

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Albany Institute of History & Art

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NEWS

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ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART TO PARTICIPATE IN BLUE STAR MUSEUMS

The Albany Institute of History & Art is one of more than 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to military personnel and their families this summer in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and the Department of Defense

ALBANY, NY— The Albany Institute of History & Art is proud to participate in Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to the nation's active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2015. Leadership support has been provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. The program also provides families an opportunity to enjoy the nation's cultural heritage and learn more about their new communities after a military move. The complete list of participating museums is available at arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

"The Albany Institute is proud to be a Blue Star Museum," said Tammis Groft, the museum's Executive Director. "We have such a great selection of exhibitions that will appeal to the whole family- from baseball to fine art to antiquities in our Ancient Egypt galleries- that a trip to the museum is a great way to spend time together this summer."

"Parents of young children tell us that they go together to museums to learn new things and have family time together," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "Blue Star Museums helps them do both, by helping military families learn about the cultural resources in their communities, and offering a fun, high-quality experience that's budget friendly as well as family friendly. We're proud to help connect museums to military communities nationwide."

"Blue Star Museums has grown into a nationally recognized program that service members and their families look forward to each year," said Blue Star Families Chief Executive Officer Kathy Roth-Douquet. "It helps bring our local military and civilian communities together, and offers families fun and enriching activities in their home towns. We are thrilled with the continued growth of the program and the unparalleled opportunities it offers."

This year, more than 2,000 (and counting) museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative. Museums are welcome to join Blue Star Museums throughout the summer. The effort to recruit museums has involved partnerships with the American Alliance of Museums, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Association of Children's Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, and the Association of Science-Technology Centers. This year's Blue Star Museums represent not just fine arts museums, but also science museums, history museums, nature centers, and dozens of children's museums.

About Blue Star Museums

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums across America. The program runs from Memorial Day, May 25, 2015 through Labor Day, September 7, 2015.

The free admission program is available to **any** bearer of a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card, which includes active duty U.S. military- Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, as well as members of the National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps- and up to five family members. Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program. For questions on particular exhibits or museums, please contact the museum directly. To find participating museums and plan your trip, visit arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

All summer long, Blue Star Museums will share stories through social media. Follow Blue Star Museums on Twitter @NEAarts and @BlueStarFamily, #bluestarmuseums, on Facebook, and read the NEA Art Works blog for weekly stories on participating museums and exhibits.

Museums that wish to participate in Blue Star Museums may contact bluestarmuseums@arts.gov, or Wendy Clark at 202-682-5451.

This is the latest NEA program to bring quality arts programs to the military, veterans, and their families. Other NEA programs for the military have included the NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership; Great American Voices Military Base Tour; and Shakespeare in American Communities Military Base Tour.

About the Albany Institute of History & Art

Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 35,000 objects and one million documents in the library, it is an important resource for the region, giving the community a sense of the part the Hudson Valley played in the American story, and their own place in history. Permanent and temporary exhibitions are open year-round and create a sense of place, allowing visitors to meet the people who helped shape this region. Over 25,000 people visit the Albany Institute of History & Art every year, enjoying the collections, workshops, school programs, and lectures, helping to build an understanding of the history and culture of this region. Among the museum's best-known and most-loved collections are the 19th century Hudson River School landscape paintings by artists like Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, the 19th century sculpture collections, and, of course, the famous Albany Mummies that came to the museum in 1909 and have been on view ever since. For more information, please visit www.albanyinstitute.org and be sure to follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute) and Twitter (@AlbanyInstitute).

The Albany Institute of History & Art is located at 125 Washington Avenue in Albany, New York. Free parking is available in the museum's lot at the corner of Elk and Dove Streets. The museum is open Wednesday-Saturday 10AM-5PM, Thursdays until 8PM*, and Sunday Noon-5PM. On Tuesdays, the

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museum is open to registered groups only. The museum is closed on Mondays and some holidays. Admission is free for Institute members; \$10/adults; \$8/seniors; \$8/students with ID; \$6/children 6-12; FREE/children under 6. *We are now offering free admission on Thursdays from 5PM-8PM. For more information, visit www.albanyinstitute.org or call (518) 463-4478.

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families (BSF) is a national, nonprofit network by and for military families from all ranks and services, including active duty, National Guard and reserves. As the largest and fastest growing military family engagement organization in the country, Blue Star Families forges extraordinary partnerships resulting in 1.5 million military family members served annually through programs and resources with 50 chapters at home and overseas. BSF has also activated more than 26 million hours of community service to build leaders within and strengthen the military community, and connected Americans with their military. To learn more about Blue Star Families' opportunities for service members, military families, and civilians, visit www.bluestarfam.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$5 billion to strengthen the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at arts.gov.



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