



Jan–Mar 2025

# LI 202 AFA NEWS

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## CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2025

### Vietnam Medal Ceremonies

**Sat, Jun 28, 2025**

Long Island State Veterans Home  
100 Patriots Rd  
Stony Brook  
2:00 p.m.

**Wed, Jul 9, 2025**

During Shootout for Soldiers  
John J. Burns Park  
4990 Merrick Rd  
Massapequa Park  
5:00 p.m.

**Sat, Sep 27, 2025**

American Airpower Museum  
1230 New Highway  
Farmingdale  
11:30 a.m.

### Women's Military Service Medal Ceremonies

**Sat, Apr 26, 2025**

Cradle of Aviation  
Charles Lindbergh Blvd  
Garden City  
11:30 a.m.

### 84<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony— Dropping of the Roses

**Sun, Dec 7, 2025**

American Airpower Museum  
1230 New Highway  
Farmingdale  
10:30 a.m.

## President's Message

We are still accepting applications for both the Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremony as well as the Women's Military Service Medal Ceremony. The requirements for each are:

### Applies to both medals:

- 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)

### Applies only to Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal:

- Served in the Vietnam theater of operations in any branch of the military as per DD Form 214

### Applies only to Women's Military Service Medal:

- 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.

You will find both applications at the end of this newsletter. You can also apply online from our website at [LIAFA.org](http://LIAFA.org) (DD214 and other required documentation must still be mailed; black out your Social Security number).

## Recent Events

### Suffolk County Vietnam War Veterans Honored

On March 29, the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the date when the last American combat troops left Vietnam, nearly 400 people, largely veterans and their families, gathered at Armed Forces Plaza outside the county government H. Lee Dennison Building in Hauppauge for a celebration of the estimated 21,000 living Suffolk County Vietnam War veterans. Officials had planned the event to align with National Vietnam War Veterans Day. There were food vendors and live performers for those in attendance. A Vietnam-era V-100 Commando armored car and an M114 Command and Reconnaissance Carrier were among the military vehicles displayed thanks to Old Bethpage's Museum of American Armor.

"It's a celebration to say thank you and we remember your service to this country," Suffolk County Executive **Edward P. Romaine** (R) said in an interview.

Some of the other officials present at the event were U.S. Representative **Nick LaLota** (R-Amityville), New York State Assemblywoman **Jodi Giglio** (R-Riverhead), New York State Assemblywoman **Rebecca Kassay** (D-East Setauket), Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency Director **Marcelle Leis**, Suffolk County Legislator **Chad Lennon** (R-Rocky Point), Smithtown Supervisor **Ed Wehrheim** (R) and Veterans Committee Chairman and Suffolk County Legislator **Nick Caracappa** (R). Music was provided by **The Band of Veterans and Friends** while Suffolk County Police Officer **Lauren Timpano** sang *The Star-Spangled Banner* and *God Bless America*.

The keynote speaker was Vietnam veteran and former Suffolk Judge **John J. Toomey, Jr.**, who served in the Army as a rifleman, machine-gunner and squad leader, and received two Bronze Stars. In 2010, he was chosen to be the first Presiding Judge of the newly-formed Suffolk County Veteran's Court. Said Toomey, "They viewed themselves as ordinary guys, but they were far from ordinary. They were extraordinary. They were patriotic. They were humble. They were scared. And they were ever so young."

Among the other supporters of this event were the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and Gold Star Families.



Marine Corps veterans Bob Thomas, left, of Oakdale, and Ed German, of Flanders, meet during the ceremony.  
Photo credit: Newsday/Steve Pfost

## **Ceremony Marking 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Liberating Nazi Concentration Camps**

On Friday, April 4, the Museum of American Armor (1303 Round Swamp Rd., Old Bethpage) hosted a ceremony marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in Germany at Dachau on April 11, 1945, and Buchenwald on April 29, 1945, by American troops. The ceremony was held jointly by the Museum and by the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County (100 Crescent Beach Rd., Glen Cove). Several hundred people were in attendance, including students from North Shore Hebrew Academy, veterans, public officials and at least one Holocaust survivor, Fred Zeilberger, who survived five different camps. Zeilberger came to the United States in 1947, when he was 15. After the war, he returned to Germany, only to discover that his entire family had been killed.

After American troops had liberated those camps, they were shocked to see emaciated corpses, starving survivors and mass graves. They were used to the horrors of war, but this was an even more extreme level of depravity and cruelty. These findings prompted General Dwight D. Eisenhower to order his soldiers to take photographs and film footage to document what they had seen. He brought Generals George Patton and Omar Bradley with him to witness the liberation of the camps. He also invited journalists and dignitaries to the camps so that, in the words of Dr. Richard Schoonhoven, Associate Professor of Military Ethics and Philosophy at West Point and one of the speakers at the event, “Eisenhower insisted on documentation because he foresaw what would come—that there would be those who, in time, would seek to diminish or deny these atrocities.”

Towards the end of the program, the living historians, who were dressed as World War II American G.I.s and were perched on a Sherman tank, walked around the mock barbed wire that separated them from the audience and started handing out chocolate bars, much as the stunned G.I.s had done with the starving camp survivors they had liberated eighty years before.



A “soldier” interacts with Holocaust survivor Fred Zeilberger during the ceremony.  
Photo credit: Newsday/Howard Schnapp

## **Upcoming Non-LIAFA Events**

### **Hope Walks Here—Suicide Awareness**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** at Suffolk County Community College, Ammerman Campus, Veterans Plaza, 533 College Rd., Selden. Take the Long Island Expressway to Exit 62. Proceed north on Nicolls Road (CR97) about 2 miles to the first traffic light. Turn right at the main campus entrance. Check-in time is 9:30 a.m.; event start time is 10:00 a.m. Participants will walk the inner loop of the campus. The route will be 1-3 miles depending on how many loops you choose to complete. This event is being held in partnership with the Long Island Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the Student Veterans of America at Suffolk County Community College. For more info, call Sarah Boles at (631) 451-4530 or email her at [boless@sunysuffolk.edu](mailto:boless@sunysuffolk.edu). To register online, go to <https://afspwalks.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=10505>.

### **Vet Fest**

A free resource-sharing event to benefit veterans, service members and their families will be held on **FRIDAY, MAY 2, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.** at SUNY Old Westbury Campus Center, 223 Store Hill Rd., Old Westbury. The main campus entrance is Gate A. After entering through the gate, make a right at Wenwood Dr. and follow around. After the police building on the left, a large parking lot will be on your left. Park there and use the tunnels to enter the building.

It is sponsored by the Veteran Suicide Prevention Coalition and supported by various veteran service providers. Complimentary services and resources offered will include help for food insecurity, mental health, health screening, equine therapy, substance abuse, Naloxone training, education, peer-to-peer, problem gambling, housing, employment, legal help and financial advisory services. Food and drink will be available; entry is free. If you are interested in being a vendor at Vet Fest, please contact Amy Millheiser at (631) 261-4400, ext. 5574 or email her at [amy.millheiser@va.gov](mailto:amy.millheiser@va.gov).

### **American Legion Riders Annual Fundraiser BBQ and Blessing of the Bikes**

**SATURDAY, MAY 3, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** at Elmont American Legion Post 1033, 60 Hill Ave., Elmont, rain or shine. *Registration for bike blessing is 10:00 a.m.; bike blessing will be held around 12 noon.* Hamburgers, hot dogs, beverages, music, 50/50 and raffles, and cash bar available. Requested donations: \$30 for riders, \$20 for passengers/guests. For more info, please call the post at (516) 354-9884.

### **“Dining for a Cause” Fundraiser**

**SATURDAY, MAY 3, 12:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.** at Omega Diner, 1809 Lakeville Rd., New Hyde Park. The American Legion Auxiliary Williston Unit 144 is hosting the fundraiser for veterans dealing with food insecurity. Individuals who dine at Omega Diner on the date and times listed above, and present a coupon (which will be handed out at the entrance) will have 15% of their bill donated to the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency Food Pantry (VetMart). Dine-in and take-out orders of food and non-alcoholic beverages are eligible for the fundraiser. All proceeds will fund the purchase of supermarket gift cards, which will be provided to veterans with food insecurity who visit the pantry.



Thank you, Omega Diner, for providing the venue for this great event!

### **Veterans Summer Stand Down—\*\*\* CANCELED \*\*\***

This event, originally scheduled for May 9 at the Freeport Recreation Center, has been **CANCELED**.

### **2025 High School Enlistee Recognition Ceremony by Our Community Salutes Nassau County NY**

**TUESDAY, MAY 13, 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. (doors open at 5:30 p.m.)** at Nassau County Police Department Training and Intelligence Center, 1 Law Enforcement Way, Garden City.

Our Community Salutes 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 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.

For more information, please call Andrea Nordquist at (516) 476-9094. Andrea is president of Military Blue Star Mothers of Nassau County NY 14, which sponsors, supports and participates in this event.

### **2025 Office of Minority Affairs (OMA) Employment Expo**

**THURSDAY, MAY 15, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.** at "Yes We Can" Community Center, 141 Garden St., Westbury. **Nassau County residents only.** **The 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. hour is for disabled, seniors and veterans only.** There will be on-site interviews with select businesses and resume reviews. For more information, call Runnie Myles at (516) 572-2891 or send an email to [rmyles@nassaucountyny.gov](mailto:rmyles@nassaucountyny.gov).

### **Blue Star Moms Support a Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Walk**

**SATURDAY, MAY 17**, at Jones Beach, Field 1, One Ocean Pkwy., Wantagh. Military Blue Star Mothers of Nassau County NY 14 is supporting *Walk MS*, a nationwide walking event to show support for those living with MS and to help raise funds to find a cure. **The site is open at 8:30 a.m., the opening ceremony is at 9:50 a.m. and the walk kickoff is at 10:00 a.m.** There will be two route options—one is a mile long while the other is three miles long. Each route is accessible, can accommodate mobility devices and will have at least one hydration station with volunteers distributing water. To register online, visit <https://events.nationalmssociety.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=cms.page&id=9165&eventID=2102>. You can also register at the site on the day of the event by stopping at the Registration and Information Area.

The Food and Beverage Area includes breakfast-themed snacks and beverages. *Walk MS* is a rain-or-shine event. In case of cancellation or delay due to severe weather, registered participants will be notified through email and updates will be posted on social media. Except for federally-defined trained service dogs, dogs are not otherwise permitted at Jones Beach. Per park regulations, emotional support dogs are **not** allowed.

## **Remembrance Service for Those Who Gave All**

**SUNDAY, MAY 18, START TIME 2:30 p.m.** at Our Holy Redeemer Church, 37 S. Ocean Ave., Freeport (one block south of Sunrise Hwy., on the east side of the road; parking lot is right next door and to the north of the church). Guest speaker is Monsignor Charles Fink, who served a 21-month tour in Vietnam (1969-1970), first as an Army specialist and then as a sergeant in the 199<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (Light), receiving a Purple Heart for his service. Veteran organizations are welcome to participate with a color guard. Open to the public. Sponsored by Our Holy Redeemer Church and the Vietnam War Veterans Association.

After the war, Msgr. Fink was angered after listening to a presentation by antiwar activist and former religious Elizabeth McAlister, labeling U.S. troops as moral transgressors. In response, he wrote the poem, “Bury Me with Soldiers,” which has been widely circulated over the years, with one copy left in 1987 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington and now part of a National Park Service collection. Go to the following website to read the poem:

<https://www.11thcavnam.com/Tales%20from%20Nam/Bury%20Me%20With%20Soldiers.htm>

## **Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Day Flag Placement**

**SATURDAY, MAY 24, STARTING AT 8:00 a.m. AND ENDING UPON COMPLETION** at Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Ave., Farmingdale. All those who participate in the placement of the flags on this day will receive a patch in recognition from the Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization (LINCMO). Call the cemetery at (631) 454-4949 for more information.

## **FourLeaf Air Show (formerly the Bethpage Air Show)**

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds will be headlining this event to be held **SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MAY 24 AND 25, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.** at Jones Beach. This year’s lineup also includes the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, the U.S. Navy F-35C demo team, the 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing Air National Guard, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) intercept display, the U.S. Marines F-35B demo team, the U.S. Navy Growler demo team, the U.S. Navy Rhino (F/A-18F Super Hornet) demo team, the Warbird Thunder Airshows, Farmingdale State College Aviation, the American Airpower Museum (AAM) Warbirds, and aerobatic flyers Aarron Deliu and David Windmiller. You can watch the AAM Warbirds take off and land from the American Airpower Museum, 1230 New Highway at Republic Airport in Farmingdale during the show.

The air show is free, but there is a \$10 vehicle use fee for each day upon entry to Jones Beach. However, there is no charge for those who have a 2025 NYS Empire Pass Card (*also see note below*). For more info, visit <https://www.fourleafairshow.com/> or call the Long Island office of the NYS Parks Department at (631) 321-3510.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** A phone call to the above number provided the additional information that free vehicle entry is also available to NYS Lifetime Liberty Pass holders as well as to veterans who can show any kind of veteran ID, including a driver’s license showing veteran status.

## **Navy and USMC Helicopter Landings**

**SATURDAY, MAY 24, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.** at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow (Kite Field, parking at Field 6A). Attendance is free. For more information, please call the Nassau County Parks Department at (516) 572-0200.

## **United Veterans Organization (UVO) Memorial Day Ceremony**

**SUNDAY, MAY 25, 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.** at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow (Veterans Memorial Plaza, Field 6). Attendance is free. For more information, please call Morris Miller at (516) 798-3710.

## **Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony**

**SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.** at Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Ave., Farmingdale and conducted by the Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization (LINCMO). Attendance is free. For more information, please call Morris Miller at (516) 798-3710.

## **Fleet Week New York**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 21 THROUGH TUESDAY, MAY 27.** The 37<sup>th</sup> annual Fleet Week begins with the Parade of Ships, entering New York Harbor and visible from locations like Battery Park and Hudson River Park. The Intrepid Museum (Pier 86, W. 46<sup>th</sup> St. and 12<sup>th</sup> Ave., Manhattan) will host a number of events from May 23-26; activities on the pier are free, but entrance to the Museum itself requires a ticket, which can be purchased in person at the Welcome Center box office or online at <https://intrepidmuseum.org/plan-your-visit/visitor-information/tickets>. Service men and women from the U.S. and foreign nations will be arriving aboard the ships. A ship from Canada will also join the celebration. This year marks the U.S. Navy's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Day Flag Pick-Up**

**SATURDAY, MAY 31, STARTING AT 8:00 a.m. AND ENDING UPON COMPLETION** at Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Ave. in Farmingdale. Call the cemetery at (631) 454-4949 for more information.

## **Gold Star Mothers and Families Ceremony**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow (Veterans Memorial Plaza, Field 6). Gold Star Mothers will conduct a ceremony to remember and read the names of our local military service members who gave their lives in defense of our nation. Attendance is free. For more information, please call Emily Torres at (917) 971-8748.

## **Veterans Benefits and Information Seminar**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** at the Nassau County Bar Association Building, Conference Hall, 15<sup>th</sup> and West Streets, Garden City. Veterans and family members will be provided briefings on VA Disability Compensation, Aid & Attendance Benefits, VA Survivor and Dependent Compensation (DIC), Veterans Burial Benefits and other important veterans information. Veteran Counselors will be present to answer questions regarding these benefits and to schedule appointments. Veterans in attendance should bring their **DD214 MILITARY DISCHARGE FORM** to file for

benefits. For any questions regarding the event details and to RSVP, please call (516) 572-6565. Food and refreshments will be served.

**NOTE:** *This red-brick building has no street number. For GPS, use 133 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Mineola as your destination.*

## **Second Annual General Needs Gala**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 6:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.** at Leonard's Palazzo, 555 Northern Blvd., Great Neck. This year's honorees will be **Ralph Esposito**, Director of the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency and **Arnold T. Quaranta, Jr.** of the Ronkonkoma Rotary Club. Tickets are \$215 per person; \$200 per person if reserving a table for ten. Admission includes cocktail hour, seated dinner, open bar, basket raffles and silent auction.

To buy tickets, go to <https://generalneeds.org/event/general-needs-2nd-annual-gala/>. On this web page, you can also sponsor a vet to attend the gala, sponsor a distribution of clothing, etc. to a vet, or buy an ad to support the gala. To become an event sponsor, please email [info@generalneeds.org](mailto:info@generalneeds.org) or call (631) 266-1672. With every ticket purchased or donation made, you are directly contributing to critical resources like mattresses, boots, and essential supplies for veterans in need.

## **TD Bank Fireworks Show and Concert**

**THURSDAY, JULY 3, GATES OPEN AT 5:00 p.m.** at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow (Harry Chapin Theater). Attendance is free. *Rain date is Saturday, July 5.* Call Cindy Gillen at (516) 572-0396 for more information.



**WEDNESDAY THROUGH THURSDAY, JULY 9–10, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.** at John J. Burns Park, 4990 Merrick Road in Massapequa Park. Shootout for Soldiers has reverted to its former schedule of twenty-four one-hour games in a row. Shootout for Soldiers is a nonprofit organization that hosts lacrosse experiences to support American veterans through fundraising and community engagement.

As the front-page calendar shows, LIAFA will hold its 47th Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremony during the first day of the tournament, **WEDNESDAY, JULY 9 AT 5:00 p.m.**

Long Island Chapter 202 of the Air & Space Forces Association is proud and grateful to be one of the three local charity beneficiaries that share in a portion of the net proceeds raised from this event. Shootout for Soldiers is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

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# **Announcements and Programs**

## **Veteran Functions at Eisenhower Park**

**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 Traffic Court (Nassau County)**

The Nassau County Traffic and Parking Violations Agency (NCTPVA) 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](http://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](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/4919/Veterans-Treatment-Court). **Volunteers are also being sought to be mentors; training will be provided. Please call Rosemary Walker at (516) 493-4145.**

## **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

*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.

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

7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 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!

### **VetMart Food Pantry**

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

Veterans may register at the food pantry for eligibility with a Veterans ID Card or DD214 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 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (*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.

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

DAV is also 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](mailto:Robert.Erdody@va.gov) or call (631) 235-8220. For a volunteer application, please send an email to [Jennifer.Pohl2@va.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Pohl2@va.gov) or call (631) 261-4400, ext. 7182.

### **VHUC Veterans Transportation Program**

From Sal Polito's "Veteran's Column" in the February 12-18 issue of the *Massapequa Herald*:

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

Sal Polito is a member of American Legion Massapequa Post 1066 and is also an employee of the Town of Oyster Bay Veterans Service Agency.

### **Attention: Military Star Card Holders**

**If you have received your new card, please activate it now. If you are a cardholder and have *not* received your new card, please call (877) 891-7827 or send an email to [militarystar@aafes.com](mailto:militarystar@aafes.com) for assistance. The old “Liberty” cards will be deactivated on May 1.**

The Military Star card is a line of credit and its benefits are exclusively available to military personnel and their families, DoD civilians, Purple Heart recipients and Disabled Veterans. Veterans who received an Honorable or General under Honorable Conditions Discharge have online shopping privileges only.

To get more details on the Military Star card and/or to apply for the card, please visit the following website: [https://www.myecp.com/htmlpages/cp\\_milstarcard](https://www.myecp.com/htmlpages/cp_milstarcard).

### **Commissary Reopening**

For those of you who may not already know, the Mitchel Field Commissary reopened for business on March 4 after undergoing necessary repairs. The address is West Road, Building 84, Garden City.

You are eligible to shop in a commissary if you are an active-duty service member, a member of the Guard or Reserve, a military retiree, or a veteran *with a Veteran Health Identification Card that shows at least one of the following*:

- Service-connected
- Medal of Honor
- Purple Heart recipient status
- Former prisoner of war (POW)

### **Lifetime Liberty Pass for New York State Residents**

Since April 1, 2024, eligibility for the Lifetime Liberty Pass has expanded to encompass the following **(for New York State residents only)**:

1. All veterans, regardless of whether they have a VA disability compensation rating and who were discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.
2. Gold Star parents, Gold Star spouses and Gold Star children.

This pass provides free admission to all New York State parks. Additionally, pass holders are also entitled to free admission to the two Town of Hempstead golf courses in Merrick (9 holes) and Lido Beach (18 holes).

To apply for the Lifetime Liberty Pass, please go to the following website:

<https://www.parks.ny.gov/admission/lifetime-liberty-pass.aspx>.

Also, since April 1, 2024, a veteran who has the veteran distinguishing mark on their New York State driver's license or nondriver's ID card will be able to use that license to gain free admission at New York State parks that have a *staffed* admission gate. Parks that have only an *unstaffed* admission kiosk, however, will require the use of the Lifetime Liberty Pass.

### **DD214s and Other Military Service Records Are Available Online**

The following VA website is for veterans to gain access to their DD214 and other military service records online: <https://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html#BasicInformation>.

### **PACT Act and Camp Lejeune Justice Act (CLJA) Deadlines**

The information below is from an article by Elizabeth Hartman of the law firm Bergmann & Moore LLC in the October 2023 issue of *The American Legion Magazine*:

- **There is no deadline to file a PACT Act claim** through the VA. You can always contact an accredited American Legion service officer to file a claim. The “deadline” that is shown on several law firms’ websites references filing an *Intent to File* (ITF). If you had filed an ITF by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 14, 2023, that ensured that your benefits (if ultimately approved) would have dated back to the implementation date of the PACT Act—August 10, 2022—in essence, giving you a bonus year of benefits and a year from the date of the ITF to finalize your claim. There is no deadline for filing the PACT Act claim itself. Your claim will simply be considered from the date you filed rather than from the implementation date.

If you have any questions before filing a claim, Elizabeth Hartman can be contacted at (252) 497-7255. She is the Bergmann & Moore CLJA liaison with The American Legion.

### **More PACT Act Information**

The VA has announced that all veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving are eligible to enroll in VA Healthcare. This means that all Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror or any other combat zones after 9/11 are eligible to enroll directly in VA Healthcare without first having to apply for benefits. For more information on the PACT Act, presumptive conditions and locations, visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and search on *PACT Act*, or call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 or the Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency at (631) 853-8387.

Here is a list of “presumptive conditions,” which are conditions that the VA automatically presumes were caused by your service:

These cancers are now presumptive:

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

These illnesses are now presumptive:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

If you don't have any of these presumptive conditions, you can still qualify for VA benefits, but you'll need added documentation to prove your case.

### **Nassau County Firefighters Operation Wounded Warrior (NCFE-OWW)**

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization **not** affiliated with the Wounded Warrior Project or any other Operation Wounded Warrior organization, the NCFE-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 NCFE-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 NCFE-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](http://www.ncff-oww.org) for more information.

### **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 hand-offs 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](mailto:vetservices@centralnassau.org).

**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 p.m. and Cablevision channel 20 on Fridays at 6:30 p.m. 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](mailto:mardiv1@optonline.net), or call him at (516) 921-0595.

### **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](mailto:VLAP@hofstra.edu) or call (516) 463-7302.

### **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](mailto:Info@GeneralNeeds.org). You can also visit their website at [www.GeneralNeeds.org](http://www.GeneralNeeds.org) or go to their Facebook page to see any upcoming events.

### **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](http://www.licares.org/what-we-do/feed-long-island/veterans-project).

### **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](mailto: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 Street in Hempstead at 5:15 p.m. on Mondays and 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays; Levittown Public Library, 1 Bluegrass Lane in Levittown at 2 p.m. on Thursdays (biweekly). There are also spouse/partner meetings at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and women-only meetings at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, both at Mental Health Association, 16 Main Street 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 contact Marisol Mateo at (516) 489-2322, ext. 1260 or send her an email at [mmateo@mhanc.org](mailto:mmateo@mhanc.org). Also check out their website: [veteranshealthalliance.org](http://veteranshealthalliance.org).

### **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 [www.nslawservices.org](http://www.nslawservices.org).

Contact information:

Hempstead Office: 1 Helen Keller Way, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, phone (516) 292-8100

Islandia Office: 1757 Veterans Hway., 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](mailto:ghorton@nysda.org). Their website is [nysda.org/page/AboutVDP](http://nysda.org/page/AboutVDP).

### **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](mailto:mardiv1@optonline.net) or call him at (516) 921-0595. A charitable donation receipt will be provided by Beacon House.

### **Long Island Vets Help**

The Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, Inc. and the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless have partnered to produce a resource directory devoted specifically to the needs of veterans navigating civilian life on Long Island. For more information, go to their website at [longislandvetshelp.org](http://longislandvetshelp.org).

### **Walls of Honor**

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. There is a \$100 application fee for each name to be engraved. For more information, please call Allison Ridam Krivosheiw at (516) 236-3245 or email her at [alliridam@gmail.com](mailto:alliridam@gmail.com).

***NOTE: A new requirement has been put in place that applicants must be current or former Nassau County residents. A copy of the newly-revised two-page application form has been attached to the end of this newsletter.***

### **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](http://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 Washington, D.C. to see their memorials **at no cost**. Flights depart from MacArthur Airport in Islip. 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 email him at [jbowden@southamptontownny.gov](mailto:jbowden@southamptontownny.gov).

## **RISE Study Regarding Veterans and Stress**

The ReACH (Relationships, Aging, Coping & Health) Lab at Adelphi University has launched the RISE (Relational Influences on Sleep & Emotion) Study to learn more about how veterans cope with stress in their daily lives and how it affects their sleep and well-being. They are looking for veterans who are at least 65 years old and are married (or living with a partner). Participants will be compensated for their time and effort with a maximum of \$75 worth of gift cards. Participation includes an initial survey and seven brief daily surveys that will be emailed to you, along with the **option** to wear a watch-like device (after visiting their lab) to help them measure your sleep. If you wish to learn more, please contact the lead researcher, Dr. Christina Marini, by emailing her at [cmarini@adelphi.edu](mailto:cmarini@adelphi.edu) or calling her at (516) 877-4812.

## **Free COVID-19 At-Home Test Kits—\*\*\*No Longer Available\*\*\***

As of March 10, 2025, you can no longer request free COVID-19 at-home test kits from the government through the website <https://covidtests.gov>. Last August, health officials said that the national stockpile of COVID-19 tests was large enough to sustain the program. It is unclear what inventory now remains in the national stockpile and what will happen to the unused test kits.

It's recommended to get the updated 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine to help protect you from severe disease, hospitalization and death; the vaccine is recommended by the CDC for everyone ages 6 months and older. It is especially important to get your 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccination if you are age 65 or older, are at high risk for severe COVID-19, or have never received a COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccine protection decreases over time, so it is important to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccine.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, about 325 Americans have died from COVID-19 per week on average over the past four weeks. As of April 5, less than a quarter of adult Americans have gotten an updated COVID-19 shot.

## **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.

### **Military Blue Star Mothers of Nassau County NY 14 Adopt a Building**

Andrea Nordquist has announced that they will “adopt” Building 8 at the Northport VA to help veterans and to give gifts throughout the year.

### **DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Donation Programs**

DAV helps more than one million veterans every year with their health problems, employment issues, accessing their benefits and easing their transition to civilian life. The DAV Charitable Service Trust has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator.

In addition to cash donations, you can donate a car, truck, motorcycle, boat, or other vehicle. Go to <https://www.dav.org/vehicle-donation/> or call (833) 227-4328 seven days a week to schedule a vehicle donation—FREE towing is provided!

§



*Did you know . . .*

#### **Why haven't fighter jets gotten any faster in 50 years?**

With all the new fighters that have appeared on the scene within the past half a century, perhaps you've wondered why their top speeds are lower than those of older fighter jets like the Vietnam War-era McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom.

After all, the Phantom had a top speed of Mach 2.23 (about 1650 mph) while the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, operational for barely ten years, clocks in at a top speed of about Mach 1.6 (about 1190 mph) at high altitude.

So, what's going on here? Hasn't the history of fighter aircraft shown that newer planes are supposed to be faster than older planes? Well, yes, that's been the historical trend, just like a World War II-era P-51 Mustang is much faster than a World War I-era Sopwith Camel and an F-86 Sabre is much faster than either of them.



Here are several reasons for this seeming step backwards:

### **Top Speed Versus Combat Reality**

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. Air Force and the North Vietnamese each flew fighters that were capable of reaching Mach 2.2 (F-4 versus MiG-21), but analysis of thousands of flight records showed that the Phantoms rarely reached Mach 1.8 in combat. Most flights were conducted at Mach 1.2, while only briefly hitting Mach 1.4.

### **The Widespread Use of Anti-Aircraft Missiles**

Up through World War II, speed was a crucial factor for evading enemy fire from opposing aircraft. With the advent of SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) and air-to-air missiles (used by aircraft), which had a much higher speed than any manned airplane could hope to achieve, trying to outrun a missile with a fighter jet is a fool's errand.

### **Increased Speed Means Decreased Range**

As with any moving vehicle, a jet aircraft burns more fuel the faster it goes. A Northrop Grumman study found that speeds above Mach 1.1 severely reduced combat range. In fact, it showed that increasing a Phantom's speed from subsonic to Mach 1.5 could cut its combat range by up to 70%.

### **The Advent of Stealth Technology**

Modern fighters prioritize stealth over speed. Supersonic flight creates greater air resistance, which increases the heat signature of the aircraft so that it can be more easily detected by infrared-guided missiles and other infrared detection systems. The F-22's maximum sustained speed, in fact, was reduced from Mach 1.8 to Mach 1.6 to better manage the heat load on its composite wings and avoid detection.

In short, modern fighters are designed for stealth, greater range and increased weapons payload rather than simply speed.



Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor  
Photo credit: [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)



Vietnam War F-4 Phantom  
Photo credit: Creative Commons

# Taps



**Michael J. Dolan** of New Hyde Park passed away on February 11 at the age of 80 of undisclosed causes. He was an Army veteran who served with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Vietnam and was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he suffered during that war. He was instrumental in the redevelopment of the veteran's monument at New Hyde Park Memorial Park, in getting New Hyde Park to be the first village in Nassau County to be recognized as a Purple Heart Village and securing support for the Hometown Heroes Banner Program by the Town of North Hempstead.

During his 50-plus years as a volunteer fireman, he served as Chairman of the Nassau County Fire Commission prior to serving as Vice-Chairman of the New Hyde Park Fire Commission and was a former Chief of the fire department.

In addition, he was also a member of the Nassau County Operation Wounded Warriors' Project, Firefighters Burn Center Foundation, Firefighters Children Museum, the New Hyde Park Elks Club, Cellini Lodge #2206 of the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, Lions Club, Leisure Club, Knights of Columbus, American Legion, Narrow Backs, VFW Posts in New Hyde Park, Albertson and Franklin Square, The Military Order of the Purple Heart USA, and a participant in all local fundraisers and events.

Michael is survived by his wife of 55 years, Frances, and their nine children—Jennifer, married to Donald; Patricia, married to Diego; Deirdre; Tara; Colleen; Carrie; Mary Frances, married to John; Michael Jr., married to Lauren; and Brian, married to Jennifer; also including 12 grandchildren.



Michael J. Dolan in undated photo.

Photo credit: New Hyde Park Funeral Home  
website

**Paul P. Pette** of Lynbrook passed away on March 7 at the age of 101 of undisclosed causes. He was a World War II Army Air Corps veteran who served with the 20<sup>th</sup> Air Force and the 313<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing of the 9<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. While he was stationed on Tinian Island in the Central Pacific, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

Paul was born in Cosenza, Italy in 1923; that same year, he and his parents Vincent and Camilla moved to the U.S. He was one of four brothers and served along with one of them in the Army during the war.

Last year, four days before his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday on August 29, his fellow veterans from Lynbrook American Legion Post 335 conducted a drive-by parade to celebrate both his upcoming birthday and his past military service. The drive-by consisted of a parade of motorcycles from the American Legion Riders, Rolling Thunder, and fire trucks from the Lynbrook Fire Department. While sitting on a chair on the curb, Pette waved to all of them as they passed. Members of the post presented Pette with a cake, then stood at attention and saluted him.

Paul is survived by his children Deborah, Rosemary and Vincent, his daughter-in-law Terese, his brother Jerry, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Paul P. Pette in undated photo.

Photo credit: [From the Flinch & Bruns Funeral Home website](#)

**Joe Harris** of Los Angeles, California passed away on March 15 at the age of 108 of undisclosed causes. Sergeant Harris is believed to have been the oldest surviving World War II paratrooper and a member of the Army’s first all-Black parachute infantry battalion, the 555<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Battalion, nicknamed the *Triple Nickles* (“Nickle” is the older English spelling of the word).

During World War II, Black Americans were usually relegated to support-level jobs in the racially-segregated military, facing overt racism and being limited to Black-only barracks, hospitals, and recreational facilities. Many of the training facilities were in the South, which made even off-base conditions difficult, given the Jim Crow laws in place at the time. That was not lost on grandson Ashton Pittman, who said his grandfather was brave enough to serve the U.S. “during a time when the country didn’t love him, honestly, didn’t care about him.”

According to Robert L. Bartlett, a retired Eastern Washington University professor who specializes in the 555<sup>th</sup>, the battalion helped protect the U.S. from deadly Japanese balloon bombs, thousands of which were launched in 1944 and 1945 into the Pacific jet stream to reach the U.S. mainland to explode and start fires. The members of the 555<sup>th</sup> were some of the first American “smokejumpers,” tasked with parachuting into Pacific Northwest forests to fight the fires ignited by the Japanese incendiary balloon bombs under the highly secretive *Operation Firefly*. The operation was kept quiet in order not to alert the Japanese that many of their balloons (rough estimate—1000) had, in fact, made it all the way to America’s West Coast and had dropped their bombs.

Harris was drafted in 1941 at the age of 24 and by the time he was honorably discharged in November 1945, he had completed 72 parachute jumps. After the war, he purchased a home in Compton and went on to work for the U.S. Border Patrol for almost 40 years. He and his wife, Louise Harris, had three children; she predeceased him in 1981. He is survived by his son, Pirate Joe Harris Sr., and two daughters, Michaun Harris and Latanya Pittman, along with five grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and 20 great-great-grandchildren.



Joe Harris, in an undated photo

Photo credit: Tracie Hunter via AP



**John Hemingway**, the last remaining Battle of Britain pilot, died at age 105 on March 17 in the Trinity Care Foxrock Nursing Home in Dublin. As befits a proud Irishman, he died on Saint Patrick's Day. The death of the former Royal Air Force (RAF) pilot, who referred to himself as "nothing special," was noted on the front pages of British newspapers; his death was mourned by King Charles and the Prime Minister. This year marks the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain (July-September 1940) and, for the first time, it will be commemorated with no living participants of the battle. He achieved the rank of Group Captain, which is the equivalent to an American Colonel.

A citizen of neutral Ireland, he left school at age 18 to join the RAF in December 1938; the very next year, the world was plunged into World War II with Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939. With the fall of France in June 1940, Hitler turned his attention to Britain, the lone holdout in Western Europe. Since crossing the English Channel to land German troops in England was considered far too risky without first neutralizing the British Navy and Air Force, in July 1940 the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) was tasked with attaining air superiority over Britain. Though stretched at times almost to the breaking point, by September 1940 the RAF was able to successfully fight off the Luftwaffe, thereby eliminating the threat of invasion. On August 20, 1940, speaking in Parliament, Prime Minister Winston Churchill said of the RAF airmen, "Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few."

John was shot down four times during the war, twice in the space of eight days during the Battle of Britain. After the war, he served as a staff officer in the Middle East, acted as station commander of RAF Leconfield in Yorkshire, and then senior staff officer at NATO headquarters in France, before being posted to the air ministry. He retired in 1969.



John "Paddy" Hemingway holding a photo of himself in 1939 during a 2019 interview.

Photo credit: Aidan Crawley/For the Irish Times



## THE LONG ISLAND AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION (LIAFA)

A Department of Defense (DOD) Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Commemorative Sponsor

LIAFA proudly presents the Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> 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 send a copy of your DD-214 (block out your Social Security Number) and  
this application to:

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



For information call:  
631-754-6383

- 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.



# WOMAN'S RECOGNITION CEREMONY

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

The Long Island Air Force 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 send a copy of your DD-214 **showing military service** (black out your Social Security Number) and this completed application to:

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

For information,  
call: 631-754-6383

- 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)



# The Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund, Inc.

PRESENTS:

## "WALLS OF HONOR"



### The "Walls Of Honor"

offers places of remembrance to residents of Nassau County, NY  
within *Veterans Memorial Plaza*,  
Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, New York.

**The Walls of Honor are exactly what they state, they are Honor Walls, not memorial walls.** Stainless Steel Panels, mounted on Granite Walls, Engraved with Veterans names, ensures that the greatest contribution to our legacy of freedom is recognized for generations to come.

### **GIVE THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME**

Reserve a place of **HONOR** for yourself, family member or friend and become part of a monument to the men and women who bravely served this nation through its darkest moments or protected it during times of peace. **Any** Veteran of any U.S. involved war. **Any** Veteran who is currently serving. **Any** Veteran living or deceased. **Any** Veteran who took the oath of enlistment & has been honorably discharged is eligible to be remembered.

The *Walls of Honor* is on-going. As long as veterans apply, there will be room for their names. Once a year we welcome all to attend our **Annual Honoree Dedication Ceremony** where new honorees names are placed on the Walls of Honor.

**There is a \$100.00 application fee for each name to be engraved.**

Donations are always greatly appreciated.

For additional information please contact Allison Ridam Krivosheiw  
cell/text: 516-236-3245 /alliridam@gmail.com

revAR 05/2024



## TO REGISTER:



Type or Print all information CLEARLY

Each registration form should include ONE NAME - For additional forms contact Allison or Joan Ridam @ 516-804-5802

**NOTE: BE SURE TO INCLUDE A COPY** of DD-214 or SEPARATION PAPERS or ANY OTHER TYPE OF PROOF OF SERVICE

Along with Proof of Nassau County Residency

Donor's name:

Address:

Town:

State:

Zip Code:

Area code & Phone number (Please circle: Home / Cell )

### HONOREE INFORMATION:

All Letters are Capital Letters. For lower case letters, circle the box (e.g. Mc, Mac)  
Leave blank boxes for space between words.

1. Name of Veteran being honored:

( First, Middle, Last)

JOHN E. MCCORMICK

2. Branch of service:

\* See below for abbreviations

3. Date of service: (optional)

4. If applicable: Prisoner of War - Missing in Action - Killed in Action Please include proof of status.

check box: POW ☐ MIA ☐ KIA ☐

**IMPORTANT:** SERVICE MEMBERS' NAMES ARE NOT ENGRAVED ALPHABETICALLY. THEY ARE ENGRAVED IN THE ORDER THEY ARE RECEIVED. THE INFORMATION YOU SUBMIT IS WHAT WILL BE ENGRAVED ON THE WALL.  
DOUBLE - CHECK YOUR INFORMATION. If you wish to place multiple names on a panel, submit together a separate application for each person. In receipt of this form, the donor will be sent a certificate of acknowledgement.

#### \*Service Branch Abbreviations:

USA - US Army / USAF - US Air Force / USN - US Navy / USMC - US Marine Corps / USCG - US Coast Guard /  
USAAC - US Army Air Corps / USAAF - US Army Air Force / USMM - US Merchant Marines / USANG - US Army National Guard /  
NYARNG - NY Army Reserved National Guard / ANG - Air National Guard / USNG - US National Guard / WAC - Women Army Corp /  
ABN - Army Airborne / USSF - US Space Force / All service prior year 1900, e.g.: Civil War, Revolutionary War-please contact us.

Submit this completed form, payment and proof of service & residency to:

Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund, Inc

PO Box 7911

Hicksville, New York 11802-7911

For additional information please contact Allison Ridam Krivosheiv cell/text: 516-236-3245 / alliridam@gmail.com

The Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund, Inc. is a 501-(c)(3) non- profit organization. It is a private organization and not part of Nassau County government and has no affiliation with any government agency. Federal Tax # upon request.

Please make check payable to : Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund, Inc.

The Walls Of Honor are open to Nassau County Veteran residences living &/or deceased

*A \$100.00 application fee for each Veteran name is all that is required to ensure that future generations know the sacrifice & courage of these brave Americans.*