



Jan-Mar 2019

# LI 202 AFA news

## Chapter Officers

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Visit us on the WEB:

[LIAFA.ORG](http://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 2019

### Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:

**Sat, Apr 20, 2019**

Cradle of Aviation Museum  
Garden City  
11:00 AM

**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

### Memorial Day Weekend:

**Sat & Sun, May 25-26, 2019**

American Airpower Museum  
Farmingdale  
Table Display - All Day

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

**Sat, Dec. 7, 2019**

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 27 Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremonies and have presented medals to over 850 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).

**23 Vietnam veterans** were presented with Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medals and Certificates of Appreciation during LIAFA's 27<sup>th</sup> Vietnam medal ceremony on March 23 at the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook (26 veterans were scheduled but 3 could not make it to the ceremony). This particular venue is always special since many of the home's residents show up for the event and their presence makes the event especially poignant. Distinguished guests included Congressman Lee Zeldin, 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing Aircraft Maintenance Commander LTC Jesse Fritz, Veterans Home Executive Director Fred Sganga, Veterans Home Deputy Executive Director Jonathan Spier and Veterans Home Chaplain Rev. Gregory Leonard. We'd also like to thank our sponsors Shootout for Soldiers and the Long Island State Veterans Home 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 and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Band Flotilla 22-7, who always add so much to our ceremonies.

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### **FDNY Honors Fallen Long Island Airman**

Air National Guard Master Sergeant Christopher Raguso, who was killed on March 15, 2018 along with six other men when their helicopter crashed in Iraq near the Syrian border, was honored on March 30 with a plaque that was unveiled during a dedication ceremony at Ladder Company 155 in Jamaica, Queens, where he was most recently assigned. MSgt Raguso was one of four members of the 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing who were killed in the crash. He was a lieutenant with the FDNY as well as a volunteer member of the Commack Fire Department.

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### **Saluting A Friend**

Hearty congratulations to Blue Star father **Harry Jacobs**, co-chair of Long Island Shootout for Soldiers, who was inducted by the Long Island Metropolitan Lacrosse Foundation into their Hall of Fame along with seven other men and one woman during a dinner at the Long Island Marriott in Uniondale on January 26. This year's event was attended by almost 400 people. Harry was instrumental in having LIAFA be one of the charity beneficiaries of the money raised by Long Island Shootout for Soldiers.

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

#### **World War II Victory Dance**

Saturday, April 6, 5 PM to 10 PM at The Museum of American Armor, 1303 Round Swamp Rd., Old Bethpage. \$25 per person; \$15 for veterans, active duty, retired and reserve. Step back in time to post-war 1940s and dance the night away celebrating the end of the war. Catered food and beverages are included, BYOB over 21, raffles and 50/50. Period dress and military uniforms are encouraged but not required. Hosted by Moms of Military/NY12. Funds raised will be designated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center VA. For more info, contact Debbie DeVito at (631) 838-9131 or [debdevito821@yahoo.com](mailto:debdevito821@yahoo.com), or Andrea Nordquist at (516) 476-9094 or [anordquist83@gmail.com](mailto:anordquist83@gmail.com). Moms of Military also has a Facebook page.

### **Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) of World War II**

Sunday, April 7, 2:00 PM to 4:15 PM at the Community Church of East Williston, 45 E. Williston Ave., East Williston. Free. For more info, call (516) 538-7679 or go to [nassaucountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://nassaucountyhistoricalsociety.org). Hear the history of the women who flew military aircraft on the home front to free up men for military combat or other duties. They flew over 60 million miles, transported every type of military aircraft, towed targets for live anti-aircraft gun practice, simulated strafing missions and transported cargo. 38 WASP members lost their lives and one disappeared while on a ferry mission, her fate still unknown as of 2018. In 1977, for their World War II service, the members were granted veteran status and in 2009 awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

### **Bowling for Veterans**

Sunday, April 7 at 3 pm at the East Islip Lanes at 117 E Main St., East Islip. Proceeds will support Honor Flight Long Island. \$30 per-person to attend the event (\$20 for non-bowlers), and that includes two games, shoe rental, food and soda.

### **Boots on the Ground NY 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Fundraiser and Lance Corporal Robert Cafici Memorial**

Saturday, April 27, 3 PM to 7 PM, at Mulcahy's Pub, 2323 Railroad Ave. in Wantagh (doors open at 3 PM). Tickets are \$75 all you can eat or drink, open bar; \$35 for under 21; free for 8 and under, and can be purchased in advance online at <http://www.bootsonthegroundny.com/product/tickets-for-8th-annual-1cpl-robert-cafici-and-vac-benefit/> or at the door.

For more information, go to <http://www.bootsonthegroundny.com/2019/03/04/8th-annual-botgny-benefit-1cpl-robert-cafici-memorial/>

### **Fleet Week New York**

Wednesday, May 22 through Tuesday, May 28. The 31<sup>st</sup> annual Fleet Week at the Intrepid Air and Space Museum begins with the Parade of Ships. Participating Fleet Week ships can be viewed at Pier 86, Pier 90, and the Intrepid Air and Space Museum in Manhattan, Brooklyn Cruise Terminal and Homeport Pier on Staten Island. More than 4,500 service men and women from the U.S. and foreign nations will be arriving aboard the ships.

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

Sunday, May 26, 10 AM to 11:30 AM, Eisenhower Park in East Meadow (Veterans Memorial Plaza, Field 6).

### **Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony**

Sunday, May 26, 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Ave. in Farmingdale.

The Long Island National Cemetery Memorial Organization (LINCMO) is seeking donations to purchase patches and food for the people who will flag the graves for Memorial Day. Please make checks payable to "LINCMO" and write "Patches" on the memo line of your check. Mail your check to Ken Cadieux, 121 Powell Ave., Rockville Centre, NY 11570-3035.

### **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.

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

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. ***Please go to their Facebook page to view the list of upcoming events, which was not available at the time of this issue.***

### **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.

### **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](mailto:brussell@mhanc.org); Jeff McQueen at (516) 489-2322, ext. 1202 or email at [jmcqueen@mhanc.org](mailto:jmcqueen@mhanc.org). Or check out their website: [www.veteranshealthalliance.org](http://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.

### **Walk With Frank**

Frank Romeo, who celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 1, is a Vietnam veteran from Bay Shore who in 1969 served with the 199<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade, an air-mobile unit designed for covert warfare. He is a recipient of the Purple Heart and was diagnosed with a 100% post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) disability.

For the past 30 years, Frank has traveled the country teaching and advocating for PTSD awareness to young people in school through his award-winning program *The Art of War*. He feels his message of education before military service will help build a strong country and help our veterans when they return to deal with today's social issues.

In 2014 he returned to Southeast Asia for 7 weeks, living in grass huts and visiting bombed-out areas in order to recreate the wartime experience. While traveling through the countryside and dining with his former enemies, he learned about their post-war trauma and how they dealt with it. Each day he posted a daily blog about his thoughts and feelings. When it was feasible, he would even Skype into classrooms as students posed questions in real time. Channel 12 NY aired a few of these lessons.

Walk With Frank: In order to bring greater awareness about PTSD to the public, Frank is now literally walking 750 miles across New York State, having started off in Buffalo on March 1. His plan is to finish up his trek in Bay Shore by June 1. Frank will be living in homeless shelters, eating in soup kitchens and visiting organizations frequented by veterans. You can follow his progress on Facebook by going to the *Walk With Frank* page.

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) tax-exempt 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/>

## Did you know . . .

**Pennies are not accepted at overseas military exchanges or other shops on base** since they are too heavy and are not cost-effective for the government to ship to and from the USA.

**In World War II**, supporting one soldier on the battlefield took one gallon of fuel per day. Today, more than 22 gallons of fuel per soldier/day is needed.

**After the release of the movie “Top Gun” in 1986**, the US Navy stated that the number of young men who wanted to become naval aviators went up by 500 percent.

**The U.S.S. John Stennis nuclear-powered aircraft carrier** has a more powerful air force than 70% of all countries.

**The original shoulder patch from 1924 for the 45th Infantry Division contained a swastika** up until 1939, when it was replaced by a thunderbird, for obvious reasons. Both design choices were chosen because of the large population of Native Americans in the southwestern United States (both were common Native American symbols).

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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



**Colonel Joe M. Jackson** died January 12 at the age of 95. He had enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1941 shortly before turning 18 and served as a gunnery instructor during World War II. He later flew 107 combat missions as an F-84 Thunderjet pilot in Korea, where he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross as well as the Air Force Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters. In 1956 he became one of the first Air Force U-2 pilots. However, it was in Vietnam that he earned his highest honor. On May 12, 1968 then-Lt. Col. Jackson, serving as a C-123 pilot with the 311<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron, was called in to rescue a three-man combat control team trapped under heavy enemy fire at a special forces camp in Kham Duc. The camp had been surrounded by enemy forces for weeks and an evacuation of the roughly 1,000 U.S. troops and allied civilians had been ordered. In the confusion, the three-man team had been left behind. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters were raking the camp with small arms, mortars, automatic weapons and recoilless rifle fire while ammo dumps were blowing up and littering the runway with debris. Eight rescue aircraft went in on the morning of May 12. All were taken out by hostile enemy fire.

Jackson started his approach to the camp runway from 9,000 feet and went into an extremely steep dive at maximum speed and rate of descent. After he touched down amidst the chaos, he saw the three men running toward his plane. At that moment, his co-pilot called out that a 122-mm rocket had been fired at their aircraft. Fortunately, it broke in half and skidded to a stop right by the plane's nose without exploding. The three men boarded the plane and then, despite all the enemy fire that was directed at them, the C-123 managed to lift off successfully and make it back to safety. Amazingly, they later discovered that not a single round had pierced the airframe.

For his actions at Kham Duc that day, Jackson was presented with the Medal of Honor by President Lyndon B. Johnson during a White House ceremony on Jan. 16, 1969. He also received his second Distinguished Flying Cross and three additional Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal.

See the following page for a photo from the medal ceremony.



*President Lyndon Johnson talks with Air Force Col. Joe Jackson at the Medal of Honor ceremonies for Jackson and three others in 1969. From left are Navy Lt. Clyde E. Lassen, Marine Maj. Stephen W. Pless, Johnson, Jackson and Army S/Sgt. Drew D. Dix*





# 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)**