run into a complication considerably more appealing than a change of orders. When his four years in the Air Force ended, he hoped to continue as a firefighter, but the opportunities he needed were not available, and he found work on an egg farm instead, which while it was employment to su-pot his new family it was not the career he had wanted. Transitions rarely arrive with every practical detail neatly resolved, and a person can leave the service with training and a clear idea of what comes next, only to discover that the available work does not match the life he hoped to build. What came next was the decision that defined everything after it. Ed had recently married Faith, when he chose to enlist again. He had explored the Coast Guard first, but that possibility did not work out, and then a Navy recruiter who knew him recognized the strength of his high test scores and the next opportunity opened quickly. Despite his previous service, he went through Navy boot camp from the beginning, and the weight of that choice is hard to overstate, because a man with a young wife who had already served his country once, walked back into uniform knowing exactly how long the absences would be. He then volunteered for submarine duty, a service the Navy fills only with volunteers, and volunteering was only the doorway. Selection and training still lay ahead, with demands that reached well beyond physical strength, testing a person's ability to learn, to function under pressure, and to live within the unusual conditions of an undersea assignment. It takes a particular kind of man to choose that life with his eyes open, and Ed carried himself by a code of honor that never needed announcing. He remembers roughly two years of intensive preparation before beginning his submarine assignments, including escape procedures and damage control, subjects whose seriousness requires little embellishment. Beneath the sea, a problem cannot always be handed to someone outside the vessel, and the people already aboard must understand what is happening and respond with the equipment and knowledge available to them. His specialized education took him to San Diego for sonar school, where he learned to operate the equipment and make repairs. For someone unfamiliar with that world it is tempting to picture only the headset and the hidden ocean beyond the hull. But the seriousness of the work also meant understanding the machinery well enough to keep it all running even at the most stressful of times. Once aboard, he had a year to complete his qualification if he wanted to remain in submarine service, and earning the insignia known as 'dolphins' meant studying the boat's systems and equipment until his knowledge reached well beyond his own specialty and could withstand the examination of men qualified to judge it.

His assignments included USS Jack in 1987, USS Tinosa in 1988, and USS Gato in 1990, and he spent forty-four months aboard Gato alone. His travels reached from waters near Portugal to the Arctic Circle, with Mediterranean stops including Monte Carlo and Italy, yet most of his experience of that wide world came through instruments and sound rather than a view across an open deck. Any account of this generation of submarine service belongs within a history that includes USS Thresher. On April 10, 1963, Thresher was lost during deep-diving trials, taking the lives of all 129 people aboard, and because she had been commissioned at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, the loss carries a particularly close connection to this state. The Navy established the Submarine Safety Program, known as SUBSAFE, in 1963 in response, and that legacy helps place Ed's rigorous preparation in context, since safety aboard a submarine depends on engineering, maintenance, training, and all of the people who carry those standards into daily work. It also asks us to remember the families of the men who were lost, whose connection to submarine service became permanent in the most painful way.

Life aboard asked a great deal of the body and the mind. Ed describes a six-hours-on, six-hours-off watch routine, and six hours away from a watch never meant six uninterrupted hours of sleep, since there were other obligations and there was the ordinary business of existing among a crew in a confined space. Sailors shared berths at different times according to their schedules, a practice called hot racking, and three men could rotate through a single rack. His own seniority earned him one of his own. Without daylight, the familiar cues of morning and evening disappeared, so meals became the markers of time, with eggs and bacon suggesting morning and pizza and snacks signaling midnight, while the boat itself kept Zulu time, the military designation for Coordinated Universal Time. A clock could provide the hour, but it could not offer the experience of dawn through a window or darkness settling over a yard.

These men lived without the small freedoms that quietly steady civilian life, and they could not step outside for a change of air or take a solitary walk when they needed room to think. When asked what the inside of that submarine was like, Ed answered with a smell, and it was not a technical answer or a strategic one: it smelled like hamburger grease. That scent is what he holds in his memory to this day, a wonderfully ordinary detail from a life lived under extraordinary conditions, and it brings the reader back to the human place inside the vessel, where meals were cooked and men carried on their daily lives.

He recalls a three-blast signal associated with diving, a sound tied to the moment the submarine slipped beneath the surface and the outside world fell away. In the sonar control room, headsets brought a different world to his ears, and when asked whether he heard underwater life, he said they heard whales all the time. The ocean could also come looking for them. When asked about close calls, Ed returned to the training that made a quick response possible: "We train constantly for fires, flooding, battle stations, so it is second nature." On one occasion, while the boat was on the surface, a huge wave washed over it with the hatch in the sail still open, as is normal during surface operations, and a large amount of seawater came through. "The biggest problem is Mother Nature trying to get into the submarine," he said. Nobody panicked, and the crew reacted quickly to shut the hatch, although considerable water had already entered. Even in a conversation about hazards at sea his humor

found its way through, as when he recalled a small fire in a clothes dryer and offered a piece of advice: "Remember to clean your filter."

Ed's strongest recollection of the crew is their friendship. They were buddies, and he remembers an atmosphere that was "not on edge," which would surprise an outsider who assumed confinement must have made every day tense. He credits an attentive captain with helping preserve that atmosphere. When tension began to build, the captain took notice and adjusted the routine. A change in meals could help, and so could allowing two movies instead of one. These were practical responses to the people under his command, and after enough repeated watches and familiar days, a small variation could give the crew something pleasant to anticipate. Leadership aboard his submarine included understanding when men needed a lift and finding a way to provide it within the mission's demands. Feeding the crew was one of the ways care became visible, and Ed remembers the food as exceptional for the ninety-day stretches he describes, with fresh fruits and vegetables at the outset, and at the halfway point they celebrated with steak and lobster, a meal that marked progress through a long absence and gave the crew an occasion to recognize together the time they had already given.

The absence of ordinary daylight makes the mindset required for this service easier to appreciate. The work and the living quarters existed within the same vessel alongside all of the same people, so adaptability had to become part of daily behavior, and so did consideration and respect because another man's tiredness and habits, and need for space could not always be avoided and had to be lived with. A personal place to sleep became a meaningful comfort when privacy was scarce, and even rest had to fit the needs of a vessel whose space served many purposes.

Medical care aboard rested with a senior corpsman whom the crew called Doc, and Ed remembers that the attention of the men stayed concentrated on the work at hand, which made sense within the responsibilities he had explained. The equipment needed to operate, watches needed to be stood, and the crew needed to remain capable of responding when circumstances changed without warning along with any personal feelings put aside. Each man was one member of a larger team, and the team depended on its members being competent. There was little room for counseling and it was imports that they all concentrated on the job at hand. It helped to focus on their duties, Ed's skill with sonar mattered well beyond his own performance or advancement, because other people benefited from his readiness to do the job well.

His longest deployment belongs to the Desert Storm era in 1991. He was away from May until December and returned to port two days before Christmas, a full 8 months deployment. At home the seasons continued to changed and everyday responsibilities continued while he was gone. Through that time home connections reached him by 'familygram.' These were very brief personal messages sent to the submarine by radio, which allowed thirty-eight words between the identifying names. There was little room for wandering through a thought or describing a day at length, so the sender had to decide what mattered enough to include, and for the person receiving them brevity did not make the words unimportant, since a few of them could bring news and reassurance. Long before Ed ever put on a uniform, radio had been the nervous system of war. In World War II it stitched together fleets and forces scattered across oceans, and it leaked, too. American code breakers pulled Japanese transmissions out of the air, and naval historians credit those stolen words with steering submarines toward their targets in the Pacific. But in Ed's day the same crackling channels that moved orders and secrets also carried something small and tender, a few heartfelt lines from home slipped through to a man living beneath the sea, far past the reach of a phone call or a porch light. He could be good at his job and proud of it and still ache for the people he loved. They, in turn, kept the house running, set the table, and got through the long quiet days with no easy voice to call. It took patience on both sides, and a message that arrived was never just a message. It was proof somebody was still out there waiting.



There are things Ed carries that he does not discuss. When asked whether those years left him with nightmares or any kind of post-traumatic stress, he was very unwilling to talk about it, though he allowed a small acknowledgment that he lives with it. It was only a few words, and they say a great deal. After months sealed beneath the ocean, standing watches, drilling for disasters, and living for years inside a vessel that could not offer the ordinary release of stepping outdoors, it is not difficult to understand that such experiences might follow a man home, and the quiet way he admitted it speaks to the same code that carried him through the service itself. He asks for no sympathy, and yes, he deserves respect.

The character revealed in that work lies partly in its repetition. A sailor must remain reliable after the novelty of an assignment has passed, continuing to study and to maintain equipment and to attend to the responsibilities others expect him to fulfill. There is patience in that as well as discipline. Ed's modest manner does not erase the efforts required, and it may help explain why he speaks about his service so practically, as though the work simply became what he did, day after day, among other men doing theirs.

After just under fourteen years across the two branches, his military path also included a reserve commitment, and his last two years were close enough to home and to Faith to ease the transition into civilian life. He recognizes that other veterans have very different experiences, and that the abrupt adjustment some face after a distant assignment was not his, but being nearer his family gave him a chance to begin settling into the life that would follow, and the man who had once wanted to leave Maine behind had come to value being close to home. Asked what had changed between the young man who first enlisted and the man he became, Ed spoke about appreciating people more, about being more family oriented and more able to enjoy the smaller moments, with both feet on the ground. After this interview, both feet on the ground, took on a much differ meaning for this writer.

His service to other veterans remains active to this day and did not end with his returning to civilian life.. Ed is the Northeast representative for the Submariners' Advocacy Group, known as SAG, and describes it as one of his proudest civilian responsibilities. The organization seeks recognition of health concerns associated with submarine service as well as sourcing additional research, and for improving the support for submariners and their families. The program's goals include working with veterans' organizations and congressional delegations. Advocacy asks for a different kind of persistence far from standing a watch or repairing equipment, since concerns have to be brought forward and explained before the people who can respond and make the changes necessary. The comradeship he remembers aboard submarines has found a civilian purpose in speaking up for others. He also serves as commander of his local American Legion post, where he describes the camaraderie, resources, volunteers, and fundraising, all part of a place where veterans can find one another and remain involved in their community or simple have a conversation about life now. Ed values the opportunity to talk through problems that can feel especially heavy in the middle of the night, because having somewhere to bring a concern, and someone willing to hear it, can matter long after a uniform has been put away. A commander's responsibilities include attention to people, the willingness to organize, and the patience to keep useful work moving, and Ed's fondness for the post suggests how much he values that shared undertaking, since volunteers and fundraising require others to give their time much like his enlisted years and the camaraderie depends on an atmosphere that is worth returning to.

Behind every veteran stands a very special person each with their own hometown, a family, and a desire to serve who at some point looked at the cost of service with open eyes and said yes anyway. Ed did it once in an Air Force uniform as a young man from Maine, and then, with a wife at home he did it again beneath the ocean where the work was scarier and the sunlight was gone for ninety days at a time. Toward the end of every interview, the question is the same: what do you want the reader to know about you now? Ed answered without hesitation. He wanted readers to know that he has had a good life, that he has settled down back in his hometown in western Maine, surrounded by family, his three children and five grandchildren. When he says he is nobody special, he speaks as a man who does not need to enlarge himself in the telling, and yet he chose a life of discipline and sacrifice not once but twice, knowing the cost, so that others could depend on him. Anyone who knows Ed Perry will tell you he is a really nice guy, and if he can help you, he will go out of his way to do exactly that. As for being special? Those are the qualities that make him exactly that.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Beverly Ann Soucy is a writer, fourth-generation herbalist and stained-glass artist living in the mountains of Western Maine. A proud Mainer and equally proud American, she has spent much of her life telling the stories of the people, places and those passed down traditions that make her corner of the world special. She is honored and excited to be part of this new publication and especially grateful for the opportunity to share the stories of those who have served.

HONOR FLIGHT MAINE









Submitted Photos By Participants

On April 29, 2004, the National World War II Memorial opened to the public in Washington, D.C. At the time, Earl Morse—an Air Force Veteran and physician assistant at a VA clinic in Ohio—cared for many World War II Veterans. When he asked whether they planned to visit their memorial, he discovered that many wanted to go but likely never would because of their age, health, finances, or need for assistance.

A private pilot himself, Morse turned that realization into action. In May 2005, he organized six small airplanes to carry 12 World War II Veterans to Washington, D.C., at no cost. Volunteer pilots donated their aircraft, fuel, time, and personal assistance so this first group could visit the nation's memorials. From that mission, Honor Flight was born.

Honor Flight Maine was established in 2014 to give Maine Veterans that same opportunity: a journey to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifice, at no cost to them. As of September 2026, Honor Flight Maine has completed 52 trips and brought 1,700 Maine Veterans to our nation's memorials.

Each journey includes three days, two nights, and eight meals. On Friday morning, we depart from Portland or Bangor and fly to Baltimore. Our first stop is Fort McHenry, the birthplace of our national anthem, followed by dinner at Fort Meade with active-duty service members from every branch of the military. On Saturday, we travel by motor coach to Arlington National Cemetery, the Marine Memorial, the Air Force Memorial, the Pentagon Memorial, the Women's Military Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, the World War II Memorial, the Nurse Memorial, and, finally, the Navy Memorial. After a full day in our nation's capital, we return toward Baltimore and share dinner at a local VFW or American Legion. On Sunday morning, we boarded the buses one last time, headed to the airport, and flew home to Maine—where the Veterans are greeted with a well-deserved Welcome Home ceremony.

An Honor Flight is far more than a tour of our country's memorials. It gives Veterans time with fellow Veterans—to remember friends who did not return, share experiences, and, in some cases, find a sense of closure.

Honor Flight Maine is a 100% volunteer organization with no paid staff. Its mission is made possible by generous donations from individuals, businesses, foundations, civic organizations, and community partners.

HONOR FLIGHT MAINE

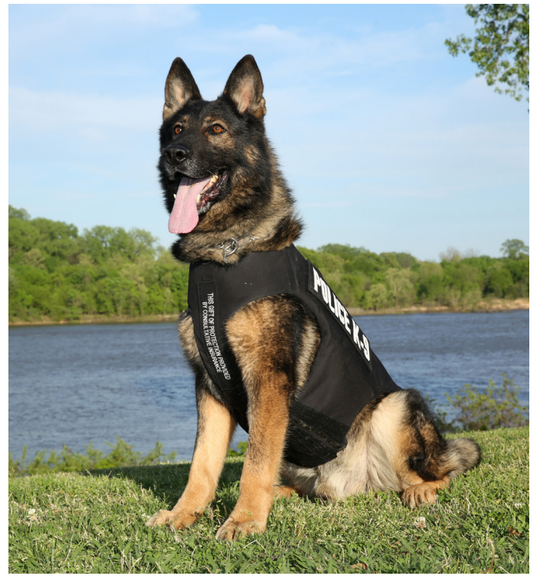


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THE HEROIC STORY OF GABO

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READER RESPONSE: WHAT DOES VETERANS DAY MEAN TO YOU?

When I meet a Veteran, I am conscious that I'm standing before someone who signed their name to a commitment most of us will never be asked to make. Whatever their reasons for enlisting, they accepted the possibility that serving this country could ask everything of them and that resonates with me to my core. I love this country deeply. I cherish daily the freedom to speak my mind and to question what I believe is wrong and to live in a country where you are not going to get shot for those opinions. I live a life of my own choosing and there isn't a day that goes by that I don't recognize that. I also know that generations of Americans have served to protect those freedoms, often at considerable personal cost. In my family service has taken many forms for many generations from the Spanish American war where my great grandfather served to the armed forces where cousins and uncles served to the medical field and firefighting, to the continued community work of my uncles who were Master Masons. I grew up having a deep respect for people who showed up when they were needed. During my junior year of high school, I signed up for a military through a buddy program. Although I ultimately chose art school in the final hour of getting shipped off to boot camp, my respect for that commitment has never faded. For me, Veterans Day isn't just a date on the calendar or a day off, it's a call to recognize that our way of life is and was, protected by those who wrote a blank check to our country, payable with their very lives! And for that I have the deepest respect and am eternally grateful. I am a very proud American.

Generations of Honor: What Veterans Day Means to Chesterville

For the Chesterville Heritage Society, Veterans Day is a vital bridge connecting our rural town to global history, ensuring local sacrifices are never forgotten. This November, we reflect on this legacy through remarkable local archives highlighting chapters of extraordinary military service.

Our history stretches back to the nation's earliest conflicts. A prized 1812 militia roster honors Quartermaster Sergeant Nathaniel Maddocks, who answered the call at the outbreak of the War of 1812. Generations later, that same spirit of profound duty was magnified during World War II. Staff Sergeant Raymond Curtis Balser bravely fought through three amphibious invasions before becoming Chesterville's only military casualty of the conflict on February 18, 1944. Back home, veterans like Harold Decker led American Legion color guards to honor him.

That era also saw entire local families answer the call, including brothers Merville, Joe, and Orville Meisner, the latter serving in the elite Amphibian Engineers. Their collective service matched the valor of T/Sgt. Sheldon W. Dustin (82nd Airborne), who earned the Distinguished Service Cross by single-handedly capturing thirty-nine enemy soldiers to secure a vital bridge in Holland. This legacy continued into the Cold War, where 1951 records honor Chesterville native Corporal Burt Franklin Butterfield, who served dutifully in the U.S. Army combat engineers during the Korean War era. From early militia pioneers to bands of brothers and elite paratroopers, these archives tell a unified story of profound dedication.

The Chesterville Heritage Society proudly salutes all veterans.
Submitted by the Chesterville Heritage Society.



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BUSINESS PROFILE:

TURNING RELATIONSHIPS INTO SUPPORT

BIZNET4VETS

BizNet4Vets grew out of a community already gathering around veterans, first responders and their families. Co-founders Julie and Bryce Davis are building on five years of relationships to connect that community with resources, opportunities and support throughout the year.

Bryce first heard **Travis Mills**, a retired Army staff sergeant and veteran advocate, speak at a Unity College commencement in 2019. Travis's message of resilience stayed with him: "Never Give Up, Never Quit." Julie and Bryce later watched documentaries and read books about Mills's recovery, family and work. Over time, they developed a friendship with Travis. His example and the Travis Mills Foundation's work supporting veterans and their families influenced how the couple approached their own commitment to service.

That commitment to service resonated with Julie and Bryce. Before real estate, Julie earned a master's degree in counselor education, spent about a decade counseling young people on probation and served 15 years as a public-school guidance counselor. Bryce brought more than two decades of information technology, project management, analytics and business systems.

In 2021, Julie and Bryce resigned from their corporate careers to form **The Davis Team**, their Maine real estate company. They paired Julie's instinct for listening with Bryce's gift for structuring complex work and built their practice around relationships and service. Both are associate brokers with The Davis Team and hold the Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR) designation and Military Relocation Professional (MRP) certification. Bryce also holds the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. Their approach begins with understanding the people behind a move and the support they need to settle into a community.



Bryce Davis, Julie Davis, with Travis Mills
Photo submitted by Davis Realty

Photo By Bill Van Tassel

Alongside their real estate practice, Julie and Bryce developed "A Heroes Journey" as The Davis Team's charitable initiative. It reflected their commitment to veterans and first responders and became a launch point for BizNet4Vets, connecting their professional relationships with a broader purpose of community service.

FINDING A HOME AND A COMMUNITY

> **THEY UNDERSTAND THE TRANSITION AND GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO HELP**
>
> — James Kelley, client, from his written testimonial
> Source: James Kelley's published testimonial

Through its residential real estate and relocation services, The Davis Team helps families navigate decisions that extend beyond choosing a property. For a military family preparing for civilian life, a move can also mean finding resources and establishing a place in a new community.



James and Stacie Kelley turned to Julie and Bryce as their family prepared to relocate from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to Maine. After years of Army life, James and Stacie Kelley, both proud veterans who dedicated years of service to our country and who had relocated every two years throughout their military careers, had long dreamed of putting down roots and enjoying their retirement in beautiful Maine.

During the family's one-week visit to Maine, The Davis Team narrowed communities, organized roughly 10 showings, and helped the Kelleys consider how each home and community would fit their family's needs. The questions included schools, daily life, proximity to veteran resources, and whether the family could find a veteran community around them.

While in the area showing properties, Julie and Bryce had arranged to meet Travis Mills for coffee and breakfast. They shared that the Kelleys were drawn to that area because of the strong veteran presence and the many resources available to veterans. Travis mentioned a home within his residential community, near the country club, that had fallen out of contract and was expected to return to the market. He then made a phone call, and with the listing agent's cooperation, Julie and Bryce arranged a showing. The home was a perfect fit. The family submitted an offer and was under contract that evening.

The connection carried another layer: the seller was a Maine State Trooper and Army veteran. The Kelleys began a new chapter in a home with its own history of military and public service. James later wrote in a testimonial that Julie and Bryce "understand the transition and go above and beyond to help."

The Davis Team also worked with a Texas police officer and his Maine-native wife who hoped to start a new chapter in Augusta, Maine's capital. The team helped them relocate and continued working with them through three transactions. That continuing relationship reflects the importance Julie and Bryce place on remaining a resource as their clients' needs change.

That emphasis on relationships informs The Davis Team's housing slogan, "Everybody Moves. How Matters." Through their professional real estate services, Julie and Bryce saw the value of connecting a family with people and resources in a new community. Those lessons helped shape BizNet4Vets' focus on making useful connections across businesses, service organizations and the communities they support. Their philanthropic work offered another way to bring people together around that commitment to service.

Kelly Family
Photo submitted by Davis Realty

ONE DAY, ONE MISSION

> **GOLF GIVES PEOPLE A REASON TO GATHER. SUPPORTING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES GIVES THAT GATHERING ITS PURPOSE.**
>
> — Bryce Davis, co-founder, BizNet4Vets

TeeOff4TMF is an annual charity golf tournament benefiting the Travis Mills Foundation (TMF). Historically organized by The Davis Team, the event brings together golfers, volunteers, sponsors, local businesses and their owners, and other nonprofits and charities to support the foundation's work.

The foundation provides all-expenses-paid retreat experiences in Maine for post-9/11 veterans with service-related injuries and their families. It also offers Warrior PATHH, a program for combat veterans and first responders seeking growth after trauma. Mills coined "recalibrated" to emphasize adapting to life after injury, an outlook reflected in the foundation's work.

For Julie and Bryce, the tournament became a public expression of The Davis Team's philanthropic work. According to the couple, the team organized the first tournament on roughly 30 days' notice. Seven teams participated, and the event generated about $13,000. What began as a leap of faith became a shared act of gratitude, bringing volunteers, business owners, veterans, first responders and families together to turn appreciation into visible support for those who served.

By 2026, the fifth annual TeeOff4TMF had moved to The Woodlands Club in Falmouth and sold out with 36 teams for the fourth year in a row. With the generous support of more than 150 businesses, families, and organizations, the event raised an impressive $94,000 in a single day to benefit veterans and their families. Over the course of five tournaments, this remarkable community effort has brought in approximately $250,000 in gross proceeds, reflecting the generosity of countless supporters, according to Julie and Bryce.

Sponsors, volunteers, business owners, veterans and first responders contribute to the same effort, each bringing something different. The event offers a place for people who want to help to meet others already doing the work. Its slogan, "One Day, One Mission," captures the shared purpose of the tournament.

Julie and Bryce say relationships formed through successive tournaments revealed a need for connections that could continue throughout the year. Businesses wanted to help but did not always know where to begin. Organizations doing valuable work did not always know one another. Veterans, first responders, and families did not always know which resources were nearby.

TeeOff4TMF Golf Tournament
Photos submitted by Davis Realty









Those relationships helped shape BizNet4Vets, incorporated in 2025. The nonprofit provides an organizational home for extending that community work. Historically organized by The Davis Team, TeeOff4TMF will move forward as BizNet4Vets' premier annual event, continuing to benefit the Travis Mills Foundation. The tournament remains a focused day of support within the nonprofit's broader purpose of connection, education and service.

BEYOND THE TOURNAMENT

BizNet4Vets was developed as an independent nonprofit with a specific purpose: to strengthen veterans, active-duty military personnel, first responders, their families and the organizations and businesses that support them. Its mission combines networking, education, mentoring, charitable initiatives, resource connections and community engagement.

The organization was incorporated in Maine effective March 21, 2025, with Julie and Bryce as co-founders and founding directors. Treasury/IRS Letter 947, dated September 22, 2026, recognizes BizNet4Vets under Section 501(c)(3), classifies it as a Section 509(a)(2) public charity, and establishes an effective exemption date of March 21, 2025.

During a five-month pilot, Julie and Bryce and a small group including **Bill Merchant** brought together business owners, volunteers, veterans, first responders and nonprofit representatives. According to the organizers, participants connected one another with services, resources and people who could help. That experience demonstrated the group's ability to gather people around a shared purpose and helped the founders develop the approach now reflected in BizNet4Vets.



Bill Merchant
Photo submitted by Davis Realty

Vice President Bill Merchant brings a 28-year medical background, experience with Revolution Fitness and established relationships within veteran and first-responder communities. The bylaws permit the board to establish a Veterans and First Responders Advisory Council. When established, the council would give those communities a defined role in informing the organization's work as it develops.

The need is local and national. The Census Bureau's 2020–2024 estimate puts Maine's veteran population at 95,013. Nationally, the Department of Veterans Affairs reported 6,488 veteran deaths by suicide in 2024, an average of 17.7 a day. HUD's point-in-time estimate identified 32,495 veterans experiencing homelessness on one night in January 2025. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated an annual average of 294,000 unemployed veterans in 2025; the veteran unemployment rate was 3.5 percent, compared with 4.2 percent for nonveterans. These measures describe different needs and populations. They provide context for the importance of housing, meaningful work, wellness support and trusted relationships. Veterans in crisis, or those concerned about one, can call 988 and press 1.

The founders describe resource connections and partnership inquiries as current work, with workshops, mentoring and professional development still in planning. Their goals include helping a veteran-owned business find a customer or mentor, connecting a first responder with wellness support and introducing a nonprofit to a potential sponsor. Housing is also a major area of focus, with plans to help veterans, first responders and their families find housing information, community resources and qualified professionals. This resource-connection role is distinct from The Davis Team's professional real estate services. The founders see these as practical goals for the network as it develops.

AN ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY, A NEW CHAPTER

> **OUR ROLE IS PRACTICAL: LISTEN TO WHAT PEOPLE NEED, INTRODUCE THEM TO SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP AND MAKE IT EASIER FOR BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WORK TOGETHER**
>
> — Julie Davis, co-founder, BizNet4Vets



One part of that next chapter is the Veterans Impact Fund, which BizNet4Vets is developing under its approved grantmaking and financial assistance policy. The fund is intended to support documented projects that directly benefit veterans, active-duty military personnel, current and former first responders and their families. The board has developed the application, review and stewardship process, according to the founders.

BizNet4Vets is a new independent nonprofit with an established community behind it. A Heroes Journey provided a launch point; five years of TeeOff4TMF and the five-month pilot brought together businesses, volunteers, veterans, first responders and nonprofit leaders. Those gatherings and relationships form the foundation the nonprofit now extends. The founders contribute experience in counseling, business systems and housing, along with relationships developed through years of community work. As co-founders who have not served in the military, Julie and Bryce look to veterans and first responders to help define what useful support means.

The nonprofit gives that effort a structure that can continue beyond an individual transaction or annual tournament. Education, mentoring and community gatherings remain part of its developing plans, with the existing network providing people and relationships on which to build.

The work also carries responsibility to the people who place their trust in it. A family facing a move needs guidance suited to its circumstances. A business offering support needs a clear way to participate. A veteran or first responder looking for a resource needs to know whom to contact. BizNet4Vets' purpose is to make those connections more accessible and useful.

For Julie and Bryce Davis, the next chapter builds on what the community has already accomplished. Its human purpose remains clear: help a veteran, first responder or family find a useful next step, with people alongside them who are willing to help.

BizNet4Vets.org

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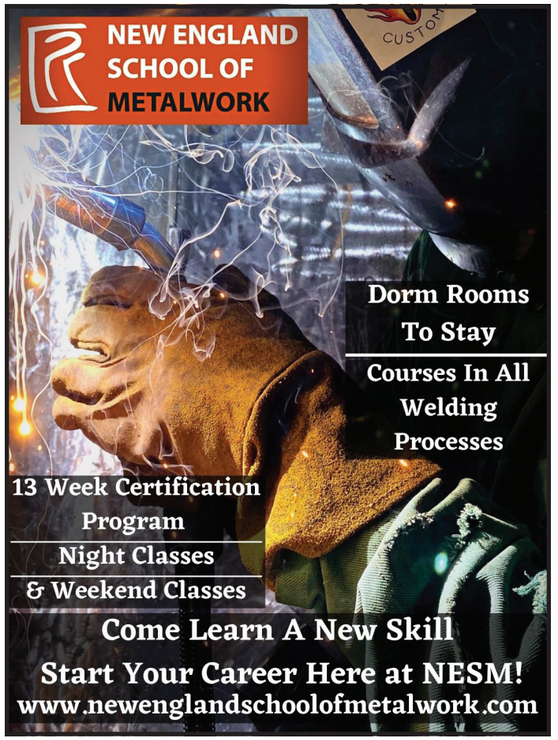




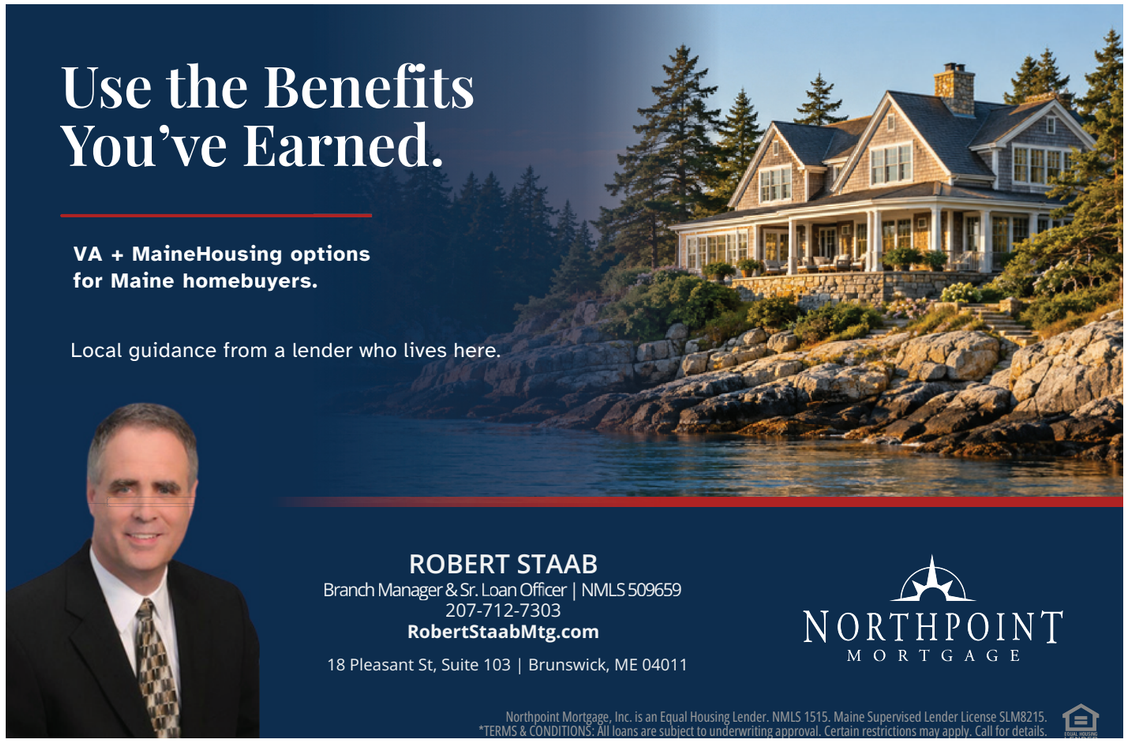
Julie and Byrce Davis
Photo By Bill Van Tassel

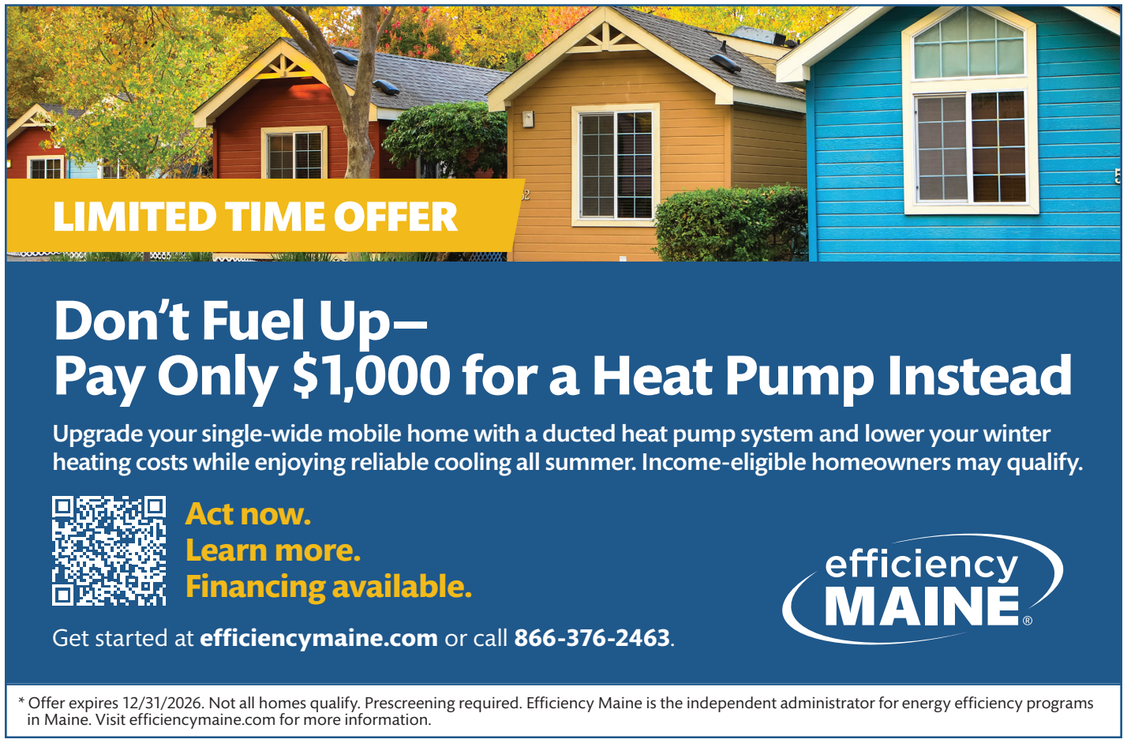
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THE MEASURE OF SERVICE

BEFORE THERE WAS A UNIFORM, THERE WAS A BOY WHO WANTED TO FLY

By Beverly Ann Soucy

There was a time when the young Mitchel Levine wanted nothing more than to fly whether it was a plane, a jet or helicopter, he would have happily taken the controls of any of them. For years, he pictured a future in the air, and the Navy seemed like the place where that future might begin. As a young man considering military service, he imagined himself somewhere above the earth, and initially it was the United States Navy that interested him most. Then reality arrived in the rather unromantic form of an eye examination. Levine wore glasses, and when he began speaking with military recruiters in high school, he was told his vision effectively eliminated the possibility of becoming a military pilot. There would be no waiver, no clever route around it. For a while, he found his own way into the sky anyway. While attending college, Levine began working toward his private pilot's license and accumulated roughly 40 hours of flying time before deciding he probably wasn't going to pursue aviation professionally. Flying lessons were expensive, and eventually practicality won. The dream of flying professionally may have faded, but the desire to serve remained, and that is a theme that would follow him through much of his life. Over the next several decades it would carry him farther than he could have imagined, into engineering exercises in Portugal, along the back roads of northern Japan, through two deployments to Iraq, and into American diplomatic service.



When we sat down to talk, I knew Mitch. Or I thought I did. I knew the person who already had a place in my life, which is much different from knowing the life that brought him there. As he spoke, that familiar person became a young cadet overseas, a fin teacher on a touring bike, an officer buying supplies for rebuilding projects in a country most people knew very little of as well as a friend writing to a grieving widow from a war zone. I found myself wanting to follow each road a little farther. Some led to wonderful stories of adventures while others led into sorrow he remembers with painful clarity. Through all of them ran his stubborn belief that there was useful work to do, and that he ought to do his share. I asked him to go back to the beginning. In that single question the measure of service unfolded.

At freshman orientation at the University of Southern Maine, Levine mentioned that he might join the military someday. An Army ROTC officer happened to be nearby. The Navy still interested him, and a recruiter had suggested that nuclear engineering aboard submarines might be an option, but Navy ROTC would require regular travel from Maine to New Hampshire. Army ROTC was right there on campus. "I just wanted to serve," he remembers. He joined the program, but when offered a four-year scholarship, he politely declined. Before accepting the money and the commitment that came with it, he wanted to know with certainty whether the Army was something he would choose for himself. Two years later, having had time to find out, he accepted a two-year scholarship. By then, his interest had become something firmer, although he was still eager to see what lay beyond the boundaries of home.

That eagerness took him to England for a year of study at what was then Kingston Polytechnic, outside London. While there, he joined the University of London Officer Training Corps. And while he was not formally serving in the British military, the student organization gave him opportunities that would help shape his future in the American one.

He spent a month in Portugal training alongside a British infantry battalion and participated in bridging exercises and other engineering work with the Royal Engineers. It was there that he realized that engineering suited him. Here was work that called for both imagination and precision for understanding the problem, studying the ground and for working out what people needed, and then figuring out how to get it done. A bridge being built had to carry weight and all the equipment had to reach its destination. Add to it all, plans had to survive contact with the actual conditions in front of you and young Levine found himself liking the practical demands of it all.

When he returned home to Maine, he found a place for that interest in the 133rd Engineer Battalion of the Maine Army National Guard. Through the Simultaneous Membership Program, he joined the Guard in September 1989 while still an ROTC cadet, securing his future as an engineer officer. At graduation, some of his fellow cadets discovered that requesting a particular branch did not necessarily mean the Army would assign them to it. Levine already knew where he belonged and because of his prior enrollment, he secured the very position he put in for. His college decision would grow into roughly twenty-four years of National Guard service, although anyone expecting a conventional military career would have been surprised by the route he took to get there. Teaching mattered deeply to him, and he is careful about how he describes the relationship between those two callings. "I was a teacher who served as a National Guard officer," he says.

That distinction helps explain much of what followed. He wanted to serve his country, but he also wanted to teach, travel, and experience other cultures and other ways of living. He was willing to pursue those interests, even when making room for them complicated his Army career. Military service had held a small place in his family, though there was no single path he felt obliged to follow. His father had been classified 4-F for medical reasons during the Korean War. His grandfather served in civil defense during World War II, wearing the white helmet associated with that work and enforcing blackouts in southern New Jersey. Two uncles served during the Korean era. Uncle Lou made a career in the Navy and retired as a commander. Uncle Barney served as an infantry soldier in Korea, and Levine believes he returned carrying wounds that went largely unrecognized in his generation.

Barney died before Levine was old enough to ask the questions he would later wish he had asked. There is a particular sadness in that for growing into an understanding of someone after the opportunity to hear his stories has passed. Levine's brother also served, working in military intelligence and retiring as a major. In time, Mitch would retire at the same rank.

I needed a little instruction about that rank myself. Major and Sergeant Major are different positions, and Levine patiently explained the distinction. He was a commissioned officer, progressing from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant, Captain, and eventually Major. Progressing, however, is a generous word for one stretch of his career. By his account, he spent so long as a first lieutenant that at one point he was the most senior Girst Lieutenant in the Army. There is humor in the telling now, but the circumstances were bewildering when he was living through them.

He had gone to Japan to teach English for two years through the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, placing his military career on inactive status with permissions. He expected to return and resume his Guard service. While he was overseas, however, his name went before promotion boards without his knowledge. He submitted none of the materials normally expected of an officer being considered for promotion, because he did not know he was being considered.

After being passed over twice for captain, he returned home to discover that, administratively, his military career was over. "What do you mean, I'm out?" He remembers asking. He believed he had followed the proper process, yet the institution he intended to return to had effectively closed the door. Eventually, someone advised him to contact his congressional delegation. Though his politics differed from hers, he still credits Senator Susan Collins's office with helping him return to service. He pursued the matter until the National Guard Bureau made an exception allowing him to return. A letter ordered him back to duty, but the interruption reset his promotion clock. His unusually long stay as a first lieutenant followed.

Japan itself was another matter entirely. There was too much life in those two years for him to remember them simply as the cause of an administrative mess. He bought a Kawasaki KLX motorcycle and explored the countryside. His reserve identification card occasionally gave him access to Misawa Air Base, where the commissary and exchange offered familiar American goods that were difficult to find elsewhere. Ben & Jerry's ice cream was among the pleasures of those visits. He laughs when he remembers those visits. He also purchased and brought American treats back to share with Japanese friends, small offerings from home, in a place he was learning to love on its own terms.

He then set his sights on northern Japan, with an idea for organizing a car rally through the region. The idea was wonderfully ambitious, watch the sun rise over one ocean, travel west across Aomori Prefecture, and reach the opposite coast in time to watch it set over another. The route would cover roughly 250 kilometers. An experienced rally organizer warned him that he was taking on far too much distance. But that did not deter Levine. He went ahead with the event and after mapping out the route, approximately three dozen people in a dozen vehicles joined the adventure. Along the way, they stopped at off-the-beaten path and little known spots to visit shrines and restaurants, and places visitors might never have found without

someone willing to go looking. Levine worked in clues, a bit of trivia about each spot and scavenger hunt items into the journey. All of this hand written and way before GPS could calmly announce the next turn. He created a detailed "route book" on his old Macintosh computer, that included all of the minute details; the mileage, intersections, checkpoints, directions, and graphics.

Listening to him describe it, I could see why people still remembered that day. They had crossed a landscape together in another country, for the privilege of seeing the sun rise and fall on two different coasts, following his carefully prepared instructions toward a finish line determined only by mother nature. The group reached the western shore in time for sunset, or close enough to see it sinking while they hurried toward the end. Levine laughs at the connection he now recognizes out loud, he had planned the whole thing much like a military convoy. As he planned and carried out an adventure of his own making, he found himself drawing on his Army training and his experience as a teacher, the two sides of his life working so naturally together that he could hardly tell where one ended and the other began. He was solely responsible for getting a small company of travelers safely across Japan for the simple pleasure of seeing what they would discover.

Years later, that same capacity to plan and take responsibility would be called upon under vastly different and very serious circumstances. Immediately after September 11, 2001, Levine's unit went on alert. For roughly eighteen months, its members waited for a deployment that might come at any time. They continued working and living at home while preparing for the possibility of leaving it. Eventually, the alert was lifted. Levine then accepted a job at Wolfe's Neck Farm in Freeport, Maine and on his first day of work the call came again. This time, they were going. Within weeks, he was headed to Fort Drum. Before deploying, the officer who had spent so many years as a first lieutenant finally pinned on the title of Captain and then he was bound for Iraq.

Levine had serious reservations about the war. He also understood the obligation he had accepted as a commissioned officer. The order had come, and he would go with his unit. Once there, he intended to take responsibility for the choices he could make. "I went to do the good I could do within my sphere of influence," he says.

He deployed with Maine's 133rd Engineer Battalion, beginning as the battalion S2, an intelligence officer, despite having no formal intelligence training. When the personnel officer was medically evacuated, Levine moved into the S1 position and spent the remainder of the tour overseeing personnel. He also became a purchasing officer, a responsibility that brought him into direct contact with the locals and local businesses, particularly among Kurdish communities in northern Iraq.

Engineers needed lumber, culverts, fasteners, plumbing materials, toilets, and construction supplies. Their battalion built and repaired schools, medical clinics, roads, bridges, and municipal facilities. Getting the right materials was part of getting those projects finished, and Levine found purpose in that practical work. It connected him with people whose communities would live with the results long after the soldiers left.

The mission he recalled included humanitarian engineering work that the unit had performed in Guatemala, bringing infrastructure and clean water to communities. In Iraq, Levine took particular interest in the Kurdish people, their culture, and their long struggle for self-determination. In a way it reminded him of his own Jewish heritage. He learned about a population spread across several countries and who were caught in political circumstances far beyond anything one purchasing officer could resolve. What he could do was conduct his business fairly, help the engineers obtain what they needed and support projects that had value to the people living there. Of his work in Iraq, that support for Kurdish communities remains a source of particular pride. It is an aspect of service easily overlooked when the telling centers on combat. Yet someone has to find the supplies and arrange the purchases as well as over see that the work can proceed. A school or a clinic becomes possible through many such decisions, made by people who may never appear in the photograph when the job is done.

Another part of Levine's deployment lives in his memory as a second deeply proud source of pride. This, through a young Maine soldier and the Romanian woman who loved him. Specialist Christopher Gelineau served with the 133rd Engineer Battalion. Levine knew him through their shared headquarters, though they were not close friends. Before the unit left, Levine had also met Chris's wife, Lavinia, at their send-off for deployments among the soldiers, families, and the buses preparing to carry the battalion away. On April 20, 2004, Chris was killed when his convoy came under attack near Mosul. He was twenty-three. Lavinia was Romanian-born, highly educated and building a life in America with her husband. After his death, she spoke publicly about the war and faced harsh criticism for doing so. From Iraq, Levine watched a young widow being challenged over her right to question the conflict that had taken Chris from her.

This struck him to his core. He believed she had every right to speak. Whatever someone's position on the war, he felt that her loss deserved respect. So he reached out and wrote to her. When he came home on leave around Thanksgiving, Lavinia visited him. She was still wearing black, and Chris's dog tags hung around her neck. Over the months, however, Levine had begun to see changes through her letters. She had returned to work. She was beginning to reassemble to pieces of her life again. There was still grief, but there were also tentative steps toward a life she could continue. Levine returned from Iraq in March 2005, and they planned to meet up again. However fate had other plans. On April 1, Lavinia was killed by her father in her Westbrook home. He then took his own life. She was twenty-five.

After her death, Levine printed their correspondence: ninety-eight single-spaced pages. He gave them to her Romanian family. Within those pages was the Lavinia he had come to know, the wife of a fellow service member who was still grieving but who also had found the strength and courage to pick up the pieces to begin again. He knew her family would need to know this for their own closure, and it was his way of honoring it all. Her family could read her words and see those changes for themselves. A scholarship at the University of Southern Maine now bears both Christopher's and Lavinia's names. Levine remembers them together, although their deaths came under different circumstances. His friendship with her had become part of his experience of the deployment, and her loss came home with him too.

There is another date from Iraq that remains close at hand:
December 21, 2004.

Levine and members of the 133rd were stationed at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul when an attacker entered the dining facility during lunch and detonated a bomb. Twenty-two people were killed, and dozens more were wounded. Levine was a few hundred yards away.

He tells this without making a claim of heroism out of his proximity. He was nearby, he survived, and he now when he looks back to remember he still feels the weight of that fateful day. The attack had struck in a place where the soldiers gathered for one of the most ordinary acts of the day, eating a meal together. For those who lived through it, the memory of that dining facility would remain inseparable from what happened there. Levine lives with hearing loss and tinnitus, though he attributes much of the damage to years of rifle range and heavy engineering equipment, and the accumulated noise of ordinary military life. The bombing holds its own place in his account. He does not need to make it responsible for every injury in order to convey its significance.

Coming home in March 2005 brought him back to Maine, but returning to familiar surroundings took adjustment. Having lived overseas before, he knew something about the disorientation of moving between countries. Coming back from war involved another kind of reckoning. People at home had continued their lives while he and his fellow soldiers had been living through experiences that were difficult to explain in casual conversations. He was a much aged man. And in those changes he also discovered that he had become less willing to let inaccurate or dismissive remarks pass him by. At a family Thanksgiving after his return, an aunt made sweeping comments about people in the military. The stereotypes however did not remotely resemble the educated and capable, complicated people he had served beside.

"You're wrong," he told her.

Before Iraq, he might have held his tongue. Afterward, he felt compelled to answer with conviction. . These were people he knew. He had worked with them, depended on them for his life and seen what they were asked to endure. He was no longer willing to sit quietly by while they were reduced to a careless generalization.

When I asked what he would tell a young person
considering military service, his answer was direct:
"Only if you really want to."

He gives much of the same advice about teaching. Both professions demand something of the person doing them, and he believes the desire to do the work matters. The Army gave him education, including a master's degree, as well as travel, friendships, leadership experience, responsibility, and a sense of real belonging. For someone whose family life had been complicated, the military became a family in ways he had deeply needed.

He had joined out of patriotism and a desire to give something back to his country. Over time, those convictions were tested by the realities of the institution and the missions it tha6 were assigned.. He still deeply values duty, honor, moral courage, and responsibility. He also speaks frankly about the boredom, the danger,the discomfort, and the long stretches of waiting, with language considerably more colorful than an official recruiting brochure.

More difficult for him was knowing that a soldier could be sent to carry out decisions made far above his authority. Levine wanted to serve honorably, and he worried about being misused as an instrument of foreign policy. In Iraq, he returned to the area where he could exercise judgment for the people under his responsibility and for the work he was doing, and more importantly his own conduct.

"No atrocities on my watch," he says.

He could look after soldiers and he could treat the local people decently, while supporting the rebuilding projects and for making sure the engineers had materials. He could write to Lavinia. Those actions did not resolve his objections to the war, but they gave him work and a true purpose he could stand behind. He remains proud of all of the people who tried to do their jobs honorably under difficult circumstances.

During a later deployment to Iraq, he was promoted to Major. Explaining the progression to me, he described captain as "the top



of the bottom" and major as "the bottom of the top." Captains often command companies of a hundred or more soldiers; majors work on senior staffs under lieutenant colonels, colonels, and generals. His explanation made a hierarchy unfamiliar to me easier to understand, and there was a certain satisfaction in hearing that the man who had been a lieutenant for so long eventually reached the rank at which he retired.

Retirement from the Army opened another route into service. After years working on the military side of American foreign policy, Levine wanted to understand how that policy developed and how diplomacy might influence what happened before troops were sent.

He joined the United States Department of State as a Foreign Service officer, serving six years in Brazil, Guyana, and Washington, D.C. During his first year in Washington, he worked in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, where diplomacy and defense meet. It offered him a different view of government and a closer look at the work behind decisions most Americans encounter only through the news. What impressed him most were the people. He found talented, dedicated Americans doing very difficult work inside systems that could be cumbersome and frustrating. Having dealt with Army bureaucracy, he was familiar with institutions that sometimes seemed to make their own work harder. He also knew that within those institutions were people trying earnestly to make them function.

His understanding of patriotism had grown through those encounters. He could criticize a policy and respect the people carrying it out and he could question his government while continuing to work for his country. His commitment asked him to participate and take responsibility, even when participation brought him face to face with failures he could not ignore.

When I asked about his uniforms, he told me he still had them. Camouflage clothing, duffel bags, and Army equipment were stored in his garage and in a container on his property. As an officer, he had bought much of it himself, a detail that prompted a practical joke about owning the stuff.

There is sentiment in keeping it, too. He has seen veterans make very different decisions about their belongings. Some discard everything in order to forget, while others assemble medals and insignia in shadow boxes and some find the sight of a uniform painful. Levine has kept his without turning the collection into a display.

"I don't miss wearing the uniform," he says.

By this point in our conversation, I understood how much of his life existed far beyond it. There was the teacher who had gone to Japan, the young dreamer who had taken flying lessons to become a pilot, the motorbike rider, the diplomat, and the grown man who took lessons as a boy who still plays piano. Between all that a life was woven. There were relationships, a painful divorce, family fractures, and private struggles that a list of military assignments and promotions could never explain.

I had come to the interview wanting to understand Mitch's service. As the conversation unfolded, I found myself listening to the ways he had kept seeking a useful place in the world. When one ambition became impossible, he pursued another. When the Army's administrative process put him out, he worked to get back in.

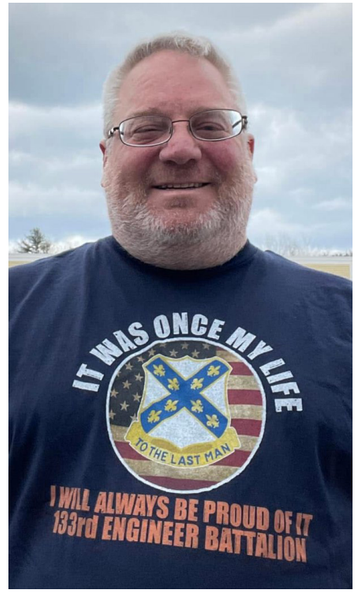
When he was sent to a war he questioned, he looked for work he could do honorably fo4 having real impact. When his military career ended, he entered diplomatic service. And now, after decades of trying to understand why certain parts of life had been so hard, he was willing to ask new questions about himself.

The adventure in his story is real. There were countries to cross, unfamiliar places to explore, a dirt bike in Japan, and a rally that people still remember to this day. There is pleasure in hearing those stories and recognizing the resourceful young man at their center. But following him farther also means hearing Chris's name, meeting Lavinia through the account of her letters, and understanding why a December day in Mosul remains so distinct.

Those details are what I want readers to have the chance to know. A rank tells us where someone stood within the military. It does not tell us about the dust and dirt of building a bridge, the loss of a buddy, whom he wrote to when there was grieving, what work gave him a real sense of pride, or what still makes him laugh. It cannot explain the friendships he formed, the policies he questioned, or the effort it took to make a somewhat normal life after returning home.

As I listened, the familiar words "Thank you for your service" began to feel like the opening of a conversation I hoped more of us would have. There was so much behind them worth asking about, and so much Major Mitch was willing to share. Honoring him meant giving those experiences room, including the ones that made his story difficult to hear.

Near the end of this interview,, he spoke about service as something he believes the country could use more of. He was thinking beyond the military; about teaching, fire departments, emergency response, conservation, volunteering and community work. He wondered what Americans from very different backgrounds might learn by



working together toward something their communities needed. The idea still holds his interest after all the institutions he has served and all the disappointments he has witnessed. He knows how much can go wrong. He has also worked beside people who continued trying to do their jobs well, despite not agreeing with the decisions behind them and his faith in their efforts has survived. That belief is part of what he carries forward from the Army and the Foreign Service. People can give their time, accept responsibility, and make a difference within the work entrusted to them. He has spent much of his life trying to do exactly that. When I think back over our conversation, I return to the young boy who wanted to fly. He could not have known where the change in that plan would lead him, or how much he would be asked to carry along the way. He found the adventure he dreamed of, a real sense of belonging, useful work, as well as sorrow. He became a teacher and an officer, an engineer and a diplomat, and eventually a veteran looking at his own history with new understanding.

After two tours in Iraq, roughly twenty-four years in the Maine Army National Guard, and six years in the Foreign Service, I asked him the question I save for the end of every single interview: What do you want my readers to know about you? "I'm an average American who believed in service, who did the best I could with the time I had. I'm proud of my service, and proud of the people I worked with. There were no atrocities on my watch. I wish it would have been for a better cause, for a lot of it, but I'm not ashamed of any of it. "I think service is good and honorable, and I think it's the best of America. And I wish we would be used better by those people we put in charge." All the things I disagree with were made at pay grades far above me and far above my bosses. But from my experience, from the two-star general level on down, there were a lot of really good people trying their best to do the right thing."

About the Author: Beverly Ann Soucy is a writer, fourth-generation herbalist and stained-glass artist living in the mountains of Western Maine. A proud Mainer and equally proud American, she has spent much of her life telling the stories of the people, places and those passed down traditions that make her corner of the world special. She is honored and excited to be part of this new publication and especially grateful for the opportunity to share the stories of those who have served.

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Joshua L Chamberlain
Union Army General, Professor at Bowdoin College, and a four-term Governor of Maine
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