



Jan-Mar 2021

LI 202 AFA news

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President's Message

Although we've had to postpone our Vietnam Medal Ceremonies over the past few months due to COVID-19, we're still accepting applications from any Long Island Vietnam veterans who wish to receive a Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal at one of our upcoming ceremonies once they resume. To date we have held 32 Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremonies and have presented medals to almost 1,000 veterans.

The requirements are:

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

You will find a medal application at the end of this newsletter. You can also download one from our website at LIAFA.org.

Please look to the LIAFA Facebook page and/or our website at liafa.org for future notices regarding any upcoming events.

We're still waiting to hear whether *Shootout for Soldiers*, the 24-hour lacrosse team tournament, will be held this summer as usual; it was canceled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If it does take place, a Vietnam medal ceremony will also be held on one day during the event.

Please, get your COVID shots, wear your masks, practice social distancing and let's get back ASAP to business as usual!

CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2021

Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:

There are no Vietnam medal ceremonies scheduled for the next several months due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Memorial Day Weekend:

Sat & Sun, May 29-30, 2021

American Airpower Museum
1230 New Highway
Farmingdale

Table Display—All Day

(Subject to museum policy—please check our Facebook page as we get closer to the date)

80th Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony—Dropping of the Roses:

Tue, Dec. 7, 2021

American Airpower Museum
1230 New Highway
Farmingdale
10:30 AM

Jewish War Veterans 125th Anniversary Ceremony

At 12 PM on March 15, the Jewish War Veterans Post 652 of Merrick and the Nassau-Suffolk Council of Jewish War Veterans held a 125th anniversary ceremony at the Veterans Plaza in Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. The MC was Eric Spinner, Chaplain of American Legion Williston Post 144; the keynote speaker was Gary Glick, Post 652 Commander. Guest speakers included Congressman Tom Suozzi, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran and Veterans Service Agency Director Ralph Esposito. The guest of honor was Renee Taback, daughter of JWV monument designer Max Graber.

Founded in 1896, the Jewish War Veterans is the nation's longest-running veterans service organization.

IN MEMORIAM

On the Third Anniversary of the Death of Four ANG Members of the 106th Rescue Wing

On March 15, 2018, four New York Air National Guard members assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, stationed at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach died in a helicopter crash in Iraq. The four New York Air National Guard Airmen were part of a seven-member team who died when the HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopter they were flying crashed around 9:40 PM near the city of Al-Qa'im in western Iraq. Enemy action was not a factor in the crash; the helicopter overflew the intended destination, where its main rotor struck a 3/8-inch-thick galvanized steel cable that hung between two 341-foot-high towers. The subsequent investigation found several factors that contributed to the incident, including confusing aircraft navigation displays leading the pilot to overfly the destination, a breakdown in communications to detect and report the navigation error, low ambient light that negated night vision capability and a poorly designed flight plan.

Killed were:

- **Capt. Christopher Zanetis**, 37, of Long Island City, New York, who was an HH-60G Pave Hawk pilot. He joined the 106th Rescue Wing in 2008 and was assigned to the wing's 101st Rescue Squadron. Zanetis was a member of the New York City Fire Department in civilian life and had recently joined the law firm of Debevoise & Plimpton in New York City as an associate.
- **Capt. Andreas O'Keefe**, 37, of Center Moriches, New York, who was an HH-60G Pave Hawk pilot. He was a full-time federal civilian employee and an Air Guardsman with the wing's 101st Rescue Squadron. He joined the 106th Rescue Wing in 2013.
- **Master Sgt. Christopher Raguso**, 39, a resident of Commack, New York, who was an HH-60G special missions aviation flight engineer. He joined the 106th Rescue Wing in 2001 and was a member of the New York City Fire Department. He was assigned to the wing's 101st Rescue Squadron.
- **Staff Sgt. Dashan Briggs**, 30, a resident of Port Jefferson Station, New York, who was an HH-60G special missions aviation flight engineer. He joined the 106th Rescue Wing in 2010. He was a full-time military member with the wing and assigned to the 101st Rescue Squadron. He was posthumously promoted to Technical Sergeant.

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Other Upcoming Events, Meetings and Programs

We strongly recommend calling or emailing the appropriate organization for any events, meetings or programs that are listed below to make sure that they have not been canceled, restricted, made virtual or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many of them have been.

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.

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.

VetsWork by Long Island Cares

This program provides help for veterans seeking employment by assisting with creating a resume, writing a cover letter, learning interview skills and more. They also offer online courses, seminars and exercises that help veterans handle career adjustment issues. For more information, please call Fern Summer at (631) 824-6385 (email at fsummer@licares.org) or Michael Haynes at (631) 824-6386. Their website is www.vetswork.org.

Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project

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 traumatic brain injury; a diagnosis is NOT required for attendance. All groups are confidential and anonymous. Weekly group meetings are held in Amityville (Mondays), Bay Shore, Yaphank, Sag Harbor (Tuesdays), East Patchogue, Riverhead, Patchogue (Wednesdays), and Mount Sinai (Thursdays). Snacks and light refreshments are served at all meetings. They also provide services to student veterans at numerous Long Island college campuses and monthly community outreach in Sachem, Huntington Station, and Patchogue. For more information and exact meeting locations, please call (631) 853-8345, send an email to vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov or go to mhaw.org/dwyer/programs-services/peer-support-groups. 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); First Presbyterian Church, 178 S. Ocean Ave. in Freeport at 6:30 PM on Thursdays. 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. No pre-registration is necessary. For more information, please contact Brent Russell at (516) 489-2322, ext. 1213 or email at brussell@mhanc.org; Audrey Lewis at (516) 489-2322, ext. 1260 or email at alewis@mhanc.org. Also check out their website: veteranshealthalliance.org.

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.

Donate a Bicycle to Beacon House to Help a Veteran

Beacon House provides housing in 42 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. Contact Ed Aulman at mardiv1@optonline.net or call him at (516) 921-0595. A charitable donation receipt will be provided by Beacon House.

Veterans News UVO Long Island is looking for volunteers to act as crew members for its weekly show on public access TV. The show airs on Cablevision channel 20 on Tuesdays at 6:30 PM and on channel 115 on Thursdays at 3:30 PM or any time on YouTube by entering *Veterans News UVO*. The crew meets at the Cablevision Studio in Hauppauge to tape the program, usually on the last Tuesday of each month at 1 PM. Please contact Ed Aulman at mardiv1@optonline.net or call him at (516) 921-0595.

Please contact Ed Aulman first to see if they're still taping during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rally Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War II (POSTPONED)

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on large gatherings, this event has been **POSTPONED** until further notice. The organizers hope to reschedule it for some time in the Spring of 2021. The Village of Lynbrook will be hosting the rally.

Novelty War Bonds to help cover the rally expenses can be bought through the village's website <https://www.lynbrookvillage.net/bond> (click on the big red button) in the name of a family member or in honor of someone who served. These "bonds" will be offered in the following denominations:

Victory Bond (\$20), Liberty Bond (\$100), Freedom Bond (\$500), Constitution Bond (\$1,000) and Peace Bond (\$5,000) ***(Disclaimer—these novelty bonds are DONATIONS, NOT actual investment bonds).***

All novelty bonds purchased will be recognized online and at Greis Park, which will serve as the rally's final stop. After all rally-related expenses are paid, the remaining funds will be forwarded to the United Veterans Organization of Nassau County (UVO) to administer an endowment to aid homeless veterans.

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Seeking applicants for Col. Francis S. Gabreski and LTC Alphonse Parisi Scholastic Grants

Eligible applicants for our \$1,000.00 Scholastic Grant program are high school seniors going on to college. Applicants must have a military connection to apply. Examples include: a dependent of an active-duty military member, ANG/NG member or other reserve component member. Students with relatives who are veterans are also eligible. Students can go to our web page at LIAFA.org to see if they qualify and to download an application (click on "Scholastic Grant Application", then click on "Grant Application" and finally click on "Grant Application" again). *Please note that the application form must be printed and mailed.* The deadline for applying is June 30th.

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PLANES ON PARADE

North American B-25 Mitchell Medium Bomber



B-25C Mitchell in flight over California, 1942—US Army Air Force photo

One of the most recognizable planes flown during World War II, the iconic twin-engine B-25 was the weapon chosen to launch America's first retaliatory blow, the Doolittle Raid, against the Empire of Japan on April 18, 1942, barely four months after Japan's December 7, 1941 surprise sneak attack on the American naval and air facilities at Pearl Harbor on Oahu, Hawaii.

In March 1939, six months before Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, the Army Air Corps issued specifications for a medium bomber. It had to be capable of carrying a 2400-pound payload over 1200 miles at 300 miles per hour. The new plane, initially dubbed NA-62, was rushed into

production without testing in September 1939 and renamed the B-25. It was called the Mitchell after the late famed airpower pioneer Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell.

The Doolittle Raid, led by Lieutenant Colonel James "Jimmy" Doolittle, was one of the most audaciously improbable military air strikes ever conducted. The principal target was Japan's capital city, Tokyo. The Japanese considered their home islands to be unreachable by Allied air attack since the Japanese coast was strongly defended and a vast area around Japan had been overrun by the Japanese military shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The only possible way to attack Japan was with carrier-based aircraft, but the existing U.S. Navy planes simply did not have the range to enable them to reach the Japanese mainland without the carriers having to get unacceptably close to the Japanese coast. The concept to use Army twin-engine bombers for the raid came from Navy Captain Francis S. Low, Assistant Chief of Staff for Antisubmarine Warfare, after he had observed several such bombers taking off from a runway at the naval base at Norfolk, Virginia that featured the outline of an aircraft carrier deck. Captain Donald "Wu" Duncan, Air Operations Officer, was tasked with planning the raid and after considering which of several bombers might be suitable for the job, he concluded that the B-25's specs made it the top choice. Jimmy Doolittle, who had been made co-planner of the raid, concurred. The USS Hornet, the Navy's newest and fastest carrier, would be used to launch the bombers; it had the deck length and the speed to give the B-25s the best chance of successfully taking off, a feat which had never before been attempted. It would be a one-way trip for the B-25s since none of the medium bombers of the day could land on an aircraft carrier. Therefore, the plan was that the planes would land in China after they had completed their bombing runs. After months of specialized training and practice, the 16 planes and their crews set sail aboard the Hornet on April 2, 1942 from the Naval Air Station at Alameda, California, the town where Jimmy Doolittle was born. On April 18, the carrier group was spotted by a Japanese picket ship, which was promptly sunk but which managed to get off a warning message to Japan. Because of this, the decision was made to launch the planes about 250 miles short of their intended launch point, which made the trip even more perilous since the fuel supply had been critical to begin with. Flying at low level to avoid detection, the B-25s struck multiple targets in Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, Osaka, Nagoya and Yokosuka. With one exception, all the aircraft delivered their ordnance. Resistance was light, with most Japanese assuming that the planes flying overhead must be Japanese. Except for one aircraft that reached the Soviet Union, all the others either crash-landed or their crews bailed out in China due to lack of fuel. One of the raiders died while bailing out and the survivors of two crews (8 men) were captured by the Japanese. Three of them were executed after a show trial and a fourth died while a prisoner. The other crew members were helped by Chinese forces or civilians and eventually made it back home. The raid did relatively little physical damage, but it did shake up the Japanese public and leadership and provided a much-needed morale boost to the American public after months of nothing but bad news. While in China, Doolittle actually thought he might be court-martialed due to the minimal damage inflicted and the loss of so many aircraft and crew. Instead, upon his return home, he was awarded the Medal of Honor and promoted to Brigadier General.

The B-25 was used by many Allied air forces and served in every theater of World War II, but the Pacific theater was where it saw its greatest use. Including all the variants produced, nearly 10,000 B-25s were built. The airframe proved to be versatile for many tasks—the B-25 served as a medium bomber, a gunship, a maritime patrol bomber, a trainer and a reconnaissance aircraft. The gunship variants G, H and J carried multiple 50-caliber machine guns in the nose as well as rockets and cannon. The B-25 was used extensively against Japanese shipping using skip-bombing as well as against airfields using parachute-retarded fragmentation bombs. Together with submarines, the B-25s destroyed much of Japan's merchant shipping, with the result that Japan found it extremely difficult to supply food, medicine and petroleum products not only to its troops in the field but also to its citizens at home.

An odd fact involving a B-25, from Wikipedia: At 9:40 AM on Saturday, 28 July 1945, a USAAF B-25D crashed in thick fog into the north side of the Empire State Building between the 79th and 80th floors.

Fourteen people died—11 in the building and the three occupants of the aircraft, including the pilot, Colonel William F. Smith. Betty Lou Oliver, an elevator attendant, survived the impact and the subsequent fall of the elevator cage 75 stories to the basement.

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Did you know . . .

Braille began as a French military code called *night writing*, which was developed by Captain Charles Barbier to enable French soldiers to communicate at night without speaking or using candles. Louis Braille, who was blinded at the age of three, learned this system, then simplified and improved it in 1824 while a 15-year-old student at the Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles (National Institute for Blind Children) in Paris, France.

Bob Ross, the late star of the TV program *The Joy of Painting*, was a former Master Sergeant in the Air Force. He was trained as a medical service technician and was the First Sergeant at the clinic at Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska. Having held military positions that required him to act tough and mean, "the guy who makes you scrub the latrine, the guy who makes you make your bed, the guy who screams at you for being late to work", Ross decided he would not raise his voice again after he left the military. Ross died due to complications from lymphoma in 1995 at the age of 52.

Bell Aircraft's chief test pilot Jack Valentine Woolams was one of a small secretive group of test pilots, engineers, technicians and maintenance troops who were evaluating America's first military jet, the Bell XP-59A, in the early 1940s at an area that was later to become the secretive North Base section of Edwards Air Force Base in California. The Army Air Corps and Bell Aircraft went to great lengths to keep the project a secret. Whenever the plane was towed from the hangar, a fake propeller was hung from the nose in order to fool anyone who might spot the experimental aircraft on the ground. In the fall of 1943, Woolams was flying the XP-59A one day and spotted a P-38 from a nearby training unit flying close by. Being an inveterate prankster, Woolams decided to have a little fun, removing his flight helmet and putting on a gorilla mask and derby hat. He pulled abreast of the P-38 and looked straight at the other pilot while waving a cigar. This must have made quite an impression, especially since the "gorilla" was flying a plane with no propeller. Then Woolams tipped his hat and dove towards the ground, disappearing from view. The unknown P-38 pilot recounted his story at the bar later that night, but of course nobody believed him. After all, as the argument went, an airplane can't fly without a propeller! Woolams reportedly pulled the same stunt on several other P-38 trainees.

Taps



Fred Amore, Jr. of East Northport, Army veteran and longest-serving commander of VFW Post 9263 of Elwood, passed away on February 28 of complications from COVID-19 at the age of 73. Fred served as a helicopter door gunner in Vietnam with the 1st Aviation Battalion during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Amore also served as vice chairman of the Veterans Advisory Board and on the committee that selects military academy appointees.



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Taps



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Charles M. (Chuck) Carlucci of Elmont, Army veteran, member of Elmont American Legion Post 1033 and former president of the UVO (United Veterans Organization of Nassau County), passed away on February 4 at the age of 78.



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Taps



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William Joseph Johnson of Glen Cove, a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, passed away on January 28 at the age of 95. Since his class had not yet graduated by the time the war in Europe ended in May 1945, he never served overseas. Two brothers also served during World War II, one with the Army in Europe and one in the Navy in the Pacific. A third brother served during the Korean War. After the war, Johnson went to college and later worked as a toolmaker at Fairchild and then at Grumman, where he worked for 28 years, retiring as tooling department supervisor.



Credit: Howard Schnapp

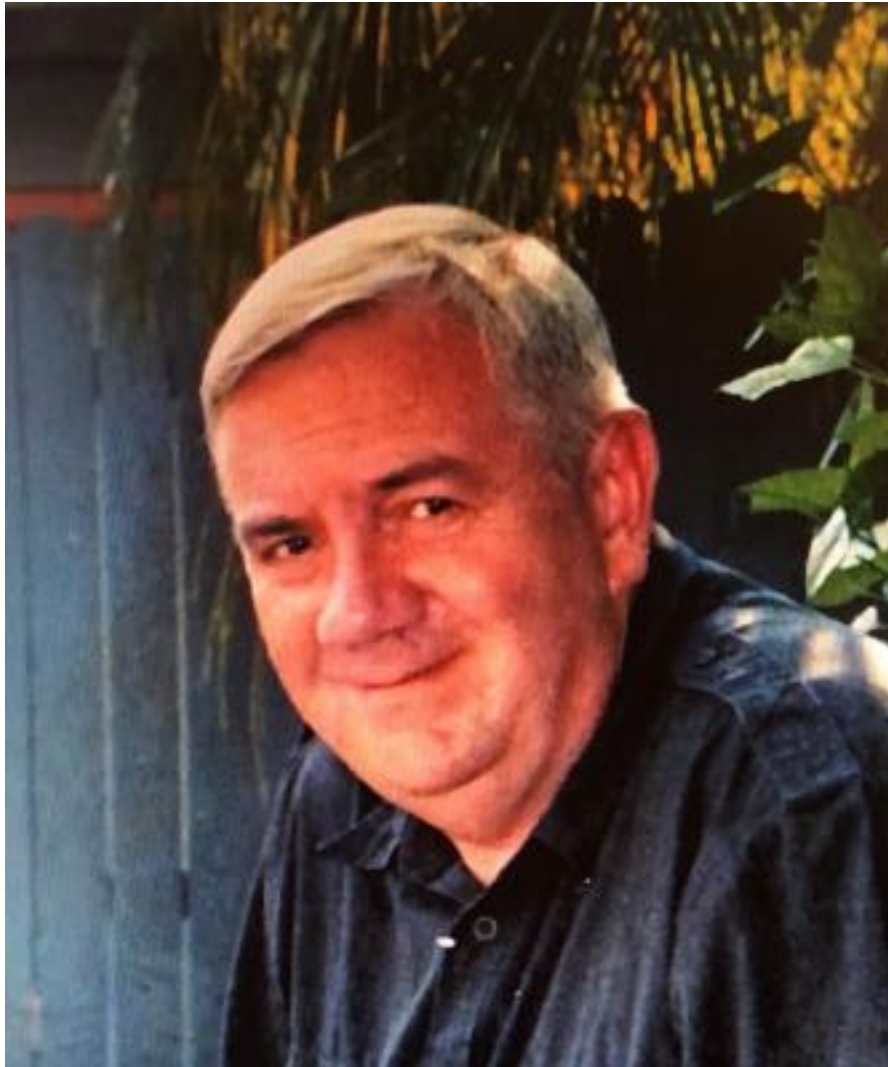
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Kenneth Rommel of Freeport, a counselor at the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency, passed away on February 14 from a heart attack related to COVID-19 at the age of 74. A Navy veteran, he was a member of the Vietnam War Veterans Association (VWVA), the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and the North Bellmore American Legion Post 1749 as well as a VWVA Rep to the Nassau County United Veterans Organization (UVO). His wife Joyce is also a well-known figure in veterans' circles here on Long Island, being involved with the VWVA as well as with Agent Orange Awareness and the UVO.





THE LONG ISLAND AIR FORCE 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 send a copy of your DD-214 (block out your Social Security Number) and this application to:

Fred DiFabio, 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.
- 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.