



Jul-Sep 2018

# LI 202 AFA news

## Chapter Officers

Fred Di Fabio	President
Steven Latus	Vice President
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Kenneth J. Nevor	VP Media and Communications
Cathy Ward	Secretary
Bill Stratemeier	Treasurer

*Visit us on the WEB:*

**LIAFA.ORG**

*Visit us on FACEBOOK:*

**Long Island Air Force Association – LIAFA**

*Email us at: [Llafa202@gmail.com](mailto:Llafa202@gmail.com)*

*Newsletter editor: Steven Latus*

## CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2018

### **Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:**

**Sat, Nov 3, 2018**

American Airpower Museum  
Farmingdale  
11:30 AM

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

**Fri, Dec. 7, 2018**

American Airpower Museum  
Farmingdale  
10:30 AM

## **President's Message**

The Long Island Air Force Association is 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 24 Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremonies and have presented medals to over 750 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)

We would like to invite all our members to show their support and to join their comrades at these upcoming events. We know that some of you may be unable to attend, but if you would like to help, you may donate to the chapter and support these programs.

Donations can be sent to:

Long Island Air Force Association  
Fred Di Fabio, President  
67 Pacific Dunes Court  
Medford, NY 11763

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).

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

### **General Needs Ltd.**

Saturday, September 29, 1 PM to 4PM at Sunrise Senior Living, 1555 Glenn Curtiss Blvd., East Meadow. Join their fundraising family festivities—bounce house, face painting, cotton candy and more.

Located in Northport, this is a nonprofit 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 president and founder Lonnie Sherman at (516) 672-9595 or email him at [LonnieSherman@GeneralNeeds.org](mailto:LonnieSherman@GeneralNeeds.org). Visit their website at [www.GeneralNeeds.org](http://www.GeneralNeeds.org) or go to their Facebook page.

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

Sunday, November 4, 10 AM at Eisenhower Park, Veterans Memorial Plaza (Parking Field 6). Please join us at Eisenhower Park to honor all military veterans past and present. For more information, please call (516) 798-3710.

### **Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization (LINCMO) Veterans Day Ceremony**

Sunday, November 4, 1:30 PM at the Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Avenue in Farmingdale. For more information, contact Andy Booth at (516) 731-6421.

### **Veterans Winter Stand Down**

Tuesday, November 20, 10 AM to 2 PM at the Freeport Armory located at 63 Babylon Turnpike, Freeport (just west of the Meadowbrook Parkway interchange). All services for veterans are FREE of charge at the event. VA Benefits Counseling, Support Services, Health Screenings, Legal Assistance, Clothing, Haircuts, Food Distribution, Representatives from County, State and Federal Agencies and a Free Holiday Meal. Call (516) 572-6565 or email – [resposito1@nassaucountyny.gov](mailto:resposito1@nassaucountyny.gov).

### **Veteran Peer Night**

Every Tuesday, 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM at Veteran Activity Center, 2184 Pond Road, Ronkonkoma. Hosted by Boots on the Ground NY: <http://www.bootsonthegroundny.com> and on Facebook. Some weeks the group may go to outside activities, bowling, movies, adventure park, etc. so please check event each week, or call the VAC and leave a message at (631) 615-2200. No paperwork, no fees, no membership, completely confidential.

### **Female Veteran Peer Night (female vets only)**

The first and third Thursday of each month, 6 PM to 8 PM at Veteran Activity Center, 2184 Pond Road, Ronkonkoma. Hosted by Boots on the Ground NY. Some weeks the group may go to outside activities, bowling, movies, adventure park, etc. so please check event each week, or call the VAC and leave a message at (631) 615-2200. No paperwork, no fees, no membership, completely confidential.

### **Food Pantry Drive and Care Package Supply Collection**

On the third Saturday of each month, 10 AM to 3 PM at Veteran Activity Center (VAC), 2184 Pond Road, Ronkonkoma. Hosted by Boots on the Ground NY.

### **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.

### **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. 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.

### **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; however, a diagnosis is not required for attendance. All groups are confidential and anonymous. Weekly group meetings are held in Amityville, Bay Shore, Yaphank, Sag Harbor, Hauppauge and Ronkonkoma. 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, Northport/East Northport, and Mastic-Moriches-Shirley community libraries. For more information, please call (631) 853-8345, send an email to [vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov) or visit their website at [www.dwyerproject.org](http://www.dwyerproject.org). They also have a Facebook page.

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Another beautiful summer day marked the annual Shootout for Soldiers Long Island, which took place on July 12-13 at the Town of Oyster Bay Field of Dreams in Massapequa. Three fields each had lacrosse matches running continuously for 24 hours. The mission of the Shootout is to use lacrosse as a platform to support American veterans and foster good community relations. This year Shootout for Soldiers Long Island raised over \$178,000 for wounded veterans. Thanks are due to the two co-chairmen of Shootout for Soldiers Long Island, Harry Jacobs and Mike Nelson, as well as to the participating teams, coaches, volunteers, sponsors and attendees whose efforts made this event such a smashing success.

During the Shootout, on July 12 at 5 PM, LIAFA held its 23<sup>rd</sup> Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremony on the lacrosse field. Colonel Michael Bank, Jr., Commander of the 106<sup>th</sup> ANG Rescue Wing, presented the medals to 16 recipients. A special presentation was also made to the Allstate Agents of Long Island for their generous donation of \$18,000 to the Shootout. Among those in attendance were State Senator John Brooks, Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran and Colonel (Retired) Michael Canders, the aviation center director at Farmingdale State College. As the ceremony finished, the crowd was treated with paratroopers from the All Veteran Group who navigated their way through the air to land at midfield.

We'd like to give a big shout-out to our sponsors, Shootout for Soldiers Long Island and Telephonics Corporation, as well as special thanks to the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band, American Legion Riders from Greenlawn Post #1244, Patriot Guard Riders, Rolling Thunder Chapter #6 and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter #82 Color Guard.





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From left to right in the front row: **Mike Nelson**, Co-chairman of Shootout for Soldiers Long Island; **Harry Jacobs**, Co-chairman of Shootout for Soldiers Long Island; **Laura Curran**, Nassau County Executive; **Rebecca Briggs**; **Carmela Raguso**; **Fred Di Fabio**, President of LIAFA chapter #202; and **Steve Bellone**, Suffolk County Executive

**Our 24<sup>th</sup> Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremony**, held at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City on September 22, was an especially notable event honoring not only the 29 medal recipients but also honoring the widows of two of the four 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing airmen who lost their lives when their helicopter crashed in Iraq on March 15, 2018, as reported in our Jan-Mar 2018 newsletter. **Rebecca Briggs**, wife of the late Tech Sergeant Dashan J. Briggs and **Carmela Raguso**, wife of the late Master Sergeant Christopher J. Raguso, were each presented with a \$5,000 check, courtesy of Shootout for Soldiers.

Special thanks go out to the Cradle of Aviation Museum, Commack Fire Department, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band, American Legion Riders from Greenlawn Post #1244, Patriot Guard Riders, U.S. Military Vets Motorcycle Club Long Island Chapter, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter #82 Color Guard and the cadets of Civil Air Patrol Squadron #8 as well as to our sponsors Shootout for Soldiers Long Island, Telephonics Corporation and VFW Plainview Post #5942.



## Freeport's 'Flying Flapper' remembered



The Freeport Historical Society held a ceremony to honor Elinor Smith for her contributions to aviation on July 20, and welcomed Smith's family, along with elected officials from the village, county and state.

COURTESY SENATOR BROOKS' OFFICE





*I had no business fooling  
around up there without  
oxygen —and I knew it.”*

## ELINOR SMITH, PIONEERING AVIATOR

It was virtually unheard of in the 1920s for a woman to fly a plane, but by October 1928, 17-year-old Freeporter Elinor Smith had flown under the Manhattan Bridge and three other crossings along the East River. After this series of aerobatics, she was nicknamed the “Flying Flapper of Freeport”.

Almost 90 years later, on July 20, the Freeport Historical Society and the Landmarks Commission memorialized Smith with a historical marker. Freeporter Kevin McKay donated money to erect the roadside tribute. Originally, it was to be placed in front of Smith's childhood home, on Nassau Avenue, but the homeowners didn't want it on their property.

“We respect their wishes,” said Regina Feeney, a Historical Society archivist and trustee, of the homeowners who now occupy Smith's one-time residence. “We will leave the marker at the Freeport Historical Society until such time as the marker can be placed in front of the home.”

The marker is now an exhibit at the society's museum, with photographs that the Sullivan family lent to the organization.

Freeport Mayor Robert Kennedy, Nassau County Legislator Debra Mulé, Freeport Memorial Library Director Ken Belfiore and State Sen. John Brooks joined members of the Historical Society and the Landmarks Commission to honor Freeport's own “Lady Eagle,” another nickname that Smith was known by.

Smith started flying at age 10 by taking lessons from Clyde Pangborn, a pilot known for his aerial stunts, and later from Frederick Lund, another pilot. By order of her father, Tom Smith, she could not be taught to take off or land (though she eventually learned how). Smith became the youngest pilot in the world at 16 when Orville Wright signed her pilot's certification.

Awarded her “freedom papers” to fly, Smith was unstoppable. In January 1929, she set a women's solo endurance record, 13½ hours. Then, three months later, she broke it with a 26½-hour flight. In 1930, she set a women's altitude record of 27,419 feet. Within a year, she reset that record at 32,576 feet, according to her son Patrick Sullivan, 80, who now lives Carmel, Calif.

“I had no business fooling around up there without oxygen — and I knew it,” Smith wrote of her record-breaking efforts in her autobiography, “Aviatrix,” published in 1981.

In the book, Smith described her days hanging out at Roosevelt Field around planes and aviation pioneers. She wore her brother's pants, a sports shirt, sneakers with argyle socks, a beat-up leather jacket, a cotton helmet and goggles.

Smith was moving up aviation's ranks around the same time that Amelia Earhart was taking flight. She beat Earhart in 1930 in a poll for “Best Woman Pilot in America.” In 1934 she became the first woman to grace the back panel of a Wheaties box after setting a solo endurance record, a world altitude record and a women's world speed record. Lou Gehrig appeared on the front of the box that year.

Sullivan came to Freeport with his older sister, Patricia Sullivan, 82, from New York City, and his youngest sister, Pamela Sullivan, 74, from Glen Cove, to honor their mother. The siblings sat at the Historical Society's table reminiscing and laughing about her antics.

"My mother was so thrilled to see the female airline pilots" later in her life, Patricia said. "She always said, 'There isn't anything that a female pilot can't do that a male pilot can do in a plane. It's not a matter of strength, but a matter of intelligence and endurance, and if women can bear children, they have the endurance.'"

According to Patricia, when her mother married Patrick Sullivan Jr., a state legislator and attorney, in 1933, the couple agreed that she should give up flying to raise their family. The Sullivan siblings said their mother spent her days caring for them, all the while sharing stories of her flying antics.

"There was always talk around the dinner table," Patrick said.

"Yeah," Patricia said, "it was always her stories of how she came in like this and pulled out like that."

After her husband's death in 1956, Elinor took to the skies once again, but this time just for fun. As a member of the Air Force Association, she was allowed to pilot the Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star jet trainer. At 89, she took one of her last flights on an experimental Raytheon F-33 Bonanza at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. She died in March 2010, at the age of 99.

Though she was an expert pilot, Smith never graduated from high school. On Oct. 6, 2010, Freeport Superintendent Dr. Kishore Kutcham posthumously awarded her a high school diploma at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City. Her family accepted the honor.

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**Did you know . . .** you can now submit requests online for copies of your DD Form 214, military medical records, replacement medals and other items? Please note that a written signature by mail or fax is required for online requests. **If you are the next of kin** (*un-remarried widow or widower, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister*) **of a deceased veteran**, you must provide proof of death of the veteran such as a copy of the death certificate, letter from the funeral home, or a published obituary. Go to [www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records](http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records).

**Adolf Hitler's nephew**, William Hitler, served in the US Navy during World War II.

**The Siege of Stalingrad** resulted in more Russian deaths (military and civilian) than the US and Britain sustained (combined) in all of World War II.

**More U.S. servicemen** died in the Air Corps than in the Marine Corps during World War II.

**The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War I**, "the war to end all wars", will occur on November 11, 2018, a conflict that witnessed the birth of military aviation. The war left 9 million soldiers dead and 21 million wounded; an estimated 5 million civilians also died.

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## Taps



**U.S. Senator John McCain** of Arizona, former U.S. Navy aviator during Vietnam war, prisoner of war, and 2008 Republican presidential candidate, died of brain cancer on August 25, only 4 days shy of his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

LinkedIn post by Michael F. Canders, PhD, ATP, Associate Professor and Aviation Center Director at Farmingdale State College:

Noble Veteran, Statesman and Leader. Always ready to don body armor and go downrange (here in Iraq) to be with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen in harm's way. Thank you for your superb example of service before self. May God Bless your family and may you Rest In Peace, Sir.



*USAF Col. Michael Canders with John McCain in Iraq circa Jan 2010*



# 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**
- 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)**