



Jan-Mar 2018

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

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Newsletter editor: Steven Latus

CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2018

Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:

Sat, Apr 21, 2018

LI State Veterans Home
Stony Brook
2:00 PM

Sat, Jun 2, 2018

Museum of American Armor
Bethpage
11:30 AM

Thu, Jul 12, 2018

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

(See additional Vietnam ceremonies on page 2)

Memorial Day Weekend:

Sat & Sun, May 27-28, 2018

American Airpower Museum
Farmingdale
Table Display - All Day

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 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal at one of our upcoming ceremonies. To date we have presented over 650 medals to Long Island Vietnam veterans.

The requirements are:

- Served in Vietnam or theater of operations as per Form DD214
- Currently living on Long Island
- Can attend the ceremony (medals are presented **only** at the ceremony; they are not mailed)

This medal is awarded to Vietnam veterans of **all** services, not just the Air Force.

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.

I hope to see **YOU** at one of our upcoming ceremonies!

Additional Vietnam Medal Ceremonies

Saturday, September 22, 2018 at 11:00 AM at the Cradle of Aviation, Garden City

Saturday, November 3, 2018 at 11:30 AM at the Museum of American Armor in Bethpage.

Other Upcoming Events and Meetings

Veteran Peer Night

Every Tuesday, 6:30 PM to 9 PM at Veteran Activity Center, 2184 Pond Road, Ronkonkoma. Hosted by Boots on the Ground NY <http://www.bootsonthegroundny.com> and also 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)

Every Thursday, 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.

Flapjack Fundraiser Breakfast for Vets

Saturday, April 21, 8 AM to 10 AM at Applebee's in Westbury. Meal includes pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs and a beverage (coffee, juice, soda or tea). \$12 per person to attend. For more information, please call James Merritte at (516) 236-7349 or send an email to jwmerritte@optonline.net.

Food Pantry Drive and Care Package Supply Collection

Saturday, April 21, 10 AM to 3 PM at Veteran Activity Center (VAC), 2184 Pond Road, Ronkonkoma. Hosted by Boots on the Ground NY on the **third Saturday of each month**.

Boots on the Ground NY 7th Annual Fundraiser

May 5th, 3 PM to 7 PM, at Mulcahy's in Wantagh. Tickets can be purchased online for a \$5 discount for the next few weeks at <http://www.bootsonthegroundny.com/product/tickets-for-7th-annual-icpl-robert-cafici-and-vac-benefit/>

For more information, go to <http://www.bootsonthegroundny.com/2018/03/13/our-7th-annual-annual-fundraiser>

UVO (United Veterans Organization) Memorial Day Ceremony

Sunday, May 27, 10 AM–12 PM, Eisenhower Park in East Meadow (Veterans Memorial Plaza, Field 6). Free.

Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony

Sunday, May 27, 1:30 PM at the Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Ave. in Farmingdale. Free.

The Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization (LINC MO) is seeking donations to purchase patches and food for the people who will flag the graves for Memorial Day. Please make

checks payable to "LINC MO" and write "Patches" on the memo line of your check. Mail your check to Ken Cadieux, 121 Powell Ave., Rockville Centre, NY 11570-3035.

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Shared from New York National Guard / Published March 19, 2018 / From website www.ang.af.mil:

LATHAM, N.Y. -- 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 Iraq on March 15, the Department of Defense announced.



Capt. Andreas O'Keeffe, 37, top left; Master Sgt. Christopher Raguso,, 39, top right; Christopher Zanetis,, 37, bottom left; and Staff Sgt. Dashan Briggs, 30, bottom right.

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 near the city of Al-Qa'im in western Iraq. There is no evidence of enemy action involved in the crash and the incident is under investigation, according to the Department of Defense.

Killed were:

- Capt. Christopher Zanetis, (za-NEH-tis), 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. He previously deployed to Iraq in 2011, supporting another HH-60G squadron, and Afghanistan with the 101st.
- Capt. Andreas O'Keeffe, 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, after serving as an armament systems specialist with the 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard, and RC-26 pilot with the 174th Attack Wing, Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, Syracuse. He deployed to Iraq three times, and to Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and Texas during Hurricane Harvey.
- Master Sgt. Christopher Raguso, (ra-GOO-so), 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. He previously deployed to Iraq as a fire protection specialist with the 106th Civil Engineering Squadron, twice to Afghanistan with the 101st, once to the Horn of Africa, and to Texas and the Caribbean for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.
- 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 previously deployed to Afghanistan as a munitions system specialist with the 106th Maintenance Group, and to Texas and the Caribbean for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma as a member of the 101st.

The 106th Rescue Wing specializes in worldwide personnel recovery of pilots, military personnel and civilians, by air, land and sea, during combat and peacetime. The 106th Rescue Wing personnel were operating in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, the American-led coalition operation to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

"It is with great sadness that I report the loss of four of our wing members," said Col. Michael Bank, the commander of the 106th Rescue Wing.

"All four of these heroes served their nation and community. Our sincerest condolences and sympathies to the families and friends that have been touched by this tragic event," Bank added. "Our National Guard family mourns the loss of the seven combat search and rescue Airmen in the HH-60 crash, including four members from the 106th Rescue Wing," said Maj. Gen. Anthony German, the adjutant general of New York. "This loss reminds us of the tremendous risks we take in serving our nation every day."

"We honor their service, their professionalism, and their sacrifice as we mourn their loss," German added.

The 106th Rescue Wing operates the HH-60G Pave Hawk search and rescue helicopter, which is a modified version of the Army's UH-60 Black Hawk. The wing also flies the HC-130 search and rescue version of the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft.

Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing have deployed regularly to Afghanistan and Iraq and other areas in support of American and coalition combat missions since Sept. 11, 2001.

Airmen from the wing also recently responded to Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Hurricane Irma in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in 2017. The members of the 106th are credited with rescuing 546 Houston area residents from flood waters with boats and their HH-60 Pave Hawks. They played a key role in evacuating 1,500 Americans from the Dutch Island of St. Maarten following Hurricane Irma. The four Airmen killed on March 15 bring the total number of New York National Guard members who have died in a combat zone since Sept. 11, 2001, to 39. Of those, seven have been members of the New York Air National Guard.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, 27 members of the New York National Guard - including these four Airmen - have died in Iraq. These four are the first New York Air National Guard Airmen to die in Iraq. The others were killed supporting operations in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Todd J. Lobraico Jr., a member of the 105th Airlift Wing's 105th Base Defense Squadron was killed while operating in the vicinity of Bagram Air Base on Sept. 3, 2013.

On Dec. 21, 2015 Tech Sgt. Joseph G. Lemm and Staff Sgt. Louis Michael Bonacasa died when a suicide bomber attacked their patrol in a village outside Bagram Air Base in Parwan Province. Both Airmen were also members of the 105th Airlift Wing's 105th Base Defense Squadron.

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Liver Fluke Testing for Vietnam Vets

You may want to consider being tested if you served anywhere in East Asia since this parasite is widespread in that area. The parasite is contracted by eating raw or undercooked river fish, drinking infected water, or eating plants or vegetables that were irrigated with infected water. Once in the body, the liver fluke migrates to the liver, where it can remain for decades without causing any noticeable effects. Over time, however, the damage that these parasites do can eventually cause bile duct cancer. Even though the VA has been rejecting most of the claims as not being service-related (they want more studies to establish a link), that should not stop you from getting tested since bile-duct cancer can be deadly.

New Arleigh Burke-class Destroyer to Be Named After Irish Vietnam Vet

On March 12 it was announced by the Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer that the next Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer will be named after the late Marine Corps Vietnam veteran Lance Corporal Patrick Gallagher. Gallagher was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on July 18, 1966 when he threw himself on a grenade to protect his fellow Marines. He then quickly pitched the grenade into a nearby river where it exploded harmlessly. Tragically, he was killed in action in Da Loc near Da Nang on March 30, 1967, the day before he was scheduled to return home. He had volunteered for his final mission; he was 23 years old when he died.

Gallagher was an Irish citizen from Ballyhaunis, County Mayo who had immigrated to the USA in 1962. He lived in Lynbrook with his aunt and uncle while working during the day and attending college at night. He enlisted in the Marines in 1966.

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“Inside Combat Rescue” on the National Geographic Channel

If you’ve ever wanted to see exactly what it is that Air Force pararescuemen (PJs) do when overseas (such as members of the 106th Air National Guard Rescue Wing, for example), watch this show. It’s on Channel 162 on Optimum (Cablevision).

The Virtual Wall Vietnam Veterans Memorial

This link <http://www.virtualwall.org/iStates.htm> is a virtual wall of all those lost during the Vietnam war with the names, bios and other information on our lost heroes. Those who remember that time frame, or perhaps lost friends or family can look them up on this site.

First click on a state. When it opens, scroll down to the city and the names will appear. Then click on their names. It should show you a picture of the person, or at least their bio and medals.

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Open Season for Teacher of the Year—Our chapter is currently looking for our next Teacher of the Year (TOY). Any STEM teacher who inspires his/her students beyond the normal classroom curriculum is eligible to apply. Interested teachers may view the application requirements by visiting our web page at LIAFA.org and clicking on “Teacher of the Year Application” and then clicking on “TOY Application” (please note that there is no separate application form—the narrative mentioned in the guidelines is the application). The winning teacher receives a check for \$250.00 and is automatically considered for the State TOY award. Any chapter member who knows of a likely candidate should encourage him/her to apply. ***The deadline for applying is May 30th.***

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 download an application (click on “Scholastic Grant Application”, then click on “Grant Application” and finally click on “Grant Application” again) and to get more information. ***The deadline for applying is June 30th.***

Taps



Members of the 106th Air National Guard Rescue Wing based out of Francis S. Gabreski ANG Base in Westhampton Beach who perished in the March 15 helicopter crash in Iraq:

Captain Andreas B. O’Keefe

Captain Christopher T. Zanetis

Master Sergeant Christopher J. Raguso

Tech Sergeant Dashan J. Briggs (posthumously promoted from Staff Sergeant)

It is with great sadness that we announce that 99-year-old Pearl Harbor veteran **Seymour Bluff** (of the 11th Bombardment Group, Army Air Corps, Hickam Field) of Manhattan passed away on January 10 of complications from a heart attack. Seymour was a fixture at our annual Pearl Harbor memorial ceremony for many years. We will miss him deeply.



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)**