



Apr–Jun 2026

LI 202 AFA NEWS

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Visit us on the WEB:

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Visit us on FACEBOOK:

Air & Space Forces Association—Long Island Chapter 202

Email us at: LIAFA202@gmail.com

Newsletter editor: Steven Latus

CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2026

Vietnam Medal Ceremonies

Sat, Oct 17, 2026

Long Island State Veterans Home
100 Patriots Road
Stony Brook
2 PM

85th Anniversary Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony— Dropping of the Roses

Mon, Dec 7, 2026

American Airpower Museum
1230 New Highway
Farmingdale
10:30 AM



RSVP required: **ATTENTION:** There will be a general meeting, open to all LIAFA members, on **Saturday, September 19**, starting at 12 noon at the American Airpower Museum, 1230 New Highway in Farmingdale (on the east side of Republic Airport). We will be discussing the future direction that LIAFA should be taking in the coming years and which programs we should pursue. We are also looking for some new people to take up leadership positions within LIAFA. Lunch will be served so please **RSVP no later than Monday, September 14**, to Fred Di Fabio at (631) 487-7210 so that we know how much food we should be ordering.

In this issue: Recent Events; Upcoming Non-LIAFA Events; Announcements, Benefits, Programs and Resources; Did You Know; Taps; and Medal Applications and Eligibility.

Priority label guide: Highlighted labels identify items that may require quick attention: **ACTION NEEDED** means readers should check, confirm, or prepare before attending; **REGISTRATION REQUIRED**, **RSVP**, **TICKET DEADLINE**, and **EARLY-BIRD PRICE** flag time-sensitive sign-ups or purchases; **BRING DD FORM 214** notes required documentation; **FREE SERVICE**, **REFUND OPPORTUNITY**, and **APPLY TO JOIN WAIT LIST** identify available benefits; and **SCAM ALERT**, **CRISIS RESOURCE**, **PERMIT REQUIRED**, and similar labels mark safety, compliance, or urgent-use information.

Recent Events

Construction of Veterans Housing in Island Park Begins

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation tore down the old Long Beach Motor Inn in December and is starting construction of Veteran Village on Austin Boulevard in Island Park. The land was donated to the foundation by Nassau County.

The new building will be a 58-unit apartment complex featuring private bathrooms and kitchens in each unit, 24/7 on-site staff and clinicians, and services ranging from job training and entitlement advocacy to behavioral health care and education assistance— all funded and operated by Tunnel to Towers.

Construction is expected to finish by the end of 2027, with a grand opening in 2028. **ACTION NEEDED:** Veterans can start applying for leases in 2027.

5th Women's Military Service Medal Ceremony

Sixteen veteran and active-duty women were awarded the Women's Military Service Medal on Saturday, **May 2**, at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Uniondale. Distinguished guests included Cradle of Aviation Museum Assistant Director of Education **Victoria Furguson**, ANG 106th Rescue Wing

Medical Group Commander Colonel (Ret.) **Pamela Combs** and Director of the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency **Ralph Esposito**. The singing of the *Star-Spangled Banner* and *God Bless America* was performed by the incomparable **Louis DiLeo**; the invocation was given by **Eric Spinner**. Special thanks to our sponsors and supporters—Cradle of Aviation Museum, Shootout for Soldiers, Long Island State Veterans Home, Hicksville Veterans Association, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band, Military Blue Star Mothers of Nassau County NY14, American Legion Riders from Greenlawn Post 1244, Patriot Guard Riders, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 82 Color Guard and Lt. Quentin Roosevelt Civil Air Patrol Cadet Squadron NY-288.



Medal recipient Christina Forrester
Photo credit: Steven Latus



Medal recipient Seabell Gilmore
Photo credit: Steven Latus

Honor Flight Long Island

On Saturday, **May 2**, 46 Long Island veterans (1 WWII, 4 Korean War and 41 Vietnam War) took off from Islip Macarthur Airport in the morning to visit the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Memorials, Arlington National Cemetery plus other sites of interest around Washington, D.C. They returned that same evening to a welcome home from the Nassau County Firefighters Pipes and Drums Band, plus family, friends and supporters.



Veterans and Guardians in front of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Photo credit: Honor Flight Long Island website

Veterans Stand Down at Mitchel Field

Held Friday, **May 8**, at the Butler Building at Mitchel Field on Charles Lindbergh Boulevard in Garden City, veterans received a free haircut, compliments of the Barber and Beauty Institute of New York (BBINY), as well as being able to get information about veterans' benefits and community resources including the Legal Service of Long Island—Veterans Rights Project and the Long Island State Veterans Home. The Nassau County Office for the Aging also shared information about their senior centers, events and monthly Veterans' Luncheons.

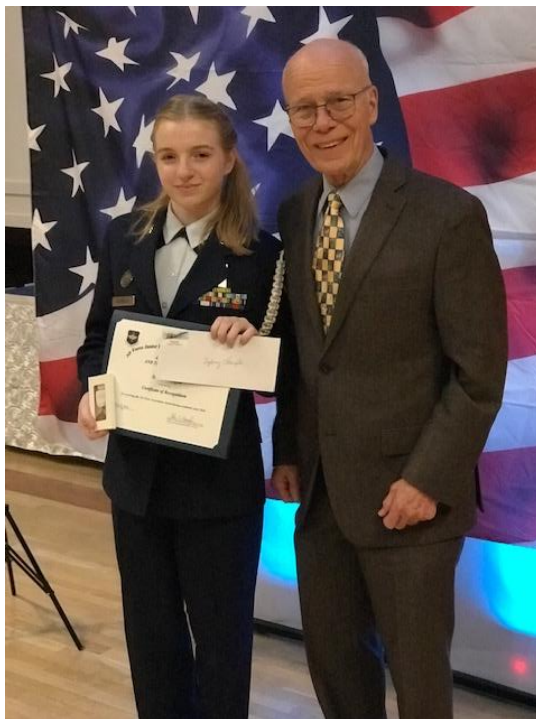
Annual Patchogue-Medford High School AFJROTC Awards Ceremony

On Friday, **May 8**, Unit NY-093 of the Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (AFJROTC) at Patchogue-Medford High School held its annual banquet at the Holbrook Country Club. These banquets include a buffet, speeches, dancing, drill performances and awards.

The AFJROTC program at Patchogue-Medford High School has been around since 1974. A military commitment is NOT a requirement, although those who do wish to enlist in the military after high school can receive a higher rank. The classes are an elective and are offered for all four years of high school. Joining the program provides a credit towards graduation, provides credit towards college-level ROTC programs and allows students to compete for scholarships. The Cadets learn self-discipline,

citizenship, a sense of responsibility, as well as the curriculum that includes Aerospace Studies, Leadership and Management, and Health and Wellness.

The winner of the AFA Outstanding Cadet of the Year Award for the Patchogue-Medford AFJROTC unit was Unit NY-093 Deputy Commander **Sydney Champlain**, who received a medal, ribbon, certificate and a check for \$250 from LIAFA.



Outstanding Cadet of the Year Sydney Champlain with LIAFA Treasurer Bill Stratemeier
Photo credit: BAM Photography

2026 Annual High School Enlistee Recognition Ceremony by *Our Community Salutes of Brookhaven*

This ceremony was held on Wednesday, **May 13**, at Sunset Harbour at 90 Colonial Dr. in East Patchogue. Our Community Salutes of Brookhaven, NY is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supporting the next generation of patriots enlisting in the U.S. Armed Services after graduation from high school. It recognizes and supports seniors who plan to enlist in the military immediately after high school graduation and provides them with resources that aid in their transition into military service. It helps the parents, guardians and families of high school seniors enlisting in the military and provides them with information and resources to support their son's or daughter's transition into the military. It helps communities provide the collective support of like-minded parents, families, educators, business leaders and veterans coming together for the purpose of honoring our nation's newest service members.

Sponsors were Renu Contracting Restoration; Bond, Schoeneck & King; Scope Education Services; USAA; Comcast; Diana Davis Spencer Foundation; American Military University; Boeing; Navy Federal Credit Union; Vistage and Fiserv.

American Legion Riders Annual Fundraiser BBQ and Blessing of the Bikes

Held **May 16** at Elmont American Legion Post 1033 at 60 Hill Ave. in Elmont. It was a warm sunny day, with the crowd enjoying the bikes as well as the food, music, raffles and a cash bar.

Kadeem M. Brown, a candidate for Nassau County Legislature, Nassau County Legislator **John Giuffre** and Nassau County Comptroller **Elaine Phillips** attended the blessing in support of the riders, veterans and community members in attendance.



Elmont American Legion Riders gathered in front of the post building

Photo credit: Hailey Fulmer/Herald Photos

2026 Annual High School Enlistee Recognition Ceremony by Our Community Salutes of Nassau County

Held on Tuesday, **May 19**, at the Nassau County Police Department Training and Intelligence Center at 1 Law Enforcement Way in Garden City. Speakers included Brigadier General **Charlone Stallworth**, Deputy Commanding General-Operations, U.S. Army Recruiting Division (Nassau County) and Major **Travis Bird**, USMC, Recruiting Station New York.

Our Community Salutes of Nassau County, NY is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supporting the next generation of patriots enlisting in the U.S. Armed Services after graduation from high school. It

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United Veterans Organization (UVO) Memorial Day Ceremony

This annual event took place on Sunday morning, **May 24**, at Veterans Plaza in Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. Long-time MC and former UVO president **Morris Miller** conducted the ceremony. UVO chaplain **Eric Spinner** performed the invocation and benediction. The guest speakers were Nassau County Veterans Service Agency Director **Ralph Esposito** and Nassau County legislator **Rose Walker**. Legislator Walker was presented with a plaque honoring her many years of support to veterans. The ceremony was kept short due to the torrential rain.



L to R at podium: Morris Miller presenting Rose Walker with the plaque.

Photo credit: John F. Scales, Jr.

Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization (LINCMO) Memorial Day Ceremony

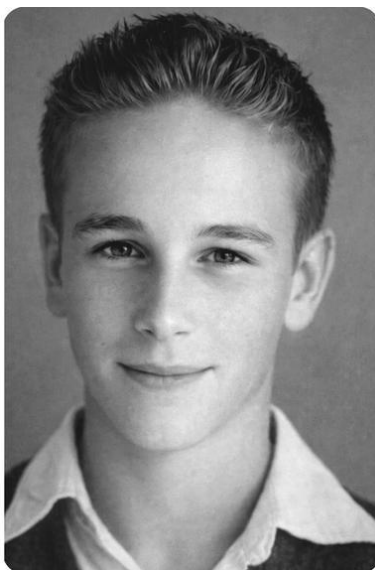
This annual event took place on Sunday afternoon, **May 24**, at Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale. Long-time MC and former LINCMO president **Morris Miller** conducted the ceremony. The honored guest speaker was Long Island National Cemetery Director **Jeffrey Taveras**.

Sailor Who Died in Pearl Harbor Attack Buried in Arkansas 85 Years Later

On Saturday, **May 30**, U.S. Navy Fireman 3rd Class **Royle Bradford Luker** was buried with full military honors at New Bethel Cemetery in Ola, Arkansas, near Plainview, where he was raised before enlisting in June 1941. He was among the 106 crewmen of the battleship USS *West Virginia* who died after the attack; he was 17 years old at the time.

The *West Virginia* was hit by at least seven torpedoes as the ship was moored at Ford Island on Battleship Row. It sank in the shallow water and came to rest on the harbor floor. Over the course of several months, the damage was patched well enough to allow the ship to be pumped dry and it was refloated on May 17, 1942. Dozens of recovered remains, initially interred at the Halawa Naval Cemetery on Oahu, were disinterred in 1947 by personnel with the American Graves Registration Service, who identified all but 34 remains. Those 34 remains were designated “non-recoverable” and buried as unknowns in what is now the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. In 2017, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, which uses forensic methods to identify the nation’s war dead, exhumed 35 caskets containing remains associated with the *West Virginia*. DNA from Royle Luker and his family were used to identify his remains.

He is survived by two nephews, Donald Bradford Henderson, John Luker and a niece, Becky Downen Lensing.



Royle Bradford Luker in undated photo
Photo credit: Cornwell Funeral Homes website

New Members Inducted into the Long Island Air & Space Hall of Fame

The 14th Annual Induction Luncheon was held on Monday, **June 8**, at the Cradle of Aviation Museum on Charles Lindbergh Boulevard in Garden City. Each year, the Long Island Air & Space Hall of Fame honors individuals who have played a major role in advancing aeronautical and technological achievement. The Hall of Fame is sponsored by GSE Dynamics, Inc., a Women-Owned Small Business and full-service engineering and manufacturing company engaged in the manufacture, assembly, and testing of military mechanical and structural components and assemblies.

This year's three inductees included:

- **Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman**, an MIT professor in its Aeronautics and Astronautics Department. A NASA astronaut (1978–1997), he flew five missions on the Space Shuttle, performed four spacewalks and worked on the Hubble Space Telescope. He later served as NASA's European Representative in Paris. Since 2001, he has taught at MIT and researches space suits and human spaceflight systems, contributing to projects like the Mars 2020 Perseverance mission.
- **Quentin Roosevelt** (1897–1918) was the youngest son of Long Island's President Theodore Roosevelt. Quentin attended Harvard University in 1915, but he dropped out when the U.S. entered World War I in 1917. Having attended a reserve officer training program since 1915, Quentin joined the newly formed 1st Reserve Aero Squadron at Hazelhurst (now Roosevelt) Field. In July 1918, he became a pilot in the 95th Aero Squadron flying Nieuport 28s in France. He had one confirmed 'kill' of a German aircraft; however, later in July, he was shot down and killed in aerial combat. Barely 20 years old, he survived just nine days in combat. He is the only child of a U.S. President to have died in combat. **Andrew Roosevelt**, a distant cousin of Quentin Roosevelt, accepted the award for the family.
- **Igor Sikorsky** (1889–1972) was a Russian-American aviation pioneer in both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. He designed the first four-engine aircraft in Russia in 1914, which was developed into a successful line of bombers during World War I. After emigrating to America in 1919, he founded the Sikorsky Manufacturing Company in 1923, based at Roosevelt Field. Sikorsky developed several successful aircraft designs, including the S-29, a twin-engine biplane airliner, and the S-38, a twin-engine ten-seat amphibian first purchased by Pan American Airways. After moving to Connecticut in 1929, Sikorsky oversaw the development of large flying boats and by 1939, the world's first successful helicopter, a line of which the company produces to this day. **Serge Sikorsky**, grandson of Igor Sikorsky, accepted the award for the family.



Holding the pictures, L to R: Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman, Andrew Roosevelt and Serge Sikorsky
Photo credit: Steven Latus

Third Annual General Needs Gala

Held on Friday, **June 12**, at Leonard's Palazzo in Great Neck, honoring **Kathy Gibson**, long-time Rotary member and General Needs volunteer, **Paule Pachter**, retired CEO of Long Island Cares, and Navy Veteran **Michael Sweeney**. The festivities included a cocktail hour, dinner, open bar, basket raffles and a silent auction.



Royle Bradford Luker in undated photo

Photo credit: Cornwell Funeral Homes website

America 250 Across the 4th LD (Legislative District)

On Saturday, **June 13**, nearly 3000 residents, veterans, families, and visitors gathered at Veterans Memorial Park in Selden for Legislator Nick Caracappa's America 250 Across the Fourth Legislative District Celebration.

From the Suffolk County Legislature's web page:

The celebration began with the Presentation of the Colors and a performance of the National Anthem by the Middle Country Central School District Choir. Opening ceremonies also included two horses from the Warrior Ranch Foundation, followed by members of the Vietnam Veterans of America, members of the 30th Virginia Regiment, and Boy Scouts of America Troop 229.

Throughout the afternoon, residents enjoyed historical re-enactments, military displays, local vendors, a classic car show, student artwork from local schools, interactive activities, and live entertainment. Historical programming included participation from the Davis Town Meeting House, along with reenactors portraying George Washington, William Floyd, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt.

A highlight of the day was the dedication of the Hometown Heroes Veterans Wall, a lasting tribute to the brave men and women who have served our nation. Legislator Caracappa recognized Eagle Scout Matthew Keraga with a Proclamation and recognized the Boy Scouts of America Troop 229 for their work in assisting with the beautification around the memorial wall and for their continued service to the community.

Legislator **Nick Caracappa** was joined by Congressman **Nick LaLota**, Suffolk County Executive **Ed Romaine**, Brookhaven Town Supervisor **Dan Panico**, fellow elected officials, veterans, community leaders, volunteers, and residents from across the Fourth Legislative District.

The celebration concluded with a grand finale procession featuring historical reenactors, veterans' organizations, and multiple volunteer groups, bringing together many of the organizations and participants who helped shape the day's events.



"George Washington" addressing the crowd

Photo credit: Facebook page of Brookhaven Town Clerk Kevin J. LaValle

Missing in America Project (MIAP) Ceremony at Long Island National Cemetery

The cremated remains of two deceased veterans were recently recovered from two different funeral homes, where they had lain unclaimed for years. On Tuesday, **June 23**, they were interred at Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale. The two deceased veterans were Marine Sergeant **Francis Robert Hanley**, who served in World War II and Korea (died on May 2, 2014), and Army Private First Class **Walter T. Cook**, who served in Vietnam (died on October 19, 2023). It was determined that Cook's infant son was already at the cemetery, so he was placed with his son. The Patriot Guard Riders and the American Legion Riders escorted the funeral procession; MIAP Chaplain **Mike Williams** conducted the service at the cemetery.



Cremains of Walter T. Cook and Francis Robert Hanley

Photo credit: Steven Latus

Town of Hempstead Annual Salute to Veterans

Held on Saturday, **June 27**, at Town Park in Point Lookout. Featured were original members of the Jackson 5, hot dog eating contest, sandcastle building and contest, volleyball tournament, family activities, food trucks, a beer garden, craft vendors, a drone show, and fireworks. Activities started at 3 PM; the concert began at 7:30 PM.

Upcoming Non-LIAFA Events (Grouped by Topic)

Community Fundraisers and Social Events

Joseph P. Dwyer Second Annual Bike Run and BBQ

Date/time: Saturday, **August 15** (rain date is August 22). Bike run registration is 10 AM–11 AM. KSU (Kickstands Up) is at 11:30 AM. BBQ runs through 3:30 PM. **Location:** Marine Corps League, 99 New York Avenue in Massapequa. **Details:** Bike run will start at Marine Corps League, travel to Eisenhower Park Veterans Memorial Plaza and return to Marine Corps League. Free BBQ, music, veterans' resources, family activities and raffles. **Requested donations/contact:** **Preregistration** donations are \$25 per rider and \$15 per passenger; **day of the event**, donations are \$30 per rider and \$20 per passenger. Call Delmar Green at (516) 456-1764 for more information.

Northport VA Medical Center Annual Appreciation Barbecue

Date/time: Saturday, **August 22**, 11 AM–3 PM, rain or shine. **Try to arrive early for best parking.** **Location:** Monsky Field, 79 Middleville Road in Northport. **Details:** For veterans and their families; music, drinks, and food by BBQ Brethren.

Veterans BBQ, Picnic and Resource Fair

RSVP required: **Date/time:** Thursday, **September 17**, 11:30 AM–2:00 PM, rain or shine. **Location:** Eisenhower Park, Parking Field 6, in East Meadow **Details:** For veterans and their families; music, drinks, and food and resource tables from veterans' groups, support organizations, and county, state and federal agencies. **RSVP** by September 14. Call (516) 572-0564, Monday-Friday, 9 AM–4 PM.

17th Annual Roslyn Rocks for the Wounded Warriors

Date/time: Saturday, **October 3**, starts at 7 PM. **Location:** Roslyn High School, 475 Round Hill Road in Roslyn Heights. **Details:** Join the Roslyn Rescue Fire Company as they proudly present the 17th Annual Roslyn Rocks, featuring Jay Siegel's Tokens, Vito Picone and the Elegants, Lala Brooks, and Dennis Tufano. All acts feature original lead singers! Don't miss this one! All proceeds go toward helping injured heroes. **Tickets:** \$45 per person. Call (516) 587-7187 or send a check payable to NCCFF-OWW to NCCFF-OWW, 155 Mineola Avenue, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577; include your name, address, phone number and email address with the check.

Senior Veterans' Monthly Lunch

RSVP required: **Date/time:** Second Friday of each month, doors open at 11:30 AM. **Two Locations:** Bethpage Community Center, 103 Grumman Road West in Bethpage and St. Mary's Knights of Columbus, 78 Hempstead Avenue in Lynbrook. **Details:** **RSVP** at www.nassaucountyny.gov/aging-events by the first Friday of each month for the following week's lunch.

Volunteer, Donation, and Community Support Opportunities

National Day of Service & Remembrance

Registration required: **Date/time:** Saturday, **September 12**, 10 AM–1 PM. **Location:** Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Avenue in Farmingdale. **Details:** Volunteers will help clean headstones and beautify these sacred grounds in tribute to our military members, veterans, first responders, and their families. Join communities across the country as we honor the nearly 3,000 lives lost on September 11, 2001, and pay tribute to the first responders and service members who answered the call in the days that followed. **Register** at www.CarryTheLoad.org.

Local Veteran Information and Recognition

POW/MIA Night Vigil Ceremony

Date/time: Friday, **September 18**, arrival time 6:30 PM, ceremony begins at 7 PM. **Location:** Eisenhower Park, Veterans Memorial Plaza, Parking Field 6 in East Meadow. **Details:** To honor the POWs and MIAs from Nassau County by reading the names of these local heroes. Call Ralph Esposito at (516) 572-6565 for more information.

Honor Flight Long Island

Date/time: Saturday, **September 26**, 7 AM–10 PM; attendees are encouraged to arrive one hour early. **Location:** MacArthur Airport, 100 Arrival Avenue in Ronkonkoma. **Details:** Honor Flight recognizes American World War II, Korean War and Vietnam veterans by flying them to and from Washington, D.C. to see their memorials **at no cost**. The flights, deluxe tour bus service, lunch, dinner and T-shirts are **FREE** to our veterans. Flights depart from MacArthur Airport (ISP) in Ronkonkoma at 7:30 AM and arrive at Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI) at 8:30 AM. The return flight leaves BWI at 9 PM and arrives at ISP at 10 PM. Both flights are via Breeze Airways. **Please see the *Announcements, Benefits and Resources/Local Veteran Information and Recognition* section of this newsletter for details on how to apply.**

Veteran Benefits and Resource Events

Women's Luncheon, Veterans Resource Fair & Food Distribution Event

Date/time: Saturday, **August 29**, 11 AM–2 PM. **Location:** Long Island Cares, Center for Community Engagement (CCE), 75 Davids Drive in Hauppauge. **Details:** *** Women Veterans only! *** Veterans will receive lunch, helpful resources from a variety of vendors, and food to take home. Sponsored by PSEG Long Island. For more information, please call Justin Berbig at (631) 582-3663, extension 151.

Mega Career Expo

Registration required: **Date/time:** Thursday, **September 10**, 10 AM–3 PM. **Early entrance from 9 AM–10 AM for seniors, veterans and individuals who are physically challenged.** **Location:** Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Turnpike in Uniondale. **Details:** Offering positions in healthcare, education, manufacturing, technology, government, retail, MTA and LIRR, hospitality, armed forces, law enforcement, energy, utilities, and construction trades. Hosted by the Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs Workforce Development Unit.

Call Runnie Myles at (516) 402-7372 or Pamela Douglas at (516) 571-2039, or send an email to workforce@nassaucountyny.gov for more information.

Register at <https://app.nassaucountyny.gov/oma/event-registration/event-form>.

Veterans Benefits and Information Seminar

ENCOURAGED TO BRING DD FORM 214: **Date/time:** Thursday, **October 29**, 10 AM–12 Noon. **Location:** American Legion Post 1066, 66 Veterans Boulevard in Massapequa. **Details:** Briefings will cover VA disability compensation, Aid & Attendance benefits, VA survivor and dependent compensation, veterans' burial benefits, property tax exemptions and other veterans' information. **Bring:** DD Form 214 to file for benefits or speak to a Veterans Service Officer (VSO). Call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 with any questions.

Veterans Annual Winter Stand Down

Date/time: Tuesday, **November 24**, 9 AM–1 PM. **Location:** Freeport Armory, 63 Babylon Turnpike in Freeport. **Details:** It will again be a drive-through-only event; the items distributed will be clothes, winter jackets, toiletries, and nonperishable foods. Information on housing and peer counseling will also be available. **Bring:** Each veteran is required to display proper veteran identification; the veteran must be present to receive donations. Call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 with any questions.

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Announcements, Benefits, Programs and Resources

Policy, Benefits, and Official Updates

Guard VA Benefits Act

This act aims to protect veterans from fraud by unaccredited representatives who charge fees for assistance with VA benefits claims. This legislation reinstates penalties for those who engage in such predatory practices, ensuring that veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to without being exploited. Penalties include a class A misdemeanor charge and civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation. Additionally, it creates a veterans' services fund to support certified organizations that assist veterans with their benefits claims. The bill was signed into law by Governor Hochul on November 5, 2025.

New Veterans Property Tax Exemption (Nassau County)

Recent amendments to New York state law allow the county, towns, incorporated villages and school districts the option to offer a property tax exemption to veterans with a service-connected 100% permanent and total VA disability compensation rating. The taxing authority in your area must opt in to this amendment for the veteran to receive the full property benefit.

Veterans will be eligible for the new tax exemption by meeting ALL the following criteria:

- The veteran must be honorably discharged or discharged under honorable conditions.
- The veteran must have a VA disability combined rating of 100% total and permanent.
- The property must be the veteran's primary residence and must be located in Nassau County.

Veterans and eligible family members can apply in person by visiting the Nassau County Assessment Office at 240 Old Country Road, 4th Floor, Room 402 in Mineola.

Veterans will need to bring the following items when applying for this exemption:

- DD Form 214
- Most recent VA Disability Award Letter showing a **100% Total & Permanent rating**
- Valid photo ID

Call the Nassau County Assessor's Office at (516) 571-1500 for more information. The Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 can also help.

NOTE: Call the Assessor's Office for the most up-to-date information since the law has been amended several times over the last 8 months. Also, this is a **State** law so veterans in other New York counties should contact their county's assessor's office.

Changes for New York Drivers under New DMV Point System

This change, effective February 16, 2026, applies to ALL NYS drivers, not just veterans.

The DMV assigns points for certain traffic violations. If you get 10 points in 24 months, your driver license may be suspended. Legal experts expect the 24-month look-back period to apply to violations that occurred before the new rules take effect.

Under the new system, points will remain active for 24 months—a six-month increase that creates a longer window during which multiple violations could lead to license penalties. The threshold for license suspension is also changing. While the old system triggered potential suspension at 11 points within 18 months, the new framework will lower this threshold to 10 points within 24 months.

For more details, go to <https://traffictickets.com/blog/new-york-dmv-overhauls-point-system-with-tougher-penalties-for-drivers/>.

Changes to How Disabled Veterans Can Get VA Automobile Grants

Qualified disabled veterans who have previously received a Department of Veterans Affairs automobile grant to purchase a specially equipped vehicle 30 or more years ago may now be eligible to apply for another one.

The Advancing Uniform Transportation Opportunities for Veterans Act, known as the AUTO Act (signed into law in January 2023), allows veterans with qualifying service-connected disabilities to receive an automobile grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs every 10 years instead of just once in their lifetimes. Under the new law, veterans who haven't received a vehicle grant in 30 years are immediately eligible to apply for another one; and they can then apply for a new grant every 10 years.

Eligibility requirements haven't changed. Veterans and active-duty service members qualify for the automobile grant if they have a service-connected disability that includes at least one of these conditions:

- Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both feet
- Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both hands
- Permanent decreased vision in both eyes, meaning 20/200 vision or less in the better eye with glasses; or greater than 20/200 vision but with a visual field defect that reduces peripheral vision to 20 degrees or less in the better eye
- Severe burn injuries
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Ankylosis in one or both knees or hips (this qualifies for adaptive equipment grants only, not the automobile purchase grant)

The disability must be service-connected or treated as service-connected under 38 U.S.C. 1151, which covers disabilities resulting from VA medical care.

The AUTO Act also updated how VA classifies certain vehicle modifications. The law allows VA to pay for specific modifications as medical services rather than only through the adaptive equipment program. These modifications include van lifts, raised doors, raised roofs, air conditioning and wheelchair tie-downs for passenger use. This change matters because it provides another pathway for veterans to obtain necessary vehicle modifications through VA health care rather than solely through the benefits system.

For more details and how to apply, please go to <https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/veterans-can-now-get-va-auto-grants-every-10-years-heres-what-changed.html>.

VA Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) Grants

The VA Home Improvements and Structural Alterations Benefit (HISA) provides financial assistance to disabled veterans with service-connected medical conditions (and sometimes non-service-connected conditions) who require modifications to their homes, whether owned or rented by the veteran.

This benefit provides medically necessary improvements and structural alterations to Veterans/ Servicemembers' primary residence for the following purposes:

- Allowing entrance to or exit from the primary residence
- Use of essential lavatory and sanitary facilities (e.g., roll-in showers)
- Allowing accessibility to kitchen or bathroom sinks or counters (e.g., lowering counters/sinks)
- Improving entrance paths or driveways in immediate area of the home to facilitate access to the home through construction of permanent ramping
- Improving plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to installation of home medical equipment

You may use HISA benefits to pay for more than one home alteration, until you exhaust your lifetime benefit. HISA benefits approved by VA for use in a particular home alteration but unused by you will remain available for future use.

\$6800 lifetime limitation:

- A service-connected condition
- A non-service-connected condition of a veteran rated 50% or more service-connected.
- A non-service-connected condition of a veteran in receipt of benefits under Title 38, USC Section 1151 for the condition requiring such benefit.

\$2000 lifetime limitation:

- All other veterans receiving medical services furnished under Title 38, USC Sections 1710(a)(2) and (3).

DO NOT START WORK BEFORE APPROVAL: Do not start a modification until you receive an approval letter from Prosthetic & Sensory Aids Service (PSAS).

For more information, go to <https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/HISA2.asp>.

Veteran Identification, Records, and Discounts

Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix)

Per the Vet Tix website:

Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix) is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit that supports all branches of currently-serving military, including the Guard and Reserves, honorably discharged or retired veterans of all eras, their families, including immediate family of those killed in action, and caregivers of Vet Tixers. Vet Tix provides free or deeply discounted event tickets with a nominal delivery fee to attend sporting events, concerts, performing arts and family activities. Attending these types of community events improves morale and strengthens family bonds while encouraging service members and Veterans to stay engaged with local communities.

Since 2008, Vet Tix is proud to announce that to date 39,689,512 event tickets have been donated to Vet Tix in all 50 states and Washington, DC to support our military, veterans, and their families. Vet

Tix is a 99% back-to-program charity (independently audited for the past 16 years). Visit VetTix.org to learn more, and follow them on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

Nassau County DD Form 214 Recording and Veterans Discount Photo ID Card

Nassau County Clerk **Maureen O'Connell** offers a Veterans Recognition Program, allowing veterans the opportunity to record their veteran discharge papers (DD Form 214) free of charge with the Nassau County Clerk's Office. Upon recording these documents, the veteran will be eligible to receive a Veterans Discount Photo ID Card, which provides discounts at participating businesses throughout Nassau County.

For a downloadable list of participating businesses, go to: [Copy of Participating Businesses - Database](#).

For more information, visit the Nassau County Clerk's website at www.nassaucountyny.gov/clerk.

Be on the Alert for Veteran Charity Scams

SCAM ALERT: Making a donation to a veterans charity is a great idea, but if it's a charity that you've never heard of or one that has solicited you in person or by telephone, mail or email, it's worth taking a few minutes to check it out before writing that check, reaching for your wallet or submitting your credit card information. Phony charities claiming to support police, firefighters, veterans or sick children are not uncommon, so it makes sense to do some research before handing over your money. Websites like Charity Navigator and Charity Watch provide information about many charities, including data on their fundraising practices, and often highlight suspect charities. The sites are free and may save you from enriching scammers and depriving legitimate charities of needed donations.

Free Discount Drug Program for Veterans

VeteranRx offers up to 80 percent off on brand-name and generic prescription drugs for veterans and their families. The program includes more than 35,000 pharmacies around the country, including all major chains. No medical service connection to the VA is necessary. There are no enrollment forms, no age or income requirements, no waiting periods, no eligibility requirements, no exclusions, covers pre-existing conditions, no claim forms to file, no annual or lifetime limits. This program has no service connection requirements. Ask your pharmacist to run both your insurance and the savings card and use the one that saves you the most money. Sometimes the free savings card will offer better prices than your insurance copay. Any veteran and family member of a U.S. Veteran with or without prescription coverage can use this free card. It even covers pet medications. Go to <https://www.veteranrx.com/> for more info.

Community Notices and Public Safety

Navy Seeks Interviews with Former Grumman Employees at Calverton

The U.S. Navy is requesting interviews with former employees, or their surviving family members, who worked at the Grumman-operated Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant in Calverton between 1954 and 1996. These interviews will aid in the Navy's environmental remediation at the site, which covers approximately 6000 acres.

Since Grumman vacated the premises in 1996, the site has been a subject of controversy over chemical contamination, with dangerous chemicals such as perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and 1,4-dioxane that have leaked into the Peconic River and threaten the groundwater in the area.

The Navy said it is particularly interested in employees' knowledge of:

- Past operations and activities
- Waste management practices
- Building utilization
- Grounds maintenance
- Aircraft fabrication practices on site
- Any other relevant information, both on- and off-property.

ACTION NEEDED: Any former employee at Grumman's Calverton facility interested in participating in an interview or in learning more is asked to send an email to NAVFAC_ML_PAO_ALL@us.navy.mil or call 800-906-9339.

Participation in the interviews is completely voluntary and all information shared during the interviews will be kept confidential.

Veteran Functions at Eisenhower Park

PERMIT REQUIRED: All veterans organizations that wish to hold an event, ceremony or other function at the park must contact the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency to get a permit. This requirement protects the organization as well as the park since the NCVSA holds an insurance policy covering any accidents or injuries that may occur during such events. Please call Ralph Esposito at (516) 572-6512 or Paul Vista at (516) 572-6521.

Veterans Courts and Legal Assistance

Veterans Traffic Court (Nassau County)

The Nassau County Traffic and Parking Violations Agency (NCTPVA) at 801 Axinn Avenue in Garden City holds monthly traffic court sessions on the third Thursday afternoon of each month, dedicated to assisting veterans and active-duty military members with resolving violations. NCTPVA will work with the District Court to bundle all traffic violations together. This program is a one-time-only opportunity so don't waste it on minor violations.

For more information, please call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565. Also see the following link: www.nassaucountyny.gov/4917/Veterans-Traffic-Court.

Veterans Treatment Court (Nassau County)

U.S. military veterans charged with minor nonviolent offenses may qualify for reduced charges or penalties by participating in a court-supervised treatment program. To apply, a pre-screening questionnaire must be completed and forwarded to the district attorney's office. You must then contact the Veterans Treatment Court Project Director to set a clinical evaluation for the purpose of determining treatment needs. If you are found to be eligible, you will be contacted by the D.A.'s office

and a plea offer will be proposed. For more information, please visit their website at www.nassaucountyny.gov/4919/Veterans-Treatment-Court.

Volunteers are also being sought to be mentors; training will be provided. Mentors should be honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces prepared to commit for a minimum of six months. Active employees of the Unified Courts System, active members of law enforcement or members of any other organization that may present a conflict of interest with the mentor program are not eligible. If interested, please call Rosemary Walker at (516) 493-4145.

Veterans Legal Assistance Program

Receive a FREE consultation with attorneys who specialize in elder law, taxes, wills and estates, family law, VA benefits and claims, disability, discharge upgrades, employment, housing, bankruptcy, debtor/creditor matters, Medicare/Medicaid, landlord/tenant disputes, immigration, and criminal law. For more information, email the Hofstra Legal Assistance Project at VLAP@hofstra.edu or call (516) 463-7302.

Veterans' Rights Project

The Veterans' Rights Project is able to assist any person who has previous military experience regardless of discharge status. All services are free. Services include housing, family law, public benefits, re-entry services and discharge upgrades.

Their website is <https://legalservicesli.org/resources-self-help/veterans/>.

Contact information:

- Hempstead Office: 1 Helen Keller Way, 5th Floor, phone (516) 292-8100
- Islandia Office: 1757 Veterans Highway, Suite 50, phone (631) 232-2400
- Riverhead Office: 400 West Main St., Suite 200, phone (631) 369-1112

Veterans Defense Program

Justice-involved veterans often do not have the funds to hire an attorney and are represented by public defenders. Public defense attorneys are rarely trained to adequately represent veterans who suffer from the invisible wounds of war or to translate the combat experience of their clients to explain resulting criminal behavior. This program provides training, support, and legal assistance to promote trauma-informed effective representation of veterans and service members. The Veteran Defense Program (VDP) is a project of the New York State Defenders Association (NYSDA), a statewide nonprofit organization working to improve the quality and scope of publicly-supported legal representation for people who cannot afford a lawyer. For information and assistance, please call Director Gary A. Horton at (585) 219-4862 or email him at ghorton@nysda.org. Their website is nysda.org/page/VDP.

Transportation Programs

Nassau County Transportation Program by GoGoGrandparent—* Funding Discontinued *****

The Nassau County GoGoGrandparent program for senior veterans provided free transportation, but it was a pilot program. **Unfortunately, the funding for this county program has been discontinued.** The service still exists, but it's no longer free. You can still call (855) 464-6872 to schedule a ride, **but you will have to pay for it.**

Nassau County Veterans Service Agency Transportation Program

This program provides free transportation for scheduled VA medical appointments. The veteran will be picked up at his or her residence and driven in a Nassau County Veterans Service Agency vehicle to a designated VA facility.

Locations that are serviced for transportation are:

- VA Clinic, East Meadow
- VA Clinic, Valley Stream
- VA Vet Center, Hicksville
- VA Main Hospital, Northport

SCHEDULE TWO WEEKS AHEAD: *All appointments for transportation are required to be reserved two weeks prior to your scheduled VA appointment.* Please call Jessica DeLisi (VSA Transportation Coordinator) at (516) 572-6526 to schedule transportation.

Volunteer drivers needed: The Nassau County Veterans Service Agency is looking for volunteers to transport veterans to and from the aforementioned VA facilities. Please donate any time you have to give on Monday–Friday from 7 AM to 5 PM You pick whatever times and dates work for you. Nassau County will provide the vehicles; a valid New York State driver's license is required. To volunteer, please call Jessica DeLisa at (516) 572-6526. The need is urgent so please help if you can!

VHUC Veterans Transportation Program

Through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the VHA-UBER Health Connect (VUHC) program offers another way for eligible veterans to access transportation to VA-authorized appointments. To qualify, veterans must meet the following criteria:

- Be service connected for 30% or more
- Be traveling to/from treatment for a service-connected condition
- Receive a VA pension or disability
- Have an income that does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate

Please call Primary BT Representative Patricia Sangenito at (631) 261-4400, ext. 5579/2661 or Alternate BT Representative Anne O'Rourke at (631) 854-6600 for more information. Both are with Northport VA. (Note: "BT" stands for Beneficiary Travel.)

Food, Claims, and Outreach Services

VetMart Food Pantry

The VetMart food pantry at the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency is located at 2201 Hempstead Turnpike, Building Q, East Meadow. Building Q is located on the property of the Nassau University Medical Center (NUMC), around the back of the property.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Veterans may register at the food pantry for eligibility with a Veterans ID Card or DD Form 214 Military Discharge Form. *(Note: Other forms of veteran identification may be accepted, but eligibility will be at the discretion of the agency).* Once registered with the proper veteran documentation, the veteran may come to the food pantry once per week for food distributions; toiletries and other supplies are issued monthly. The Veterans Food Pantry is open Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 12 Noon *(closed Weekends and Holidays)*. For more information/questions about the food pantry or directions to the facility, veterans may call (516) 572-6565.

Nassau County VSA Outreach Events Available

These events are open to all veterans groups based in Nassau County. They include:

- Intake of veteran's contact information and digital storage of veteran's DD Form 214
- Access to veteran's VA digital folder (with processed VA Power of Attorney)
- Access to local experts to expedite VA disability benefit claims
- Option to file future VA claims remotely
- Presentations on the PACT Act and Aid and Attendance benefits
- Assistance in applying for VA Healthcare enrollment

Call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 to schedule an event for your veterans group.

Nassau County Veterans Service Agency—Filing VA Claims

Speak with a trained and certified Veterans Service Officer from the Nassau County VSA to help process your VA benefits, such as claims for:

- VA Disability Compensation for eligible veterans who got sick or injured while serving and whose condition worsened due to military service.
- Survivors Pension (DIC) Dependency Indemnity Compensation for the surviving spouse, child or parent of a service member who died in the line of duty or the survivor of a veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness.
- Aid & Attendance Benefit for qualified wartime veterans and their surviving spouses who require increased care due to disability or advanced age. Intended to help individuals cover the costs of in-home nursing care, assisted living or nursing home care.
- Burial benefits for eligible veterans to help cover burial, funeral and transportation costs.

FREE SERVICE / BRING DD FORM 214: Veterans and their families can call (516) 572-6565 to find out more about these VA benefits and to schedule an appointment. Please bring the veteran's DD Form 214 to your appointment; all services are provided free of charge.

Veterans Project by Long Island Cares

This project encompasses several veterans' service programs such as a mobile pantry, job search assistance and Military Appreciation Tuesdays hosted at pantries located in Huntington Station, Bethpage, Hampton Bays, Lindenhurst, Valley Stream and Freeport. For more information, please call (631) 582-3663, extension 142.

Their website is www.licares.org/what-we-do/feed-long-island/veterans-project.

General Needs Ltd.

Located in East Northport, this is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that distributes NEW clothing as well as personal items such as toiletries to homeless veterans. If you would like to donate, volunteer, sponsor a distribution or if your business or organization would like to assist General Needs (or if you would just like more information), please call them at (631) 266-1672 or email them at Info@GeneralNeeds.org. You can also visit their website at www.GeneralNeeds.org or go to their Facebook page to see any upcoming events.

Mental Health, Peer Support, and Training

Be the One App Now Available

CRISIS RESOURCE: For veterans in crisis, a new app for both Apple and Android devices offers guidance and community resources. The *Be the One* app was developed by Columbia University's Lighthouse Project and tailored to The American Legion's *Be the One* suicide prevention mission. It's available on both Apple's App Store and Google Play and uses the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), that gives anyone anywhere a simple series of questions to ask to determine if a veteran is at risk of suicide, and the severity and immediacy of that risk.

The app can be installed and run on the iPhone, the iPad and Android phones. One of the app's key features is privacy. Your name, address and phone number are not requested or recorded; only your ZIP code is disclosed so that local resources can be shown.

Schedule *Be the One* Training for Your Post for 2026

The American Legion has partnered with the Columbia University Lighthouse Project to bring in-person training as well as virtual training to Legion Family members. To schedule an in-person training session, email Wendy Lakso at wendy.lakso@nyspi.columbia.edu. She is the director of partnerships, and veteran and military initiatives for the Lighthouse Project.

The online 90-minute virtual training sessions will continue through 2026. They teach the Columbia Protocol that supports suicide risk assessment through a series of six simple questions. All attendees will be asked to complete an online survey before the class and upon completion. These surveys help track the effectiveness of the training and allow us to plan for future development. Go to

<https://www.legion.org/advocacy/be-the-one/be-the-one-training> for a list of upcoming online virtual sessions.

Center of Excellence at SUNY Old Westbury

SUNY Old Westbury is home to the only Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success (CEVSS) in New York State.

CEVSS:

- Provides a single point of contact to coordinate support services for veteran students, regardless of their branch or duration of service.
- Supports veterans with admissions, registration, financial aid, veterans' benefits, academic advising and career development.
- Facilitates support through disabilities services and physical, emotional and mental health counseling as well as all other services available to students.
- Provides career advice and networking opportunities to help veteran students make successful transitions to college and the civilian workforce.
- Facilitates internship opportunities to provides hands-on experience and increase employment opportunities after graduation.
- Assists with employment resources to help veteran students find job openings, create resumes and learn interview skills.

Point of contact:

Jennifer Jaikaran, LMSW
Director, CEVSS
(516) 274-7768
jaikaranj@oldwestbury.edu

CEC Health Care Veteran Support Group

Weekly meetings are held every Wednesday from 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM at the Merrick Library at 2279 Merrick Ave. in Merrick. Contact Carolyn Cerky at (516) 316-0155.

CEC Health Care has its offices at 2146 Jackson Ave. in Seaford, where they offer psychiatric care and evaluation, mental health counseling and therapy, and treatment services for addiction and substance abuse. Their phone number is (516) 622-8888, ext. 2; their website is cechealthcare.org.

CN Guidance and Counseling Services

All services by this nonprofit organization are free for veterans or loved ones of veterans. Services are available in the community or via telehealth and include outreach and engagement, peer support and linkages to community resources. They also provide referrals and warm handoffs to programs within CN Guidance based on eligibility, including therapy, medication management, medication-assisted treatment for substance abuse, case management and primary care physician. For more information, please call (516) 246-0614 or (516) 246-0621 or send an email to vetservices@centralnassau.org.

Nassau Vet Center

They offer confidential help for veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. Their services include counseling for needs such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST). They can also connect you with more support in VA and your community.

They are located at 970 Broadway in Hicksville; their phone number is (516) 348-0088. Need help after hours? Their call center is open 24/7; the number is (877) 927-8387.

Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project (Suffolk County)

A joint initiative of the Suffolk County United Veterans and the Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency, it serves veterans, service members and their families with post-service transitional issues such as PTSD and TBI (traumatic brain injury); a diagnosis is NOT required for attendance. All groups are confidential and anonymous. They also provide services to student veterans at numerous Long Island college campuses and monthly community outreach in various locations. For more information, please call (631) 853-8345 or send an email to vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov. They also have a Facebook page.

Nassau County Joseph P. Dwyer Vet2Vet Peer Networking Groups

Vet2Vet consists of small groups of veterans who meet weekly to share knowledge, provide mutual support and share resources. Confidential and open to all veterans regardless of discharge status. Free to attend; no pre-registration is required. Meetings are at: Mental Health Association, 16 Main St. in Hempstead at 5:15 PM on Mondays and 6:30 PM on Wednesdays; Levittown Public Library, 1 Bluegrass Lane in Levittown at 2 PM on Thursdays (biweekly). There are also spouse/partner meetings at 6:30 PM on Tuesdays and women-only meetings at 6:30 PM on Wednesdays, both at Mental Health Association, 16 Main St. in Hempstead (park in the municipal lot across the street; use the side parking lot and side entrance closest to the gated area.) No pre-registration is necessary.

For more information, please call (516) 489-2322, extension 1213. Their website is <https://veteranshealthalliance.org/nassau-county-pfc-dwyer/>.

Suffolk County Joseph P. Dwyer Vet2Vet Peer Networking Groups

Vet2Vet consists of small groups of veterans who meet weekly to share knowledge, provide mutual support and share resources. Confidential and open to all veterans regardless of discharge status. Free to attend; no pre-registration is required. Meetings are at: Liberty Village, 600 Albany Ave. in Amityville at 6 PM on Mondays; Liberty Landing, 58 Portion Road in Lake Ronkonkoma at 4 PM on Wednesdays; **Seniors 60 and over only**—Rose Caracappa Senior Center, 739 Route 25A in Mount Sinai at 10 AM on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. There are also women-veterans-only Zoom meetings at 11:30 AM-12:30 PM on the first and third Saturday of each month (meeting ID: 932 2123 8672) and women-only MST (Military Sexual Trauma) Group Zoom meetings at 6 PM on Mondays (meeting ID: 886 6132 0754). No pre-registration is necessary. For more information, please call (631) 853-8345 or send an email to vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov. Their website is <https://mhaw.org/dwyer/>.

Volunteer, Donation, and Community Support Opportunities

Volunteer Drivers Wanted for Veterans—Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

DAV is looking for volunteer drivers to help veterans get to VA medical appointments. A valid New York State driver's license is required. For more information, please send an email to Robert.Erdody@va.gov or call (631) 235-8220. For a volunteer application, please send an email to Jennifer.Pohl2@va.gov or call (631) 261-4400, extension 7182.

Nassau County Firefighters Operation Wounded Warrior (NCFF-OWW)

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization **not** affiliated with the Wounded Warrior Project or any other Operation Wounded Warrior organization, the NCFF-OWW is committed to helping those who put their lives in harm's way to protect the rights granted to us, the citizens of the United States of America. Their mission is to boost the morale of service members wounded in the line of duty. The NCFF-OWW works closely with military representatives of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington DC, the Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Liberty, NC and the Naval Hospital in Camp Lejeune, NC. Together, they ensure that useful clothing, personal entertainment electronics, and get-well cards are properly channeled to recovering service personnel. Donations are brought down to Bethesda Naval Hospital and other Wounded Warrior centers via Fire Truck Caravan. Firefighters from throughout the Greater New York area join their 'parade' from New York to military hospitals in the south. Volunteers are also welcome to join their ranks, even if you are not a firefighter! The NCFF-OWW is comprised of firefighter and EMS volunteers throughout Nassau County who conduct numerous fundraising events throughout the year to help meet their goal of providing material and moral support to the wounded men and women of our Armed Forces. Each year's efforts culminate with a personal visit of NCFF-OWW representatives to each of the military hospitals in the area to meet with our brave wounded warriors and express their gratitude for the sacrifices that they have endured for our country. In addition to collecting items and visiting our wounded service personnel, the NCFF-OWW organizes, on behalf of the Nassau County fire service, welcome-home receptions for local service members who have recovered from serious injuries. Donations are accepted and greatly appreciated. Please visit their website at www.ncff-oww.org for more information.

Veterans News UVO Long Island is looking for volunteers to act as crew members for its weekly show on public access TV (training will be provided.) The show airs on Cablevision channel 115 on Mondays at 6:30 PM and Cablevision channel 20 on Fridays at 6:30 PM. It is also on at various times on Verizon FIOS channel 36, on Lynbrook and Malverne public access channels, on public access MNN TV Network in Manhattan or any time on YouTube by entering *Veterans News UVO*. The crew meets at the North Shore TV Studio at 1111 Marcus Ave., Suite LL27 in Lake Success on the last Tuesday of the month to tape the program. For more information, please email Ed Aulman at mardiv1@optonline.net, or call him at (516) 921-0595.

Donate a Bicycle to Beacon House to Help a Veteran

Beacon House provides housing in forty-two locations throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties. On any given day, over 255 men, women, and children from the tri-state area benefit from programs that address homelessness, physical disabilities, PTSD, TBI, mental health issues and addiction. Non-veterans, too, have access to housing, drug/alcohol addiction services and job skills/readiness

development programs. Email Ed Aulman at mardiv1@optonline.net or call him at (516) 921-0595. A charitable donation receipt will be provided by Beacon House.

Local Veteran Information and Recognition

Walls of Honor

See Note at end of paragraph. The Walls of Honor is a place of remembrance within Veterans Memorial Plaza at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. Please note—these are honor walls, not memorial walls, and are open to all currently serving and to all veterans with an honorable discharge, living or deceased, and who are current or former Nassau County residents. There is a \$100 application fee for each name to be engraved. An application is toward the end of this newsletter. **NOTE: The Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund is currently not accepting applications.**

Local Website for Veterans

We-Are-Vets.us is a local Long Island website presenting a mix of information, history and memories for active-duty troops, veterans and interested civilians. Eric Spinner is the webmaster while Gary Glick, Marvin Gold, Pat Yngstrom and Bernard Fradkin make up the rest of the team. Their website is www.we-are-vets.us.

Honor Flight Long Island

Honor Flight recognizes American World War II, Korean War and Vietnam veterans by flying them to and from Washington, D.C. to see their memorials **at no cost**. The flights, deluxe tour bus service, lunch, dinner and T-shirts are **FREE** to our veterans. Flights depart from MacArthur Airport (ISP) in Ronkonkoma and arrive at Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI). **APPLY TO JOIN**

WAIT LIST: You must submit an application to get on their wait list, where you will be assigned to a flight on a first-come, first-served basis by order of application date. It will be approximately four to five months after applying before you are assigned to a flight. You can download and print an application to mail or you can fill out an online application. Go to <http://www.honorflightlongisland.org/general-9> to do either one. You can find out more information on this same website or you can call Jamie Bowden at (631) 702-2423 or send an email to jbowden@southamptontownny.gov.

Honor Flight Long Island is also looking for Guardian volunteers. Guardians escort the veterans on the aircraft, accompany them throughout the day and make sure our veterans have everything they need for a memorable experience. Prospective Guardians must complete an application and must pay their own way, an expense of \$400.

Prospective Guardians, please note:

- Spouses are NOT eligible to serve as Family Guardians.
- All Guardians must attend the Mandatory Guardian Orientation. A flexible schedule will be created so each Guardian can make one of the several sessions.
- Every Guardian must be between 18-66 years of age or be in peak physical condition and able to handle the rigors of the day (i.e., pushing a wheelchair, extensive walking, bad weather).
- Guardians pay \$400 for the privilege to escort these veterans to D.C.

- Guardians DO NOT need to submit the \$400 donation until it is your turn to fly.
- Guardians will be contacted by Honor Flight Long Island when they have been scheduled for an upcoming flight.

For information on filing a Guardian application, either online or by downloading the form and mailing or emailing a completed form, please visit <https://www.honorflightlongisland.org/copy-of-veteran>.

If you wish to make a donation to support Honor Flight Long Island in its mission, please go to <https://www.honorflightlongisland.org/support-our-mission> or mail a check to Honor Flight Long Island, c/o Southampton Town, 116 Hampton Road, Southampton, NY 11968. Honor Flight Long Island is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; all donations are fully tax-deductible.

MedEquip Medical Alert Device with Monitoring—FREE for Veterans

This device (available as a pendant or a wristband) with Stat-VA data is the only medical device of its kind that incorporates veteran health information. All you need to do is **press the button** and a responder will know who and where you are and handle the rest. You do not need to have a pre-existing condition to qualify.

- No monthly or subscription fees
- 24/7 responders
- Coast to coast connection
- HIPAA compliant
- Joint Commission Accredited
- GSA approved program
- No contract to sign
- Service can be terminated at any time.
- Fall Detection (available)

Ask your VA doctor or clinician about the **MedEquip Alert with Monitoring. The device must be ordered using GSA# GS-35F-202GA.** You can also call (844) 435-7808 or visit <https://www.medequipalert.com/veterans/> for more info.

Vehicle, Toll, and Military Record Resources

New York Vehicle Registration Fee Refund for New Active-Duty Personnel

REFUND OPPORTUNITY: Active-duty personnel may request a New York DMV registration-fee refund if they entered the U.S. Armed Forces after registering a vehicle, will not use the registration, and the registration is not revoked or suspended. Use DMV Refund Form MV-215, available at <https://dmv.ny.gov/forms/mv215.pdf>. Entry into service must be documented by a commanding officer. Questions: dmv.sm.VeteransLiaison@dmv.ny.gov.

E-ZPass Disabled Veterans Non-Revenue Program

The New York State Thruway Authority offers free, unlimited travel anywhere on the Thruway to certain qualifying disabled veterans. A disabled veteran who obtains a fee-exempt vehicle registration from the

New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) may enroll in the Authority's Disabled Veteran Non-Revenue E-ZPass Program. Eligibility is *not* determined by percent-disabled designations, specialty license plates or other similar criteria.

ACTION NEEDED: You must find out whether you are eligible for a fee-exempt registration before applying for the program by completing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [Form 21-4502](#) (automobile and adaptive equipment) and send to your assigned VA Regional Office, either in NYC or Buffalo. The VA will rate your claim, and if approved, you will be notified. Please call the Toll-Free VA number for questions about filling out Form 21-4502 at (800) 827-1000 (hearing-impaired TDD line (800) 829-4833).

The vehicle must be in the name of the disabled veteran applying for the program. Your Tag may be used if you need to travel in another vehicle, but you must be present in that vehicle, and the vehicle must be a passenger (2-axle, 4-tire) vehicle. Veterans who are approved for the program are asked to send in a renewal application and updated fee exempt registration every two years based on the expiration date of the fee-exempt registration.

If you travel on roadways and tolling facilities offering E-ZPass other than the NYS Thruway or outside of New York State, you must establish a revenue account by completing the [E-ZPass Application for Disabled Veteran Revenue Plan](#) (TA-W5080) in order to use your Tag. *(This revenue account form is only for disabled veterans who have been approved for the non-revenue program and would like to set up a revenue account in order to travel outside of the NYS Thruway system.)*

For more information, visit <https://www.thruway.ny.gov/ezpass/veterans.html>.

DD214s and Other Military Service Records Are Available Online

The following VA website is for veterans to gain access to their DD Form 214 and other military service records online: <https://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html#BasicInformation>.

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Did you know . . .

. . . during World War II, the two-man crew of an unarmed two-seat US Army Air Forces artillery spotter aircraft shot down a Luftwaffe observation aircraft using their M1911A1 .45 pistols.

On April 11, 1945, pilot 1LT Merritt Duane Francies and observer 2LT William S. Martin were flying their L-4 Grasshopper (the military version of the Piper J-3 Cub) ahead of the advancing vehicles (M4 Sherman tanks and M7 Priest self-propelled 105 mm howitzers) of the U.S. Army's 5th Armored Division about 100 miles west of Berlin. 24-year-old Francies was one of the more experienced Grasshopper pilots assigned to the 71st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, having been with the battalion since landing at Utah Beach on July 28, 1944. On a side road, not far ahead of the advancing American force, they noticed a German motorcycle and sidecar speeding along. Moving in to get a closer look, they soon spotted a Fieseler Fi 156 Storch observation aircraft flying below them, about 700 feet above some trees. Concerned that the German plane's crew might soon spot the American armored column and report the column's position, they decided to stop chasing the motorcycle and to do something about that plane. They dove on the Storch, firing at it with their sidearms, trying to force the German plane into the fire of the advancing American tanks. Instead, the Germans started to circle with their larger and faster aircraft in hopes of shaking off the Americans. Francies positioned their plane slightly above and across from the German aircraft as they continued to pour fire into it from their pistols. They saw hits on the Storch's windscreen, fuel tank and right wing, which caused the German pilot to go into an evasive low turn, which turned out to be too low. Its right wingtip struck the ground, causing it to cartwheel. Its right wing and undercarriage came apart, and it wound up coming to rest right side up. Francies landed close by, and he and Martin ran to the wreck. The two-man German crew, dazed, stumbled out of their plane. The German pilot tried to hide behind a large pile of sugar beets; the observer, who had been shot in the foot, immediately dropped to the ground. Francies ran over to the observer and pulled off the man's boot; a .45 bullet fell out. Martin fired a warning shot to "encourage" the pilot to come out from his hiding place, which he did, with his hands up. About 15 minutes later, the prisoners were handed over to an American tank crew that had rolled up to see what the aircraft were doing there.

Francies later wrote: "I never found out their names. They could have been important, for all I know. We turned them over to our tankers about 15 minutes later, after the injured man thanked me many times for bandaging his foot. I think they thought we would shoot them."

One thing that I never saw mentioned by any online sources that I could find is whether this particular Storch was armed. The early variants of this plane were unarmed, but the later variants produced from 1940 onward were usually equipped with a rear-firing MG 15 7.92 mm machine gun. It may be that the

attack from the Americans was from an angle where the gun could not be brought to bear, the element of surprise possibly came into play or perhaps because the observer was wounded and could not move to the back of the aircraft quickly enough to employ it. Whatever the reason may have been, it was a stroke of good fortune for the Americans.

By war's end, Francies had twice been recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross but had not received it. In 1966, historian Cornelius Ryan wrote about his exploits in his book *The Last Battle*. He finally did receive the DFC in 1967, thanks to the efforts of U.S. Senator from Washington Harry (Scoop) Jackson. Other awards he received during his service include the Air Medal and the Bronze Star. He also served during the Korean War before becoming a commercial pilot. Francies died on May 5, 2004, in Chelan, Washington at the age of 82.

Attempts to find out what happened to William S. Martin after this incident were unsuccessful.



Pilot 1LT Francies (left) and observer 2LT Martin (right) with an
L-4J Grasshopper

Photo credit: Passion Aviation



TOP: Piper L4H Grasshopper; BOTTOM: Fieseler Storch Fi 156

Photo credit: Aviation Geek Club website

Taps



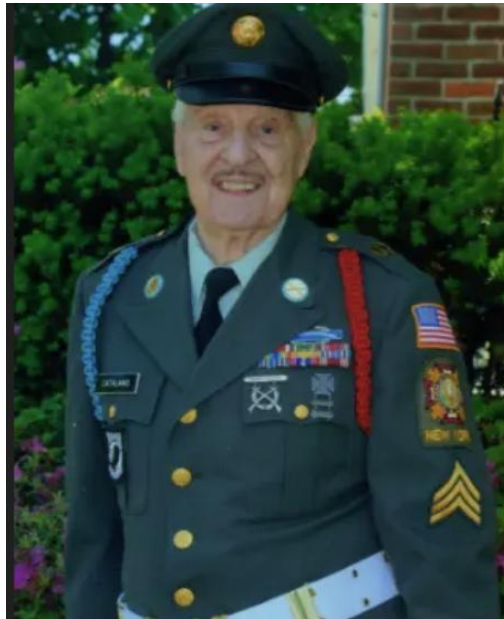
Anthony (Tony) Catalano of Mineola died on May 30 at the age of 105.

Sergeant Catalano served in General George Patton's Third Army during World War II and was among those who helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp on April 29, 1945, freeing approximately 32,000 prisoners. A member of Patton's "Trailblazers," Catalano served as a squad leader during the Battle of the Bulge, constantly urging his men to stay moving during the brutal winter weather to help them avoid frostbite and possible death by freezing.

After returning home, Catalano dedicated much of his life to educating students about his wartime experiences and giving back to the Mineola community.

Catalano was an air traffic controller for over 35 years, a member of the Albertson VFW and an honorary member of the Albertson Fire Company.

Tony is survived by his nieces and nephews. His wife Linda predeceased him.



[Anthony Catalano in undated photo.](#)

*Photo credit: News12.com website from an article by
Karina Kovac.*

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Ernest (Ernie) M. Fazio of Centerport passed away suddenly on March 13 from a burst aorta at the age of 85. He was a Coast Guard veteran who had enlisted right after high school. Per Ray Donnelly, LIAFA's VP for Corporate Development, Fazio said he built his career on the strength of that experience.

After his military service, Fazio went to work at AT&T as a lineman. His first leadership role came after he moved on from AT&T and became a regional steward with the Communications Workers of America at the age of 24 while attending Queensborough Community College at night. Seeking new challenges, he became an insurance salesman in 1970, working with Connecticut General and Mass Mutual. He set up his own management consulting and insurance company, Ernest Fazio Associates, in 1971 and ran it until 2002.

He also became involved in local issues starting in 1974, working closely with Paul Townsend, who was the editor of Long Island Business News at the time. He assisted Mr. Townsend on various pursuits, including electrification of the Ronkonkoma line of the Long Island Railroad (success!) and a high-speed ferry to New Haven, Connecticut, which never came to be. He also participated in the "Use It or Lose It" campaign, spearheaded by then-Grumman Vice President Dick Dunne, to keep Islip MacArthur airport open when it was being underused. His other passion projects were advocating for the construction of a bridge between Long Island and Connecticut, wind power for Long Island, and Maglev train systems, which involve high-speed trains that run on magnetic levitation. He also served on many committees for the Long Island Association (LIA), including Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and Small Business.

A talented and prolific writer, he contributed to various local news publications over the years. He was a contributor to the book *Maglev America: How Maglev Will Transform the World Economy*, which was published in 2013. He was also a radio host in the 1990s for the programs "World of Ideas with Ernie Fazio" on WHPC at Nassau Community College and "Ernestly Speaking" on WLIX in Islip. In 1995, he earned the "Front Page Award" from Long Island Business News (LIBN). Throughout the 1990s, LIBN also listed Fazio among the top 100 most influential people on Long Island. He was also the long-term co-chair of LIMBA (Long Island Metro Business Action), a role he had held since 2002.

On the morning of the day he passed, he had attended the Long Island Contractors' Association (LICA) annual breakfast at the Stonebridge Country Club in Smithtown, where he sang "God Bless America" to open the event. Fazio told friends and associates in attendance that he was going to step away from his business commitments to devote his full time to singing.

Ernie is survived by his wife Marguerite, sons Andrew and Glenn, and his four grandchildren: Marcus, Mia, Jayden and Sierra.

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Taps (continued)



Ernie Fazio in undated photo.

Photo credit: limba.net

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Taps (continued)



Richard R. Guevara of Plainview passed away on May 9 at the age of 81 of undisclosed causes.

Richard was a U.S. Army veteran, having served in Vietnam from July 1968 to July 1970 as a Light Weapons Infantryman attached to Troop C, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry, 2nd Armored Division. He attained the rank of Sergeant, being awarded the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, Army Commendation Medal with device and four Oak Leaf Clusters, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Civil Action Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Sharpshooter (rifle), Marksman (pistol) and National Defense Service Medal.

Richard was a longtime member of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 82. He was a 2025 recipient of the Nassau County Distinguished Service to Veterans Award last August.



Richard R. Guevara in undated photo

Photo credit: dignitymemorial.com website/from the family

Requirements for the Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal

- currently living in Nassau, Suffolk, Brooklyn, Queens, or Staten Island;
- can attend the ceremony (awards are presented ***only*** at the ceremony; they are *not* mailed);
- served in the Vietnam theater of operations in any branch of the military as per DD Form 214.

A medal application is on the next page. You can also submit the application online from our website at LIAFA.org (please click on the *Veterans* tab).

DD Form 214 *and other required documentation must still be mailed*; please black out your Social Security number and/or Service Number on DD Form 214.

LONG ISLAND CHAPTER #202 OF THE AIR & SPACE FORCES ASSOCIATION (LIAFA)



A Department of Defense (DOD) Vietnam 50th Anniversary
Commemorative Sponsor

LIAFA proudly presents the Vietnam 50th Anniversary
Commemorative Medal to thank and honor Vietnam War
veterans and their families for their commitment and service.
(Awarded to living Long Island Vietnam Vets of all services)



COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL APPLICATION

Name _____

Phone # _____ Cell # _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Branch of Service _____ Rank/Grade _____

Vietnam service dates _____

Units assigned and location during war _____

Please mail a copy of your DD-214 (black out your Social Security Number) and
this completed application to:

Fred Di Fabio, President
67 Pacific Dunes Ct.
Medford, NY 11763-2405



For information call:
631-487-7210

- Visit our web page at **LIAFA.ORG** to view a video of the ceremony.
- Also check out our Facebook page: **Long Island Air Force Association - LIAFA**
- Attendance is **FREE**. Bring your family, friends and neighbors.
- You will be contacted to schedule you for one of our upcoming ceremonies upon receipt of your application.

Requirements for the Women's Military Service Medal

- currently living in Nassau, Suffolk, Brooklyn, Queens, or Staten Island;
- can attend the ceremony (awards are presented only at the ceremony; they are not mailed);
- Female veteran **or** currently serving in any branch of the military as per DD Form 214 for veterans, or ID or other documentation for those currently serving.

A medal application is on the next page. You can also submit the application online from our website at LIAFA.org (please click on the *Veterans* tab).

DD Form 214 *and other required documentation must still be mailed*; please black out your Social Security number and/or Service Number on DD Form 214.



WOMAN'S RECOGNITION CEREMONY

**ARE YOU A WOMAN WHO IS A VETERAN OR
IS CURRENTLY SERVING?**

Long Island Chapter #202 of the Air & Space Forces Association
proudly presents and honors woman veterans and women currently
serving and their families for their commitment and service.

(Awarded to women of all Services and Eras)

APPLICATION

Name _____

Phone # _____ Cell # _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Branch of Service _____ Rank/Grade _____

Service dates _____

Please mail the completed application and a copy of documentation showing
military service (DD-214 for veterans) (black out your Social Security Number) to:

Fred Di Fabio, President
67 Pacific Dunes Court
Medford, NY 11763-2405

For information,
call: 631-487-7210

- Check out our web page at: **LIAFA.ORG** and visit us on Facebook: **The Long Island Air Force Association - LIAFA**
- Attendance is **FREE**. Bring your family, friends and neighbors.
- You will be contacted to be scheduled for an upcoming ceremony.

**THIS AWARD HONORS LONG ISLAND WOMAN VETERANS AND WOMEN WHO ARE
CURRENTLY SERVING**
(Not Awarded Posthumously)