Jillian Decker
In July, Jillian Decker joined our staff as the Foundation’s first Director of Development. Jillian brings over four years of nonprofit sector experience including fundraising, grant writing, donor stewardship, and database management. Her work is focused on building relationships with our donors, expanding our support from fundraising and grants, and raising funds for our upcoming capital campaign. Jillian is a key part of our fundraising team, which will allow us to expand our Vietnam Era Museum to improve educational experiences and expand the exhibitions of our growing collections.

This summer, Jillian presented her research, Architectural Spatial Theory in Museum Design for Improved Visitor Engagement, at the 9th Annual International Conference on Visual and Performing Arts in Athens, Greece, and at the 11th International Conference on the Inclusive Museum in Granada, Spain. In October, she attended her paper, Building Ludwig I’s German Identity: The Parthenon and German Hellenism, at the 76th Annual Southeastern College Arts Conference in Birmingham, Alabama.

Jillian is excited to join our team at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Foundation and looks forward to working with our veterans, volunteers, donors, and community.

Greg Waters
Our Museum Curator Greg Waters was busy this year as he put on his first major exhibit at the Vietnam Era Museum, Soundtrack of A Changing Nation: The Music of the Vietnam Era. As part of this work, he made new connections with other museums and organized loans of artifacts that are currently on display as part of the exhibit. This included traveling to the Museum at Bethel Woods, the official museum of the Woodstock music festival, and the Bruce Springsteen Archive and Center for American Music at Monmouth University.

In May, he attended the American Alliance of Museums conference in Phoenix, Arizona. This conference is the largest gathering of museum professionals in the nation with thousands of attendees. Greg was able to learn directly from leaders in the museum field about proven strategies and new ideas that will help NJVVMF meet the expectations and needs of future visitors.

In June, he attended a three-day workshop at Fort Eustis in Newport News, Virginia, put on by the American Association for State and Local History. The workshop focused on best practices in the museum field with a special focus on working with military collections. He was able to network with dozens of other museum professionals and learn how to better care for NJVVMF’s growing museum collections.

Keri Giannotti
Museum Educator Keri Giannotti was selected to attend a Gilder Lerhman Seminar focused on the Vietnam War. Their innovative programs are based in historical resources including artifacts, engagement with historians and in this case, Vietnam Veterans. During the seminar, she spent time with leading Vietnam War Studies scholars at the First Division Museum at Cantigny. During this unique opportunity, Keri was able to network with scholars, Vietnam Veterans and other educators while advocating about our work.

Gilder Lerhman Seminar Vietnam War Scholars Dr. Paul Herbert, Col. James Willbanks, Bob Brigham, Ron Nash from Gilder Lerhman and Greg Daddis, not shown is George Harring.
Keri also presented at the annual NJEA Teachers’ Convention. Following the theme, Standing Together: Social Justice = Education = Success, Keri spoke about the importance of memorials in light of the recent discussions about memorials in Charlottesville and other cities across the country.

Using memorials across New Jersey as examples, she addressed the complicated history of Memorials, especially those connected to the military. Based on a lesson plan she developed, participants learned ways to apply conversations about inclusiveness in the classroom.