



Oct-Dec 2021

LI 202 AFA news

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Visit us on the WEB:

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Long Island Air Force Association—LIAFA

Email us at: LIAFA202@gmail.com

Newsletter editor: Steven Latus

CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2022

Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:

Upcoming ceremony dates for 2022 to be announced—necessitated by COVID restrictions. Please watch our website LIAFA.org and our Facebook page for dates.

81st Anniversary Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony—Dropping of the Roses:

Wed, Dec. 7, 2022

American Airpower Museum
1230 New Highway
Farmingdale
10:30 AM

President's Message

The Long Island Air Force Association is instituting a new program for Long Island **women veterans**, with ceremonies currently planned to begin sometime in mid-2022.

The requirements are:

- Female veteran who served 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 (awards are presented **only** at the ceremony; they are not mailed)

You will find an award 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.

Editor's Note: This month (January 2022), I will be ending my term as president of the UVO (United Veterans Organization of Nassau County) and will be starting my two-year term as president of LINC MO (Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization). I wish to express my gratitude to all the members of both organizations who have given me the opportunity to be of service.

80th Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony (Dropping of the Roses)

As always, the ceremony was held at the American Airpower Museum in Farmingdale on Tuesday, December 7. This year, special recognition was given to 16 World War II veterans in the form of proclamations presented by Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone and New York State Senator John Brooks.

Other distinguished guests included the Chaplain for the 106th Rescue Wing LTC Brian McNamara, Director of Staff for the 106th Rescue Wing LTC Scott Stenger, Commanding Officer of Navy Operational Support Center CMDR Creighton Ho, American Airpower Museum Operations Manager Larry Starr, Skytyper Pilot Tom Daly, Deputy Executive Director of the Long Island State Veterans Home Jonathan Spier and Vice President of Honor Flight Long Island Roger Kilfoil.

After the roses were blessed, the colors were retired, and the indoor ceremony ended, 81 roses (80 red roses and 1 white rose for 9/11) were presented to the pilots of the Skytypers, who then departed to drop the roses over the Statue of Liberty at 12:55 PM to mark the exact time of the Pearl Harbor attack.

Many thanks, as always, to our sponsors: Shootout for Soldiers, Long Island ABATE (American Bikers for Awareness, Training and Education), Telephonics Corporation, Long Island State Veterans Home and NDIA (National Defense Industrial Association).

Special thanks are also due to the American Airpower Museum, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band, vocalist COL Louis DiLeo, New York Skytypers, Navy Operational Support Center, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 82, Plainview VFW Post 5942, Applebee's Restaurant, Patriot Guard Riders, American Legion Riders Post 1244, Rolling Thunder Chapter 6, U.S. Military Vets Motorcycle Club, Civil Air Patrol Squadron 8, Costco of Melville and Sergeant at Arms Paul Massi (USMC veteran).

Following are some pictures from the event:



A pretty good turnout despite COVID and the ceremony being held on a workday



Honor guard with SNJ-2 aircraft that is preparing to take off to deliver the roses to the Statue of Liberty



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 82 color guard with President Steve Bonom (foreground)



The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band, always adding so much to our ceremonies

35th Veterans Winter Stand Down

The annual Winter Stand Down took place on Tuesday, November 23 at the Freeport Armory. Due to ongoing building renovations, it was a drive-through-only event (with some arriving by foot) and the only items distributed were clothes, boots, toiletries and nonperishable foods. Hundreds of veterans came to the event and a total of 463 bags were given out.

Participating organizations were the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, General Needs, Covanta, Long Island Cares, Island Harvest, Nassau County Veterans Service Agency and Association of the Disabled.

Long Island State Veterans Home (LISVH) 30th Anniversary

The Home celebrated its 30th anniversary with a special ceremony on Friday, October 29.

Speakers at the ceremony included New York State Assemblyman Steven Englebright, Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn, LISVH Executive Director Fred Sganga, Interim Dean of the Renaissance School of Medicine Dr. William Wertheim, LISVH Chaplain Rev. Gregory Leonard and LISVH Chairman Robert Smith.

The ceremony included the dedication and unveiling of a commemorative statue of a flying eagle with the inscription, "Honoring our residents, families, volunteers and employees."

The 350-bed skilled nursing facility provides round-the-clock nursing and sub-acute care to veterans of the United States Armed Forces and has provided care for more than 15,000 veterans.

Annual Veterans Picnic

The annual picnic was held on Saturday, October 23 at the Kite Field at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. Hundreds of veterans and their families were in attendance enjoying the free food, beverages and music.

Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Monument Opening Fundraiser

The fundraiser was held on Friday, October 15 from 6 PM to 9 PM at BrewSA Brewing Company on Freeport's Nautical Mile. All enjoyed the free wings and the open bar. A total of \$4,145 was raised for the monument, including \$500 graciously donated by BrewSA.

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

Other Upcoming Events, Meetings and Programs:

Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Monument for Eisenhower Park

A fund-raising effort is currently underway to fund the construction and installation of a monument to honor the veterans of Desert Storm (1990-1991), the war in Afghanistan (2001-2021) and the war in Iraq (2003-2011). It will be installed near the Vietnam veterans monument in Veterans Plaza in Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. This effort is being spearheaded by the Nassau County VFW Council in partnership with a committee of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

If you or your organization want to send a donation to support the project, please see the attached donation form at the end of this newsletter.

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, contact the Hofstra Legal Assistance Project at VLAP@hofstra.edu or call (516) 463-7302.

Volunteer Drivers Wanted for Veterans

The Nassau County Veterans Service Agency is looking for volunteers to transport veterans to and from the Northport VA, East Meadow VA Clinic, Valley Stream VA Clinic and Hicksville Vet Center. Please donate any time you have to give, Monday–Friday from 7 AM to 5 PM. Nassau County will provide the vehicles; a valid New York State driver's license is required. To volunteer, please call Christine Sohmer at (516) 572-6526.

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.

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 and Freeport. For more information, please call Michael Haynes at (631) 582-3663, extension 202 or email him at mhaynes@licares.org.

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

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 TBI (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 or send an email to vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov. They also have a Facebook page.

Nassau County Joseph P. Dwyer Vet2Vet Peer Networking Groups

Vet2Vet consists of small groups of veterans who meet weekly to share knowledge, provide mutual support and share resources. Confidential and open to all veterans regardless of discharge status. Free to attend; no pre-registration is required. Meetings are at: Mental Health Association, 16 Main Street 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 South Ocean Avenue 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 Street 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. Their website is nysda.org/page/AboutVDP.

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 (training will be provided.) The show airs on Cablevision channel 115 on Tuesdays at 6:30 PM, on North Hempstead's North Shore TV and on Lynbrook and Malverne public access channels, or any time on YouTube by entering Veterans News UVO. The crew meets at the North Shore TV Studio in New Hyde Park one day per month to tape the program. For more information, please contact Ed Aulman at mardiv1@optonline.net, or call him at (516) 426-9495 or (516) 921-0595.

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 and for application forms, please contact Allison Ridam Krivosheiw at (516) 236-3245 or alliridam@gmail.com.

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Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird



The world's fastest jet-powered manned military aircraft in history, the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird was a two-seat, twin-engine supersonic research and reconnaissance aircraft constructed almost entirely of titanium alloy in order to withstand the heat generated by sustained Mach 3 flight. The SR-71 was powered by two Pratt and Whitney J-58 axial-flow turbojets with afterburners, each producing 32,500 pounds of thrust. The announced speed of the aircraft was Mach 3.2 (about 2400 miles per hour). It was a little over 107 feet long,

had a wingspan of almost 56 feet, stood almost 19 feet high and had a gross takeoff weight of about 140,000 pounds, with fuel making up about 80,000 pounds. Its range was more than 2000 miles and it flew at altitudes of over 85,000 feet. The jet was operational from 1964 through 1989 and during a reactivation from 1993 through 1998. A total of 32 aircraft were built.

Producing an aircraft to operate at such high speeds and at such high altitudes for an extended period of time presented many challenges. For example, it was decided that titanium alloy would be the metal of choice for much (85-90%) of the airframe since it's as strong as stainless steel but only half its weight and could withstand tremendous heat and pressure. Working with titanium, however, necessitated devising special drills with special cutting angles and special lubricants just to drill holes in it since the standard tools used to work with regular aircraft aluminum simply would not work. Doing all this required many months of experimentation. Even obtaining adequate amounts of titanium was not an easy task. Only one small American company manufactured it and it was of variable quality. So, the CIA conducted a worldwide search and, using third-parties and dummy companies, succeeded in clandestinely purchasing the base metal from one of the world's leading exporters—the Soviet Union, which unknowingly provided Lockheed with the key material needed to produce the airplane that would eventually be spying on it.

Many of the other aircraft components had to be heavily modified or made from scratch in order to operate in the environment where the SR-71 would “live”—wheels, chutes, ejection seats, cooling system, hydraulics, pumps, electronic parts of all kinds, lubricants, fuel, etc. The crewmen had to wear special pressurized suits since standard masks could not provide sufficient oxygen above 43,000 feet. As one example of the temperatures that had to be dealt with, the temperature of the exterior of the windscreen reached 600 degrees Fahrenheit during a mission. The outer windscreen of the cockpit was therefore made of quartz that had been ultrasonically fused to the titanium frame.

The SR-71 was an outgrowth of an earlier aircraft, the single-seat A-12, which had been intended to be a successor to the U-2 and which was owned and operated by the CIA (the SR-71 was owned and operated by the Air Force). Both planes were quite similar in appearance and performance. The SR-71 was a bit slower and had a lower maximum altitude, but it had a longer range and could carry an integrated package of photographic, high-resolution radar, infrared and electronic collection (the A-12 was limited to carrying only a single major sensor package on each mission.) The SR-71 also had, in addition to the pilot, a second seat for an RSO (Reconnaissance Systems Officer) so that the pilot would be free to concentrate on flying the aircraft free from the distraction of having to operate the various surveillance systems. Preparatory work inside Lockheed had begun in late 1957 to develop a more advanced aircraft capable of overflying the Soviet Union. The design team was led by the legendary Clarence Leonard “Kelly” Johnson, who at the time was the vice president of Lockheed's Advanced Development Company, commonly known as the “Skunk Works.” Under Project Gusto, a series of aircraft designs, nicknamed “Archangel,” evolved, starting with “Archangel-1.” The designations soon were shortened so they became “A-1,” “A-2,” etc., culminating in the A-12, which was also named “Blackbird.” The A-12 flew its first unofficial and unannounced flight on April 25, 1962 with Lockheed test pilot Louis Schalk at the controls. Although originally designed to succeed the U-2 in overflights over the Soviet Union and Cuba, the A-12 was never used for either role. It was, however, flown over North Vietnam

during 1967, photographing surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites, and over North Korea in 1968 during the USS Pueblo crisis. The A-12 was phased out in 1968 and replaced by the SR-71, which itself also flew missions out of Kadena Air Base, Okinawa over North Vietnam from 1968 through 1972. During their service, hundreds of SAMs were reportedly fired at A-12s and SR-71s, none of which scored a hit. In fact, over the entire course of their service, neither the A-12 nor the SR-71 was ever shot down or lost a single crewman to enemy fire. It was on Okinawa that the SR-71s and their aircrew members gained the nickname Habu (as did the A-12s before them) after a pit viper indigenous to Japan, which the Okinawans thought the plane resembled.

Ever since Francis Gary Powers in his U-2 was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960, generating a major international incident, no overflights of the Soviet Union have been permitted. SR-71s did fly out of RAF Mildenhall along the Norwegian coast and up the Kola Peninsula, which contained several large Soviet naval bases. On June 29, 1987, an SR-71 on a mission around the Baltic Sea had one of its two engines explode. The plane quickly lost altitude and turned for the Swedish coast, where it was intercepted by two armed Swedish Saab JA-37 Viggen fighters, which were told to escort the SR-71 out of the Baltic Sea. A second replacement pair of Viggens completed the escort to Danish airspace. Thirty years later, when the report on the incident was declassified, data from the NSA showed that shortly after the SR-71 engine failure, several MIG-25s had been ordered to either shoot down the stricken plane or force it to land. One of the MIGs actually had a missile lock on the SR-71 but refrained from firing since the aircraft was under escort. On November 29, 2018, the four Swedish pilots involved were awarded medals by the U.S. Air Force.

Due to funding battles with other projects (such as the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber), the lack of a real-time datalink (which had been added to the U-2) and the view by many Air Force brass that the primary consumers of the SR-71 data were CIA, NSA and DIA and not the Air Force itself all led to the final retirement of the aircraft in 1998. NASA operated the last two airworthy Blackbirds until 1999 and these have been retained by the NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center. All others were moved to museums across the country.

You can see an A-12 Blackbird (*not* an SR-71) at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in Manhattan.

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Did you know . . .

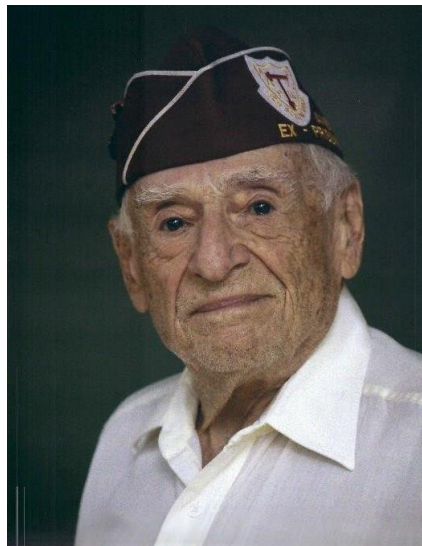
Retired USAF 4-star General George T. Babbitt, who served as Commander of the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) from 1997 to 2000, played live in uniform on drums, while on active duty, with the rock group The Ventures and the Air Force Band on March 1, 1998. Thirty-eight years prior, while still a teenager, Babbitt had joined The Ventures as a replacement for the original drummer, Skip Moore. Just before the group had their huge hit *Walk Don't Run* in 1960, Babbitt had to drop out because he was not old enough to play the nightclubs and bars the band was beginning to work in. Here is a link to the 1998 performance: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljLi_hBLy3A

Taps



Robert F. Fullam of Farmingdale, past president of LINCMO (Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization) for 2011 and VFW member, passed away on December 11 at the age of 91.

Bernard “Bernie” Rader of Freeport, longtime member of Freeport American Legion Post 342, passed away on December 23 at the age of 98. Rader was part of the only POW exchange during World War II after he had been captured by the Germans in October 1944. He had been part of a fifty-five-man patrol that was ambushed and forced to surrender after a six-hour firefight in Lorient in Brittany, France. Since he had been wounded by shrapnel in both legs and hands, he spent time in a hospital during his 47 days of captivity, being tended to by his German captors, who were unaware that Rader was Jewish. He was awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star and was also presented with the French Legion of Honor by former French President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007. Bernie and his wife June would often travel to high schools, libraries and Jewish Community Centers around the country to share Bernie’s story.



Bernie Rader



Are you a.....

WOMAN VET?

Want to receive the.....

WOMAN VETERAN'S AWARD

The Long Island Air Force Association proudly presents and honors women veterans and their families for their commitment and service **(Awarded to veterans of all services)**

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** and this application to
(black out your Social Security Number :

Fred DiFabio, 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 OUR LONG ISLAND LIVING VETERANS
(Not awarded posthumously)

PRESENTED BY THE LONG ISLAND AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION



Nassau County, N.Y. Desert Storm / Iraq / Afghanistan Monument

IraqAfghanistanMonument.com
NCMonumentCommittee@gmail.com



Dear Supporter,

It gives us great pleasure to announce the first **Desert Storm/Iraq/Afghanistan Monument** of its size in Nassau County, NY. This monument will be located at the Veterans Memorial in Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, NY. The Nassau County VFW council is spearheading this project working with other local Veteran associations.

How many veterans do you know that have served in Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan?

This monument will be a permanent way to honor the courage, dedication and bravery of United States servicemen and women who have served in these wars. Thousands of these veterans continue to serve their country and communities alike. Many have also made the ultimate sacrifice and many others continue to suffer with physical and/or mental injuries/illnesses (PTSD) due to the wars. This monument will provide a much-needed sanctuary and reflection space for veterans along with their families.

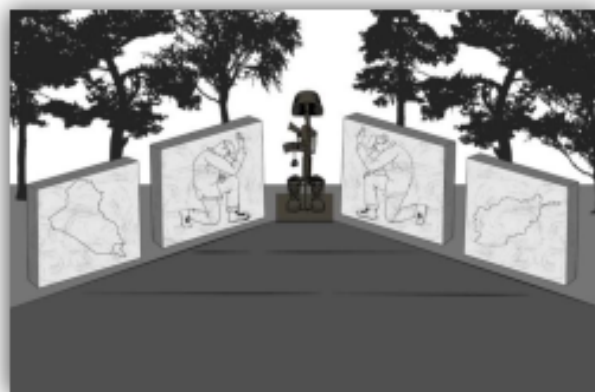
To help make the monument a reality, we need your help and we kindly request that you consider donating. Your generosity will be recognized on our website, IraqAfghanistanMonument.com

Monument Sponsorship Levels and Pricing (All Donations tax deductible- NC VFW Council- 11-2774017)

Sponsorship Level

5 Star Sponsor	\$20,000
4 Star Sponsor	\$19,999 - \$10,000
3 Star Sponsor	\$9,999 - \$5,000
2 Star Sponsor	\$4,999 - \$1,000
1 Star Sponsor	\$999 - \$150
½ star Sponsor	\$149 - \$1

Fundraising Goal- \$150,000



Please make checks out to **Nassau County VFW Council** and they can be mailed to
112 Lambert Ave, Farmingdale, NY 11735

You can also donate by scanning the QR code. This code will bring you to the Heroes Among Us website.

Please don't let these veterans' sacrifices be forgotten. You have the power to make a difference.



Thank you for supporting our veterans and please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions. (Email above)

Sincerely,

The Iraq/Afghanistan Monument Committee

Nassau County Iraq/Afghanistan Monument Committee Members

Chris Peterkin (Committee Chair, NC VFW Council Commander); **Ralph Esposito** (NC Veterans Service Agency Director); **Pat Iulucci** (NC VFW Council Treasurer); **Virginia Cervasio** (Gold Star Mother & Heroes Among Us Executive Director); **Matthew Schmidt** (Nassau Police Veterans Association President & Iraq War Veteran); **John Carter** (Senior Vice-Commander VFW Post 516 & Iraq War Veteran); **Kevin Colon** (VFW Post 9592 Post Commander & Iraq War Veteran); **Rob Valdivieso** (Iraq War Veteran); **Phoebe Erwin** (Desert Storm War Veteran); **Rick Gales** (VFW Trustee); **Steve Latus** (UVO President); **Morris Miller** (UVO Committee Member); **Andy Booth** (UVO Committee Member)



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.