



Jan-Mar 2020

# LI 202 AFA news

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*Visit us on the WEB:*

***LIAFA.ORG***

*Visit us on FACEBOOK:*

***Long Island Air Force Association—LIAFA***

***Email us at: [LIAFA202@gmail.com](mailto:LIAFA202@gmail.com)***

***Newsletter editor: Steven Latus***

## **CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2020**

### **Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:**

**Sat, Apr. 4, 2020—POSTPONED**

St. Joseph College  
155 W. Roe Blvd.  
Patchogue  
11:30 AM

**Sat, Jun. 6, 2020**

Long Island State Veterans Home  
100 Patriots Rd.  
Stony Brook  
2:30 PM

**(See page 2 for more Vietnam medal ceremonies)**

### **Memorial Day Weekend:**

**Sat & Sun, May 23-24, 2020**

American Airpower Museum  
1230 New Highway, Hangar 3  
Farmingdale  
Table Display - All Day

### **Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony—Dropping of the Roses:**

**Mon, Dec. 7, 2020**

American Airpower Museum  
Farmingdale  
10:30 AM

## **President's Message**

We're still looking for current Long Island Vietnam veterans who wish to receive a Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal at one of our upcoming ceremonies. To date we have held 31 Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremonies and have presented medals to over 900 veterans.

The requirements are:

- Served in Vietnam or 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. Please feel free to use it to apply for a medal yourself, or to give it to a qualified friend or family member who would be interested in applying. You can also download an application from our website at [LIAFA.org](http://LIAFA.org).

***Please note that, due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, we have POSTPONED the April 4 Vietnam medal ceremony and MAY have to postpone the June 6 ceremony as well. Please look to the LIAFA Facebook page and our website at [liafa.org](http://liafa.org) for future notices regarding upcoming events.***

Be safe out there.

## **Other Upcoming Events, Meetings and Programs**

### **Additional Vietnam Medal Ceremonies**

Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 5:00 PM at the Shootout for Soldiers at the Town of Oyster Bay Field of Dreams, 5619 Old Sunrise Highway, Massapequa.

Saturday, Sep. 26, 2020 at 11 AM at the Cradle of Aviation Museum, Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Garden City.

***Please look to the LIAFA Facebook page and our website at [liafa.org](http://liafa.org) for future notices regarding possible postponements or cancellations of scheduled upcoming Vietnam medal ceremonies due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.***

***We also recommend calling or emailing the appropriate organization for any events that are listed below to make sure that they have not been canceled or postponed.***

### **Military Appreciation Tuesdays by Long Island Cares**

Every Tuesday from 9 AM to 5 PM at their Huntington Station, Freeport and Lindenhurst locations. This is a chance for veterans and their families to access food, personal care items, household products and pet food (also school supplies when available). There is also a mobile food pantry for disabled vets. For more information, please call (631) 582-3663.

### **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 needy veterans on a monthly basis. 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.

### **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](mailto:fsummer@licares.org)) or Michael Haynes at (631) 824-6386. Their website is [www.vetswork.org](http://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](mailto:vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov) or go to [mhaw.org/programs/scuv/dwyer-project](http://mhaw.org/programs/scuv/dwyer-project). 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](mailto:brussell@mhanc.org); Audrey Lewis at (516) 489-2322, ext. 1260 or email at [alewis@mhanc.org](mailto:alewis@mhanc.org). Also check out their website: [veteranshealthalliance.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:mardiv1@optonline.net) or call him at (516) 921-0595.

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### **32<sup>nd</sup> Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremony**

**30 Vietnam veterans** were presented with Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medals and Certificates of Appreciation during LIAFA's 32<sup>nd</sup> Vietnam medal ceremony on February 1 at the Museum of American Armor in Old Bethpage. Distinguished guests included Nassau County Executive **Laura Curran**, New York State Senator **John Brooks**, Community Affairs Director for the Museum of American Armor **Kevin Carroll**, Judge Advocate General for the 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing LTC **Alan Berkowitz** and Chaplain for the 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing LTC **Brian McNamara**. We'd also like to thank our sponsors—Shootout for Soldiers, Telephonics Corporation and the Museum of American Armor as well as the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 82, American Legion Riders Greenlawn Post 1244, Patriot Guard Riders, Civil Air Patrol Cadet Squadron 8, vocalist Flotilla Staff Officer Louis DiLeo and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band Flotilla 22-7, who always add so much to our ceremonies.





\*\*\* Please go to our website at [LIAFA.org](http://LIAFA.org) for more photos.



## Republic P-47 Thunderbolt



*The P-47N, the last Thunderbolt variant to be produced. It was designed as an escort fighter for the B-29 Superfortresses being used in bombing raids against Japan.*

Produced from 1941 to 1945, the P-47 Thunderbolt (AKA the 'Jug') was one of the heaviest and fastest fighters of World War II, weighing close to 8 tons when fully loaded. In addition to its fighter role, it was very effective as a ground-attack aircraft, being able to carry either 2,500 pounds of bombs or ten 5-inch rockets. Its primary armament consisted of eight .50 caliber M-2 Browning machine guns, with four being mounted in each wing. The maximum speed of the P-47D (the most produced variant) was 433 miles per hour (and could reach speeds of 550 mph in a dive). It was powered by a Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp 18-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine generating 2,600 horsepower, the same engine that also powered the Navy/Marine Corps Grumman F6F Hellcat and the Vought F4U Corsair. It was used in both the European and Pacific theaters.

The Jug was renowned for its ruggedness, due in part to its air-cooled radial engine, which could absorb more punishment than a liquid-cooled engine and still function. Its large size and sturdy airframe also served it well with helping its pilots make it safely back to base.

On June 26, 1943, during a mission from England into France, Robert S. Johnson would find out just how tough his Jug would prove to be. Soon after entering French airspace, he and his fellow airmen ran into a group of FW-190s. Before he could even communicate with the rest of his flight, his plane was hit with 20mm cannon fire that smashed his canopy and punched several holes in his airframe. His plane was soon hit by more explosions, causing an engine fire that caused smoke to come into his cockpit. He couldn't bail out since his canopy was jammed. He battled mightily to save his out-of-control aircraft and eventually managed to straighten it out into level flight. The engine fire somehow had gone out, but his instrument panel was shattered, and oil and hydraulic fluid were blowing into his eyes (he had neglected to wear his goggles that morning). A bullet had also nicked his nose and another went into his right leg, where the bullet split in half. He started to turn his plane back toward England and found that an FW-190 was on his tail. The German poured 7.92mm machine-gun fire into Johnson's plane during several passes but was unable to bring his plane down (fortunately for Johnson, the German pilot was out of ammunition for his 20mm cannons). As they were flying over the Channel, his adversary, Luftwaffe ace Egon Mayer, pulled up alongside, rocked his wings in salute and flew off before they reached the English coast. Johnson managed to land successfully at his base in Manston, after which he later learned that his P-47 had twenty-one 20mm cannon shell holes and more than 200 7.92mm machine-gun bullet holes in it. Johnson would later go on to become the second-highest-scoring P-47 ace of the war with 27 victories (the top-scoring P-47 ace was Long Islander Francis "Gabby" Gabreski with 28 victories). Gabreski was also an Air Force Association member and the former Suffolk County AFA chapter was named after him (it merged into the Long Island Air Force Association Chapter 202 in 1998). The Francis S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach is home to the ANG 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing.

The P-47, along with the Lockheed P-38 Lightning, performed the early bomber escort duty in Europe with some success, but it simply did not have the range needed to accompany the bombers all the way into Germany and was eventually replaced in that role by the North American P-51 Mustang. By war's end, the P-47 had scored 3,752 aerial victories.

By late 1943, the P-47 had become the US Army Air Forces' primary fighter-bomber. From D-Day until VE Day, Thunderbolt pilots claimed to have destroyed 86,000 railroad cars, 9,000 locomotives, 6,000 armored fighting vehicles, and 68,000 trucks.

## Did you know . . .

**Two U.S. presidents served as airmen**—Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Reagan served when the branch was still known as the Army Air Forces. George W. Bush served in the Texas Air National Guard before transferring to the Air Force Reserve.

**The Army was tasked with mapping America.** The scope of this exploration and mapping task included the Lewis and Clark expedition. Army officers were some of the first American citizens to see Pike's Peak and the Grand Canyon.

**The Marines' first land battle on foreign soil was in Libya.** During this battle, 600 Marines stormed the city of Derna to rescue the crew of the USS Philadelphia from pirates.

**There has only been one five-star General of the Air Force** and his name was Henry "Hap" Arnold. He was an aviation pioneer and rose to command the Army Air Forces immediately prior to American entry into World War II. On May 7, 1949, his final rank and grade was changed to General of the Air Force. No one else has held this rank. He is also the ONLY person to hold five-star rank in two U.S. military services (Army and Air Force).

## Taps



**Alfred “Al” Worden**, former astronaut and Air Force colonel, died in his sleep at a rehab center in Houston, TX on March 17 at the age of 88 following treatment for an infection. Worden flew to the moon in 1971 along with David Scott and Jim Irwin. As command module pilot for the Apollo 15 mission, Worden remained in lunar orbit aboard the Endeavour while Scott and Irwin descended to the surface and tried out NASA's first moon buggy. On the way back to Earth, Worden performed the first deep-space spacewalk to inspect the service module's science instrument bay and to retrieve film—nearly 200,000 miles from Earth. The spacewalk lasted 38 minutes.

**James Lipton** of New York City (Manhattan) died of bladder cancer on March 2 at the age of 93. He was an Air Force veteran and as host of the cable-television show "Inside the Actors Studio" for two decades, he interviewed hundreds of Hollywood celebrities.

**John McGlohon** of Asheboro, NC, the World War II veteran known for taking a photo of the Hiroshima atomic bomb blast on August 6, 1945, died on February 2 at the age of 96. The photographer for a B-29 crew and a US Army Air Force sergeant, he took the photos that day after his plane was mistakenly flying over the city. His plane was on an unrelated mission whose flight path just happened to take them over Hiroshima. On Oct. 5, 1945, McGlohon was discharged from the service without ever seeing a print of the photos he'd shot over Hiroshima — a print he would not see until half a century later at a reunion.





## 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 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 (sanitize your Social Security Number) and this  
application to:

Fred DiFabio, President  
67 Pacific Dunes Court  
Medford, NY 11763



For information call:  
631-754-6383

- The Long Island Air Force Association has awarded to date over 650 medals during 21 ceremonies
- Visit our web page and view the video to gain a sense of the ceremony: [LIAFA.ORG](http://LIAFA.ORG)
- Checkout our Facebook page at: 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.

**THIS MEDAL IS TO HONOR OUR LONG ISLAND LIVING VETERANS**  
**(Not awarded posthumously)**