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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

This Veteran Can Sing!

by Merrill Weiner



Picture caption: *Elaine Wilburn (center), a new member of Greater Nassau Chorus of Sweet Adelines International, at her first performance with the chorus in September.*

It's been an amazing year for Massapequa resident, Elaine Wilburn. This petite 29-year-old with her sunny smile and exuberant personality just returned from a once-in-a-lifetime experience in Nashville where she and the other women of Greater Nassau Chorus earned a 4th place medal at the Sweet Adelines International 63rd Annual Convention and Competition.

Sweet Adelines International is a worldwide organization of women singers committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony through education and performance. There are more than 600 choruses in the organization, and Elaine, who joined the Baldwin-based chorus only 6 months ago, is thrilled to be a part of one of the finest women's a cappella ensembles in the world!



But Elaine is more than just a beautiful voice. She is a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy who will be spending this Veteran's Day reflecting upon her years of military service.

Born in the Philippines into a military family, Elaine always knew she would serve, but she felt particularly honored when she was invited to attend the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. At a time when women comprised only 13% of the military academy's class, Elaine dealt with every challenge – and she excelled. “The Academy pushes you emotionally, spiritually and physically. They teach you to be prepared.”

After her graduation, she was deployed to the U.S. Iwo Jima, serving as the Internal Communications Officer on the ship during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. They were proud and happy years.

During that time, she earned her Surface Warfare Officer qualification, which means she can maneuver any Naval amphibious assault ship. From there she went to Norfolk, Virginia, serving as the Assistant Protocol Officer and then as the Administrative Officer to the Commander, Naval Surface Force, of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

During her military service, Elaine found a musical outlet with the Naval Academy Women's Glee Club and even performed for the President of the United States. Later, while stationed with her husband in Korea, she sang with the Seoul Singers.

After returning to live in the United States with husband, Donald, a graduate and current instructor at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Elaine felt the urge to connect with women and sing again.

But nothing prepared Elaine for the excitement of participating with the award-winning Greater Nassau Chorus. “It's been such a terrific journey. This has been more than I could have ever dreamed of!”

For Elaine, the friendships she has formed and the passion she feels for her new chorus are reminiscent of the strong bonds she developed in the military. And Elaine is working hard again, preparing for Greater Nassau Chorus' upcoming show, *Come Celebrate Our Sound! 50 Years of Sweet Harmony*. In addition to featuring the chorus, this show will include performances from several top-notch quartets including the 2009 Region 15 Quartet Champions, a.k.a., the 2009 Atlantic Region Barbershop Quartet Champions, Hudson Chronicles, and Regional quartet competitors, Pitchcraft and Drive! The show is scheduled for Sunday, 12/06/09 at 3:00 PM at West Hempstead High School, 400 Nassau Boulevard, West Hempstead, NY 11552. For more information about the chorus, membership, and upcoming performances, visit www.greaternassauchorus.org.

And keep an eye out for Elaine on the risers – the proud veteran with the big smile.



