

# NEW YORK NAVAL MILITIA

NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2021



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### SPRING 2021

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#### Commander's Corner:

**Rear Admiral (LH)  
Warren T. Smith, NYNM**

From the Commander:

Memorial Day will be behind us as you read these comments, but let us never lose sight of the sacrifices of those who have gone before us defending our nation and our freedom. As members of the New York Naval Militia, we honor their memory by the work we do daily on behalf of all Americans and all New Yorkers.

With the advent of summer, this year now offers the hope for a gradual return to some semblance of life more-or-less as we knew it prior to March 2020. Of course, many things will never be the same. For those of us who

#### Cover photo:

ABECS Charles Dick (MEBS SouthCom Coordinator), BM1 Bill Kaul (MEBS DET 21 OIC), MK2 Michael White (MEBS Det 21), and MNCM Glenn Niemitalo (NYNM CMC) salute the flag during arrival ceremonies for PB 230 at New Rochelle.



have lost family members and friends to the pandemic, those painful gaps in our lives will endure. And for much of the rest of the world, the height of the pandemic rages on while vaccine distribution slowly begins to reach locations less fortunate than our own. But still, we can see light at the end of the tunnel, and the drawdown of our COVID mission as the year marches on seems inevitable. Vaccinations remain the key to how quickly this occurs. If you have not yet received yours, there is no reason to wait any longer.

As in past years, many other challenges lie ahead, not least of which is the start of the Atlantic hurricane season in June. Changing weather patterns suggest another active year for storms, and the odds increase for one or more directly impacting New York State given the past few years of storm tracks primarily to our south and out to sea. We must be ready to respond whenever the need arises. In the meantime, we expect that MEBS training, exercises, and engagement with our NOSCs, Marine Corps units, and Coast Guard colleagues will resume, and that full-fledged planning can get underway for a more robust schedule in 2022.

The City of New Rochelle provided a warm welcome to the New York Naval Militia as PB-230 arrived on April 16th to assume its homeport for the summer boating season there. Captain Marylynn Marrese, SOUTHCOM Commander, offered remarks to the assembled dignitaries including several elected officials. The NYNM was well represented by Force Master Chief Glenn Niemitalo, Senior Chief Charles Dick, BM1 William Kaul, and ME2 Michael White. Thanks to LCDR Brett Morash and the local Veterans Advisory Committee for organizing this impressive event. PB-230 will patrol Long Island Sound, providing support to law enforcement and other agencies as needed.

Congratulations to our MEBS commander,

Captain Don McKnight, on his well deserved promotion – recognition of his consistently outstanding performance along with the expectation of more to come. CAPT McKnight has authored another grant request for federal funding to offset the cost of our next new vessel, and he continues to provide justification for federal reimbursement on behalf of our various missions. Regarding promotions in general, boards are now scheduled, and I encourage every eligible member to submit a package for consideration, or at least start preparing your package for next year.

I continue to be impressed by our NYNM team on mission at sites throughout New York State, and was pleased to meet with our cohorts at Yankee Stadium and the Javits Center in March. In every instance, our colleagues in the Army and Air National Guard and New York Guard have expressed their appreciation for the Naval Militia as well as sharing their own observations with respect to the level of professionalism and expertise our Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard members bring to the fight. Thank you to all who have volunteered for this long mission, and keep up the great work.



RDML Smith speaks with NYNM members activated for the COVID 19 mission.

## Deputy Commander News:

**CAPT David Hawley**

### **Some thoughts on Naval Militia's Most Mobilized Year.**

During the COVID19 Mission we have had 328 Naval Militia members mobilized for support. As of May 2021, the New York Naval Militia has 220 members still on duty.

Your New York Naval Militia responded in multiple ways: Hospital Corpsmen; Nurses; Marines; SeaBees; General Purpose support; Fiscal support; Logistics support; Master at Arms personnel; and a host of every rate and specialty in the Naval Militia. Many times the Civilian Skills Questionnaire you filled out on applying for the Naval Militia was where we looked for the skills needed by New York State in responding to this crisis.

During this mission we also learned a lot about how we can serve you, our members, better. Your email is the best way we can keep in touch, but we found that sometimes sending mass email messages to certain email providers automatically went to spam folders. We found that many times our members did not read the orders we sent so we have increased the person to person briefing provided at JRSOI (Joint Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration) to include Naval Militia specific information.

The number one pay issue for our members is providing the information on BAH in a timely manner. New York State cannot look at DoD documentation so all BAH documentation has to be provided before payments. This includes: marriage certificates; dependent birth certificates; notarized rent/lease/mortgage paperwork; and the other individual specific information.

As this COVID19 mission comes to a close many people are looking at going back to

College and University: remember our RIRP (Recruitment incentive and Retention Program) for Tuition Assistance. If you are a drilling Reserve member that is a New York State resident you can qualify for tuition assistance up to the equivalent of SUNY tuition. Our application process is easy and quick: <http://dmna.ny.gov/nynm/?id=education>

And lastly:

Being mobilized for the New York Naval Militia qualified Drilling Reserve Members for a Federal Award! In a memo dated 30 June 2020 the Under Secretary of Defense authorized the Armed Forces Service Medal (AFSM) or the Humanitarian Service Medal (HSM) for eligible service members supporting the coronavirus disease (COVID 19) operations and activities. Because the New York State response was combined with Title 10 Dual Status Command Operations all State Activated Naval Militia members that are also Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard drilling Reserve members qualify for one of these awards. Additional amplifying information was included in NAVADMIN 235/20 and MARADMIN 567/20. Members that qualified for this award were provided with a Certificate of Qualifying Service from the Joint Force Headquarters – New York Personnel Office (J1).



There will be a separate New York State Pandemic Award for all members that activated for this emergency effort.

## From the Chief of Staff CAPT Larry Weill

### Brothers and Sisters in Arms

Most of us in the NY Naval Militia have some notion of our initial organization and subsequent history. Organized in 1889 and first mustered into service in 1891, we are the oldest continuously-serving naval militia in the country. We were mobilized to perform missions in 1892, and have played active roles in numerous battles and wars since the Spanish American War in 1898. It's been a proud tradition that we've carried on for the past 130 years.

But we are not alone. Numerous other states have mustered naval militias into service over the past 100 years, and many of those have participated in our nation's armed conflicts. The first one to actually muster its forces as a separate entity was Massachusetts, which met for the first time in February of 1890. New York State followed a year later, in 1891. Since that time, quite a few U.S. states have organized and mustered naval militias. As a matter of fact, 32 states can claim a naval militia as part of their past military component. However, many of these were disbanded after the forming of the U.S. Navy Reserve in 1915, so most are not active today

Of the "active" naval militias across the country, only one is as active and engaged as our own NYNM. That naval militia belongs to the state of Ohio, which was formed by an act of the Ohio General Assembly in 1896. Headquartered on Lake Erie, the Ohio Naval Militia's (ONM) organization and history closely parallel our own. Like the NYNM, the ONM was also active in the Spanish American War, manning their own cutters and other craft which participated in the conflict. Today, they are a large and viable organization that performs many of the same missions as our

own NYNM. They run numerous training operations on Lake Erie using their own boats and working with the Ohio National Guard.

Other states that list "current" naval militias include Texas, California, South Carolina, and Alaska. Of these, some were organized for a specific mission. For example, Alaska's Naval Militia (AKNM) was organized in 1984, but used extensively in 1989 to aid with the clean-up from the Exxon Valdez oil spill. They have also been actively involved with the COVID-19 epidemic relief operations inside their state. Other naval militias, such as California's, have performed limited, specialized roles including providing legal advice and expertise to the California State Defense Force, although their maritime role is now being expanded as well.

It has been encouraging to see an almost-universal trend to utilize the manpower and skills base of the active naval militias across the country. We were not the only state to mobilize personnel for the purpose of supporting COVID-19 operations. Other states, including South Carolina and California have also tapped into these forces, making us all the more relevant. We look forward to opening more lines of communications with these other state's naval militias to increase our own best practices and ideas for potential mutual operations.



# COVID 19 OPERATIONS UPDATE

When I reflect on the last 14 months of the COVID-19/COVID Support mission, one phrase near and dear to my heart, comes immediately to mind. Even though this describes the leadership style of a Chief and above in the USN & USCG, it absolutely applies to our Marines as well.

## Phrase

**deckplate leader** (*pl. deckplate leaders*)

1. A leader who understands a project's mission, knows his team and their individual skills, and leads by example



Naval Militia service members provide this style of leadership for any mission they serve on, this mission is no exception. We have Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen leading by example across the State at all mission sites including, testing sites, vaccination sites, warehouses and all the Directorates at Division of Military and Naval Affairs HQ in Latham, NY. We have had nearly 330 service members serve as of this

newsletter. We bring so much civilian and military experience to the table, which is invaluable in this joint environment. On RDML Smith's last visit to the various mission sites, he was told repeatedly by the site OICs and or Directors of Sate Agencies, how much our service members are counted on to get the job done.

The COVID mission is proving once again how valuable and integral the Naval Militia leadership is. From the CPL and Junior Petty Officer on up, our team is working above their pay grade. You set the tone, you know the mission and are contributing to mission success!

Thank you for serving with pride and professionalism.

Senior Chief Spain



EOC Scott Pease with the COVID mission, operating a truck assigned to carry supplies.



New York Naval Militia Sgt. Edwin Feliciano talks with a recently vaccinated patient in the medical observation area at the Orange County Community College state vaccination site in Middletown, NY on 6 May 2021.

developing. We have established a new training site at New Rochelle, where BM1 Bill Kaul serves as DET 21 OIC. We are placing a boat on the NYS Canal System at Waterford. In this location, we have PB 220 available for patrols on the Champlain Canal and the eastern portion of the Erie Canal.

Due to SAD conflicts with MEBS training, we have decided to not place a boat in Rochester this year. Likewise, placement of a separate boat in Albany has not occurred since our normal marina has not stood up operations (as of this writing).

The SAD conflict with the COVID 19 missions means that no one can train (either on boats or even in a classroom) for MEBS when in a paid status for COVID. This applies even when a member is in a leave status or on a pass day.

For those persons on either federal or state mobilization, we are exempting them from the the two-per-year training requirement.

## Military Emergency Boat Service

### News:



Here's what is going on in the boat program. Normally, this is the time of year when all of our boats will have been deployed across the state for training. Normal training sites include Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, mid and lower Hudson River valley sites, and Long Island's south shore.

For all MEBS personnel, the minimum training goal is to participate in at least two events per year. These events and personnel participation is tracked to determine our readiness rating which is promulgated weekly in the MEBS OPSUM.

As we see the pressure of the pandemic lessening, several changes to that plan are



ME2 Michael White conducts pre-operational checks on the PB 230 engines.

## READINESS OFFICER

We asked our membership to step up and volunteer for the ongoing COVID Support mission and we have had a tremendous response! I am so proud of you all! Thank you for serving with the pride and professionalism that has become the trademark of the Naval Militia. We have also seen an increase in new members, which has made us better able to answer the next call to State Active Duty. To ensure we are better prepared for the next emergency mission, help me keep our force ready to respond by sending me any **changes to your pay grade, address, cell or email.**

Remember, your Federal branch of service does not share information with us or the State pay office. Our database is where your pay information comes from. If we show you as an E2 but you are now an E5 and didn't send me an E5 LES, you will be not receive the correct pay. If you lived in Buffalo but move to the Bronx and do not update your address, you will not receive the correct BAH.

Updates can be sent to [nq.ny.nyarnq.mbx.nynavalmilitia@mail.mil](mailto:nq.ny.nyarnq.mbx.nynavalmilitia@mail.mil) or emailed to me directly at

[elizabeth.a.spain.mil@mail.mil](mailto:elizabeth.a.spain.mil@mail.mil)

Thank you all again!  
BMCS(EXW) Elizebeth Spain

## Education News:

The next eligible semester for RIRP Education benefits is Fall, 2021. The deadline for submission of benefit applications is 13 August 2021.

## Announcements:

Exercise Empire Challenge '21 will be taking place on 25-26JUN21. This year's exercise will be scaled down from previous exercises. Primarily due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, we planned small so that we did not have to cancel events that we could not support. As it stands, the exercise will consist of long-range emergency communications between the MEBS command post, an underway boat, and two or more operations centers.

## New York Naval Militia by the Numbers

24MAY21	SOUTH	NORTH	WEST	TOTAL
OFFICER	138	29	39	206
WARRANT	7	1	3	11
ENLISTED	1903	250	399	2552
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>2769</b>
NAVY	966	133	260	1359
MARINE	918	112	150	1180
COAST GUARD	82	4	5	91
STATE ACTIVE LIST (5%)	30	8	4	42
FEDERAL COMPONENT LIST (Retired)	52	23	22	97