



Apr-Jun 2019

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

Newsletter editor: Steven Latus

President's Message

We're still looking for current Long Island Vietnam veterans who wish to receive a Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal at one of our upcoming ceremonies. To date we have held 28 Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremonies and have presented medals to almost 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)

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.

CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2019

Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:

Thu, Jul 18, 2019

Shootout for Soldiers at Town of
Oyster Bay Field of Dreams
Massapequa
5:00 PM

Sat, Sep 21, 2019

Cradle of Aviation Museum
Garden City
11:00 AM

Sat, Oct. 19, 2019

Location and time to be
determined

Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony—Dropping of the Roses:

Sat, Dec. 7, 2019

American Airpower Museum
Farmingdale
10:30 AM

31 Vietnam veterans were presented with Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medals and Certificates of Appreciation during LIAFA's 28th Vietnam medal ceremony on April 20 at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City (32 veterans were scheduled, but one could not make it to the ceremony). Distinguished guests included New York State Senator John Brooks, Matt Geller (caseworker for Congressman Tom Suozzi), Andrew Parton (executive director of the Cradle of Aviation Museum), Maxine Rauch (president of the New York State Air Force Association), 106th Rescue Wing Force Support Squadron Commander LTC Keith Sumwalt and Rabbinic Chaplain Joni Brenner. We'd also like to thank our sponsors Shootout for Soldiers and the Cradle of Aviation Museum as well as the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 82, American Legion Riders Greenlawn Post 1244, Patriot Guard Riders, Rolling Thunder Chapter 6, Civil Air Patrol Cadet Squadron 8, Blue Star Mothers and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band Flotilla 22-7, who always add so much to our ceremonies.

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Other Upcoming Events, Meetings and Programs

Veterans Annual Summer Stand Down

Tuesday, July 9, 10 AM to 2 PM at the Freeport Armory located at 63 Babylon Turnpike, Freeport (take Exit M7, Babylon Turnpike West towards Roosevelt from the Meadowbrook Parkway). All services for veterans are FREE of charge at the event. Representatives from federal, state and local agencies will be available. There will be VA benefits counseling, support services, health and dental screenings, legal assistance, clothing, shoes, giveaways, haircuts and nonperishable food. There will also be a FREE BBQ. Call (516) 572-6565 or email resposito1@nassaucountyny.gov for more info.



Thursday, July 18-19, 9 AM-9 AM at the Town of Oyster Bay Field of Dreams, 5619 Old Sunrise Highway in Massapequa. This annual event features 24 one-hour games in a row; a running score is kept between the two teams, Stars and Stripes. Participating teams play in 1 one-hour slot during the event and the event is open to men's and women's teams of all ages. The mission of the Shootout is to use lacrosse as a platform to support American veterans and foster good community relations. Long Island Chapter 202 of the Air Force Association is proud and grateful to be one of three local charity beneficiaries that share in a portion of the net proceeds (after expenses) raised from this event. Shootout for Soldiers is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Annual Vet2Vet Fluke Fishing Trip

Friday, July 31, 8 AM-1 PM at Captain Lou's, 28A Woodcleft Avenue, Freeport. Excursion includes bait, tackle, rod rental & parking. Light snacks will be provided; please consider bringing a brown bag lunch! All veterans and a plus-1 are welcome. Please keep in mind that space is limited so an RSVP is required. Please call (516) 489-2322 and speak to Brent Russell at ext. 1312 or Rhea Spina at ext. 1260.

Annual Nassau County Salute to Veterans Ceremony and Concert

Saturday, August 3 at the Harry Chapin Theater at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. Ceremony starts at 6:30 PM; concert starts at 7:30 PM. Hosted by the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency. The ceremony will honor local residents who have distinguished themselves as helping veterans throughout the community. The awardees will receive the Nassau County Distinguished Service to Veterans Award during the ceremony. After the ceremony is completed, free concerts honoring our

military and veterans will commence. Call (516) 572-6565 or email resposito1@nassaucountyny.gov for more info.

Concert Under the Stars and Laser Light Show

Friday, August 16, 6:30 PM to 10:00 PM (outdoors, rain or shine) at the Long Island State Veterans Home on the campus of Stony Brook University, 100 Patriots Road, Stony Brook. Free event; arrive early; bring blankets, chairs and the whole family. Food vendors will be on site. Opening performer: Tommy Sullivan from Johnny Maestro and the Brooklyn Bridge; 7:45 PM: the West Point Benny Havens Band; 9:15 PM: laser light show. Special concert parking is available in staff parking lot A at Pellegrino Drive after 5 PM. Shuttle buses will provide transportation to the concert site throughout the evening. Call (631) 444-8606 or visit <http://veteranshome.stonybrookmedicine.edu/about/news-events> for more info.

Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall – “The Wall that Heals”

Thursday, August 29 through Sunday, September 1 at Eisenhower Park, Field 2 in East Meadow. Opening ceremony is on Thursday, August 29 at 10 AM; candlelight vigil is on Friday, August 30 at 7 PM; closing ceremony is on Sunday, September 1 at 2:30 PM. Open for viewing 24 hours a day, rain or shine. The Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall is a three-quarter scale replica of the Washington, D.C. Vietnam Memorial Wall; it is 375 feet long and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point. The memorial wall is a tribute and remembrance to the military service members who gave the ultimate sacrifice for freedom during the Vietnam War. For more info, go to <http://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/vietnam-veterans-memorial-fund-announces-2019-the-wall-that-heals-tour-schedule-2018-12-06>.

Veteran Peer Night (every Tuesday evening)

Hosted by Boots on the Ground NY and held at the Veteran Activity Center, 2184 Pond Road, Ronkonkoma. Stop in to chat with other veterans, watch TV, play a game of pool, break bread with them, or assist in an activity that may support their Veteran Support Programs. They may also on occasion have guests that come in to offer advice on anything from taxes, finances, mental health, etc. The food and personal care pantries are available all evening. Some weeks the group may go to outside activities such as bowling, movies, adventure park, etc. so please check events each week, or call the VAC and leave a message at (631) 615-2200. No paperwork, no fees, no membership, completely confidential. They also conduct a monthly food pantry and supplies collection event; the next one is on Saturday, July 20.

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. 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, 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 or visit their website at www.dwyerproject.org. 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 Ln. in Levittown at 2 PM on Thursdays; 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. 1312 or email at brussell@mhanc.org; Jeff McQueen at (516) 489-2322, ext. 1202 or email at jmcqueen@mhanc.org. Or check out their website: www.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 a lawyer. For information and assistance, please call Director Gary A. Horton at (585) 219-4862 or email him at ghorton@nysda.org.

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Walk With Frank

70-year-old Vietnam veteran Frank Romeo, who started off his 750-mile walk across New York State from Buffalo on March 1 to advocate for attention to veteran issues such as PTSD, suicide and homelessness, finished his journey on June 8 in his hometown of Bay Shore.

The final two-mile stretch started off on a pleasant sunny day at the head of Brightwaters Canal, continued on through the middle of Main Street accompanied by over a hundred veterans, supporters, friends and family, and finished up at Bay Shore High School, where several elected officials from New York State, Suffolk County and the Town of Islip spoke on the steps of the high school in praise of Frank's amazing accomplishment. Ken Nevor and I (Steven Latus) were among the crowd that walked with Frank on the final two-mile leg of The Walk.

Said Frank, "We've touched the homeless by living with them as an equal and documenting their stories and giving them a voice. Touched our elected officials by presenting at the State Capitol and being recognized on the Senate floor as a viable source for change. We've touched the younger generation by presenting a new curriculum at the state level, *The Experience of the American Soldier*. And we spoke about it countless times throughout New York State. And we've touched mental health by attacking the stigma surrounding mental health. I have PTSD. I have a mental condition. It's nothing to be ashamed of. We need to say the words out loud—loud and clear."

Frank also plans to make a documentary film. The following is from his website:

The Documentary: Giving Voice to the Voiceless

In his thirty years of advocating for PTSD awareness, Romeo sees a disconnect between the younger generation's understanding of the idea of war and the actual reality of war. Romeo believes that more education concerning the realities of war and PTSD are essential to understanding and confronting veterans' issues. "Walk With Frank" will tell the story of Frank Romeo's 50-year journey, which began in 1968 when he enlisted in the US Army to fight in the Vietnam War. By documenting Romeo's conversations with homeless veterans, the film will provide insight into PTSD and its impact on society. The film will also honor the veteran by giving him/her a voice. The film seeks to increase public awareness of the impact of PTSD on veterans, their families, and society.

For those interested in making a tax-deductible donation (Walk With Frank, Inc. [EIN 82-3694913] is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization), please make your check payable to *Walk With Frank* and mail to:

Walk With Frank, Inc.
1064 Thompson Drive
Bay Shore, NY 11706

You can also donate online via Paypal at <http://www.walkwithfrank.org/please-donate/>



Frank Romeo (right) and Ken Nevor, LIAFA VP Media and Communications (left)



*Frank Romeo (with yellow vest) walking onto the grounds of Bay Shore High School at the end of The Walk
(Photo by Racheal Halupa)*

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75th Anniversary D-Day Observances

There were a pair of D-Day observances held on June 6—one at the Museum of American Armor in Old Bethpage and the other at the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook. The weather was perfect and among the attendees at both ceremonies were World War II veterans who participated in the Allied landings at Normandy in 1944. So much is owed to these brave men who opened up a third front against Nazi Germany (the Soviets were attacking from the East and the Italian mainland had been invaded by the Americans, British and Canadians on September 3, 1943).

The Bell Ceremony at the Museum of American Armor sounded off the key locations and landing beaches along the Normandy coastline. As each was announced, the bell was rung by one of the honored veterans or by military reenactors (see photo below).



Bell Ceremony during the D-Day Observance at the Museum of American Armor

Photo by Chris Lauterbach

[From the New York State Senate web page of State Senator John E. Brooks:](#)

Patrick J. Yngstrom Inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame

Sergeant Patrick J. Yngstrom entered into military service when he entered the ranks of the United States Army in 1970. Serving until 1973, he was deployed to Vietnam from 1970-1971. While serving in Vietnam, Sergeant Yngstrom earned a Bronze Star with a V device and an Army Commendation Medal.

Since leaving the service, Sergeant Yngstrom has dedicated his life to helping his brother and sister veterans. He is the former director of the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency and also sits on the advisory board for the Long Island State Veterans Home. As well as advising Congresswoman Kathleen Rice, Senator Brooks and the Town of Hempstead on veterans' issues, Sergeant Yngstrom is currently serving as the Veterans Liaison to The Arbors Assisted Living Communities.

Sergeant Yngstrom has served as past commander of the Veterans of The Vietnam War for all of New York State. He also serves as commander at American Legion Post #1749 in North Bellmore and is a past commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #2770 on Long Island.

Sergeant Yngstrom lives in North Merrick and has been lovingly married to his wife Nancy for 43 years. They have two adult children, Dawn and Daniel, and are the proud grandparents of Abigail, Sofia, and Caroline.



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

20  19
VETERANS' HALL OF FAME

PATRICK J. YNGSTROM

Taps



Richard E. "Dick" Cole, the last of the Doolittle Raiders, died on April 9 in San Antonio, Texas at the age of 103. Lt. Cole was Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle's co-pilot on the famous B-25 raid on Tokyo on April 18, 1942 that was launched from the carrier USS Hornet a little more than four months after the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Granville Coggs, one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen, died on May 6 in San Antonio, Texas at the age of 93. After the military, Coggs earned a degree from Harvard Medical School and worked as a diagnostic radiologist detecting breast cancer. He later taught at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio.

Fleming Begaye Sr., a Navajo code talker during World War II, died on May 10 in Chinle, Arizona at the age of 94. He took part in the battles for Tarawa and Tinian, and spent one year in a naval hospital as a result of injuries and wounds received during his service.

John Pinto, also a Navajo code talker during World War II, died on May 24 in Gallup, New Mexico at the age of 94. He was a long-time state senator from New Mexico, having first been elected in 1976 and remaining in office until his death.

Robert Friend, another Tuskegee Airman, died on June 21 in Long Beach, California at the age of 99. Friend flew 142 combat missions during World War II. Later, he became an operations officer during both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. From 1958 to 1963, he was the director of the Air Force's Project Blue Book, which investigated UFO sightings.

Did you know . . .

The Air Force shares its birthday with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Both were founded on September 18, 1947.

At the height of the Cold War, North Dakota was home to so many USAF nuclear weapons that if it had seceded from the Union, it would have been the third-largest nuclear power in the world.

George Carlin enlisted in the Air Force at age 17 in 1954. He was trained as a radar technician and was stationed at Barksdale AFB in Louisiana. He was court-martialed three times before later receiving a general discharge under honorable conditions in 1957. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he had a problem with authority.

The British Supermarine Spitfire was one of the first airplanes to have retractable landing gear. This was such a new feature at the time that many new pilots crash-landed because they forgot to put down their landing gear, assuming it was already down.

The first B-52A flew on August 5, 1954. The turbofan-powered final version, the B-52H, made its first flight on March 6, 1961; B-52 production ended in 1962. The airframes, engines and avionics have been upgraded over the years to enable the B-52 to remain a viable component of the U.S. bomber fleet. The H model is the only variant still in use and it is currently expected to remain in service past 2040.



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 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)