Jul–Sep 2026

LI 202 AFA NEWS

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CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2026

85th Anniversary Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony—Dropping of the Roses

Mon, Dec 7, 2026
American Airpower Museum
1230 New Highway
Farmingdale
10:30 AM

Recent Events

International Naval Review 250 (stood in for Fleet Week this year)

Held **July 3–8** at the Port of New York and New Jersey to celebrate the USA's 250th birthday, this event featured ships, aircraft, and personnel from over 130 invited navies and coast guards. This historic gathering also showcased more than 30 tall ships from around the globe alongside key maritime partners, including merchant marine, U.S. Coast Guard, Army Corps of Engineers and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), amongst others.

On July 4, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and allied military aviation put on a spectacular show, followed by fireworks along New York Harbor and the Jersey City waterfront.

USS Arlington (LPD 24), a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock, was at Pier 88 in Manhattan and open for public tours. The aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* (CVN 68) also made an appearance.



USS Nimitz (CV 68)
Photo credit: Fleet Week New York page on Facebook



F/A-18 Super Hornets from the Nimitz
Photo credit: Fleet Week New York page on Facebook

Reinterment of Medal of Honor Recipient Garfield M. Langhorn

Riverhead Medal of Honor recipient Private First Class **Garfield M. Langhorn**, was reinterred on **July 3** from Riverhead Cemetery to Calverton National Cemetery in Section 23 on Garfield Langhorn Road.

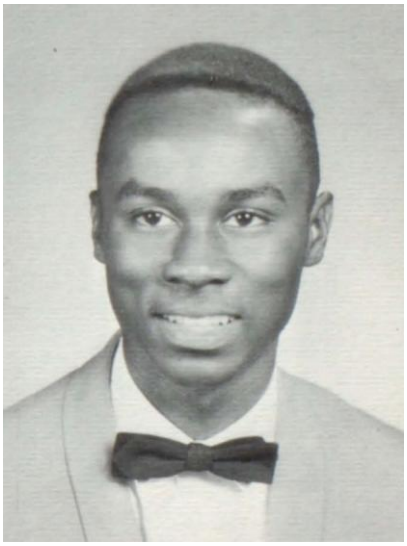
A 1967 Riverhead High School graduate, Langhorn served in Vietnam with Troop C, 7th Squadron (Airmobile), 17th Cavalry, 1st Aviation Brigade, U.S. Army as a radio operator. On January 15, 1969, his unit was tasked with rescuing the two-man crew of a downed Cobra helicopter that had crashed on a heavily-timbered slope. After hacking their way through dense foliage to reach the crash site, they discovered that both aviators were dead. As they were transporting the bodies to a pickup site, they were attacked by NVA soldiers concealed in camouflaged bunkers to the front and right flank; they were soon taking casualties. During the intense battle, an enemy grenade landed near him and several of the wounded soldiers. The 20-year-old Langhorn unhesitatingly threw himself on top of it, absorbing the blast, which killed him but saved the lives of those around him.

His awards include the Medal of Honor, the Purple Heart, the Vietnam Service Medal with campaign star, the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with palm, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and the National Defense Medal. PFC Langhorn is the only Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient in Suffolk County.

On September 27, 2010, the Riverhead, New York post office building was named the Private First Class Garfield M. Langhorn Post Office Building by the 111th United States Congress. Other tributes in

Riverhead Town include a bronze bust at Riverhead Town Hall, memorials at the Pulaski Street School library and a Veterans Wall of Honor at Riverhead High School named in his memory. In 2022, Riverhead Town designated the second Friday in October as "Pfc. Garfield M. Langhorn Day." was also honored with a new training complex dedication at Fort Rucker on July 9.

Langhorn's mother, Mary Jane Langhorn, died in 2019, and his father, Garfield Langhorn, Sr., died in 2008. His three sisters, Yvonne Reid, Anna Mack and April Armstead, all live in Virginia.



Garfield M. Langhorn's senior photo, Riverhead High School 1967 yearbook



Garfield M. Langhorn's gravesite at Calverton
Photo credit: Calverton National Cemetery's Facebook page

FourLeaf Air Show

This show is usually held on Memorial Day weekend, but this year it was changed to the July 4th weekend in honor of the USA's 250th birthday. It was originally scheduled for Sunday and Monday, **July 5–6** at Jones Beach, but the show had to be cut short and canceled for Monday due to inclement weather. Performers at the show included:

- U.S. Navy *Blue Angels*
- United Kingdom Royal Air Force *Red Arrows*
- Canadian Forces *Snowbirds*
- United Arab Emirates National Aerobatic Team *Fursan Al Emarat*
- Air National Guard 106th Rescue Wing HC-130J/HH-60G Formation Demonstration
- British Army *Red Devils* Parachute Display Team
- U.S. Army *Golden Knights* Parachute Display Team
- American Airpower Museum *Warbirds* (World War II airplanes)
- Aarron Deliu Australian professional aerobatic pilot
- Five aircraft from Farmingdale State College Aviation



U.S. Navy Blue Angels

Photo credit: Dariusz Jezewski, FotoDJ.com for Aviation Photojournal



Canadian Snowbirds followed by RAF Red Arrows
Photo credit: Dariusz Jezewski, FotoDJ.com for Aviation Photojournal



106th Rescue Wing HC-130J with two HH-60Gs
Photo credit: Dariusz Jezewski, FotoDJ.com for Aviation Photojournal

Veterans Sneaker and Produce Giveaway

General Needs Ltd. joined up with Long Island Cares in Eisenhower Park in East Meadow on Saturday, **July 18**, to distribute shoes, clothing, fresh produce and everyday essentials to veterans in need. Home Depot and PSEG Long Island also donated household supplies. Approximately 200 pairs of sneakers and socks for men and women were distributed to veterans.



Veterans in cars line up to receive food, clothing and household items.
Photo credit: John Scalesi

Nassau County Salute to Veterans

This annual event was held on Saturday evening, **August 1**, at Eisenhower Park, Harry Chapin Lakeside Theater, East Meadow. Bruce Blakeman, Nassau County Executive, and Ralph Esposito, director of the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency, hosted the event. *Salute to Veterans* honored five people in the veteran community who have devoted their time and lives to helping Long Island veterans. After the honorees received their recognition and awards, a concert was held featuring The American Bombshells and Desert Highway. The honorees were **Harry Miller**, **William Byrne, Richard Ventimiglia**, **Richard Winter** and **Michael Felix**. Congratulations to the honorees!



L to R: Harry Miller, Ralph Esposito (Director, Nassau County Veterans Service Agency), William Byrne, Richard Ventimiglia, Richard Winter and Michael Felix.
Photo credit: John Scalesi

Veterans Resource Fair and Food Distribution

The fair, hosted by Valley Stream VFW Post 1790 in partnership with Long Island Cares, was held on **August 5** at the post. A wide variety of services was provided, including access to food assistance, information on benefits eligibility, mental health counseling, education opportunities, housing information and assistance with disability claims.

Joseph P. Dwyer Second Annual Bike Run and BBQ

Taking place on Saturday, **August 15**, the bike run started at the Marine Corps League building in Massapequa, traveled to Eisenhower Park Veterans Memorial Plaza and returned to the Marine Corps League. Veterans and their families enjoyed free BBQ, music, veterans' resources, family activities and raffles.

Northport Annual Appreciation Barbecue

VA Northport and the Suffolk Police Veterans Association hosted an Appreciation Barbecue for veterans and their families on Saturday, **August 22**, from 11 AM to 3 PM at Monsky Field in Northport.

The food was cooked by the BBQ Brethren. There was live music, a classic car display, raffles, bouncy castles for the kids, arts & crafts, face painting and a Veterans Information Tent.

Missing World War II Airman Finally Laid to Rest

On November 5, 1944, 1st Lieutenant Franklin H. McKinney took off from Beitun Airfield in Yunnan, China on a photo reconnaissance mission over Burma and Thailand in his F-5E-2-LO Lightning aircraft (a recon version of the venerable P-38 Lightning twin-engined fighter). His mission was part of the 35th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron's daring spy operations that supported the war effort in China during World War II.

No contact was made after the aircraft left base and he was never seen again.

While the military officially declared McKinney dead in 1946, the exact circumstances around his disappearance remained a mystery for over 80 years. Eventually, luck intervened in the form of a flood at the Thai Air Force Museum in Bangkok in 2012. Among the museum's papers that were reviewed after the flood was a Thai police report dated November 5, 1944, the very day of McKinney's last flight. The report described how residents of a Thai island village witnessed a twin-engine plane flying through a violent storm that day and being struck by lightning, catching fire, exploding and crashing into the island. It further detailed the crash site, noting that the plane was a P-38 with the tail number "811," and that a skull was found at the crash site.

In the years that followed, an ensemble of researchers, aviation enthusiasts, local Thai villagers and officials, the Royal Thai government, archaeologists and students from Thammasat University in Thailand and members of the 142nd Wing of the Oregon Air National Guard, worked with the DPAA (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) to confirm the validity of the lost report, to locate the crash site and to find bone fragments as well as fragments from the crashed plane.

A repatriation ceremony was held in March 2026 at the American Embassy in Bangkok. On August 28, he was laid to rest alongside his mother and father in Wakefield, Rhode Island.



1st LT Franklin H. McKinney in undated photo.
Photo credit: U.S. Air Force/Maj. Daniel Jackson

Second Annual Women's Veteran Luncheon, Resource Fair & Food Distribution

The luncheon was held on Saturday, **August 29**, from 11 AM to 2 PM at the Long Island Cares' Center for Community Engagement at 75 Davids Drive in Hauppauge. It provided a complimentary lunch, access to various resources from different vendors and food to take home. This event was sponsored by PSEG Long Island in partnership with the Harry Chapin Regional Food Bank and supported by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

Long Island State Veterans Home Dedicates Gift Shop in Honor of Colonel E. David Woycik Jr.

The Long Island State Veterans Home at Stony Brook University named its gift shop in honor of Colonel E. David Woycik Jr. (Ret.), Esq. on **September 2**, recognizing his long-time contribution to the home and his dedication to serving Long Island veterans and their families.

Woycik served 30 years in the Army, retiring as a colonel in the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps. He served overseas in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait during Desert Storm and across seven tours in Panama. He has earned numerous honors, including the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal and Army Achievement Medal. He is currently a senior trial partner with the Garden City firm of Sanders, Aronova, Grossman, Woycik, Viener & Kalant, PLLC, having worked with such veteran-oriented groups as America's VetDogs, Canine Companions for Independence and in recent years with the Long Island State Veterans Home.

Mega Career Expo

The expo was held in partnership with Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman and the Office of Minority Affairs Workforce Development on Thursday, **September 10**, from 10 AM to 3 PM (early entrance for seniors, veterans and individuals with disabilities started at 9 AM) at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale. Admission was free (but registration was required) and there was no charge for parking. Employers from across Long Island were looking for candidates for positions in healthcare, education, manufacturing, technology, government, retail, MTA and LIRR, hospitality, armed forces, law enforcement, energy, utilities, construction, and trades.

National Day of Service at Long Island National Cemetery

This nationwide event started here at 10 AM on Saturday, **September 12**, at the Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale. This day serves to honor the nearly 3,000 lives lost during the 9/11 attacks and to recognize the sacrifices made by first responders and service members. Volunteers helped with activities such as cleaning headstones and beautifying the cemetery.

Annual Veterans BBQ, Picnic and Resource Fair

This annual three-hour event was held on Thursday, **September 17**, near Parking Field 6 at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. Just like last year, the weather was bright and sunny, making for a very pleasant day for the hundreds of veterans in attendance. Many organizations, businesses and government agencies had tables there providing information. Music was provided by The Tangerine Band and the American Bombshells.

POW/MIA Night Vigil Ceremony

The ceremony began at 7 PM on Friday, **September 18**, at Veterans Memorial Plaza at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. It honored the POWs and MIAs from Nassau County by reading the names of these local heroes.

9/11 Firefighters Memorial Rededication at Eisenhower Park

This memorial, which replaces the original firefighters memorial from 1989, was unveiled on Sunday, **September 20**. The rededicated firefighters plaza, located along Park Boulevard, near Parking Field 6/6A, now features the names of 56 Nassau County firefighters who died on 9/11 or who died later from 9/11-related illnesses. Seven names were added to the memorial this year.

The project is expected to cost about $350,000, funded through donations that include $100,000 from the Peter & Jeri Dejana Foundation and $150,000 from Nassau County.



Ralph Esposito, Chairman of the Nassau County Firefighters Memorial Endowment Association and Director of the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency, gets set to place a rose on the new memorial.

Photo credit: Debbie Egan-Chin for Newsday

Honor Flight Long Island

The flight that was planned to leave Macarthur Airport in Ronkonkoma on Saturday, **September 26**, unfortunately was **canceled** by the organizers (Honor Flight Long Island) due to the impending nor'easter. They tried to reschedule for October, but it didn't work out. The flight was eventually rescheduled for **April 24, 2027**, with those who were originally scheduled for the September flight to be given priority status for the new flight. The cancellation was not an easy decision to make but was a wise one that was done with everyone's safety foremost in mind.

Upcoming Non-LIAFA Events (Grouped by Topic)

Community Fundraisers and Social Events

Senior Veterans' Monthly Lunch

RSVP required: **Date/time:** **Second Friday of each month**, doors open at 11:30 AM. **Two Locations:** **Bethpage Community Center**, 103 Grumman Road West in Bethpage and **St. Mary's Knights of Columbus**, 78 Hempstead Avenue in Lynbrook. **Details:** **RSVP** at www.nassaucountyny.gov/aging-events by the first Friday of each month for the following week's lunch, or call (516) 227-8900 (Lynbrook) or (516) 571-9910 (Bethpage).

Volunteer, Donation, and Community Support Opportunities

North Hempstead Veterans Donation Drive

Running through December 4, this donation drive will help local veterans combat food insecurity and aid their overall well-being. Proceeds will benefit the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency's Food Pantry (VetMart), the Long Island State Veterans Home, and the Northport VA Medical Center.

Residents are asked to donate gift cards from Walmart, Shoprite, Stop & Shop, CVS, and Walgreens **only**.

Residents interested in donating can drop off gift cards at:

- Town Hall (Supervisor's Office): 220 Plandome Road, Manhasset
- Clinton G. Martin Park: 1601 Marcus Avenue, New Hyde Park
- Michael J. Tully Park: 1801 Evergreen Avenue, New Hyde Park
- Or call (516) 869-7604 to arrange for pick-up

Nassau County American Legion Oratorical Contest

Date/time: Saturday, **December 5**, 10 AM–3 PM. **Location**: Guthart Cultural Center Theater at Axinn Library, Hofstra University in Hempstead. **Details:** High school students from grades 9-12 speak before audiences to demonstrate their knowledge of our United States Constitution. All students may compete in successive years against other high school students. Competitions are scheduled sequentially at local county, district, zone and state levels. State winners move on to the national contest held annually in Indianapolis, IN at American Legion Headquarters. There are also monetary awards for the winners at each level, and national winners receive substantial scholarship awards. For more information, please go to https://www.nassaulegion.net/oratorical-contest/.

Local Veteran Information and Recognition

Laying of Remembrance Wreaths at Long Island National Cemetery

Date/time: Saturday, **December 19**, ceremony begins at 12 noon. **Location:** Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Ave. in Farmingdale. **Details:** The cemetery is seeking volunteers to help lay Remembrance Wreaths on the gravesites under the Wreaths Across America program. Wreath placement will take place immediately after the ceremony. Please arrive early as there were over 3,000

participants at last year's ceremony and wreath-laying. For more information, please call the cemetery at (631) 454-4949.

If you wish to volunteer to lay wreaths, or to sponsor one or more remembrance wreaths, please go to https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/pages/150000/Overview.

Honor Flight Long Island

Date/time: Saturday, **April 24, 2027**, 7:30 AM–10 PM; attendees are encouraged to arrive one hour early. **Location:** MacArthur Airport, 100 Arrival Avenue in Ronkonkoma. **Details:** Honor Flight recognizes American World War II, Korean War and Vietnam veterans by flying them to and from Washington, D.C. to see their memorials ***at no cost***. The flights, deluxe tour bus service, lunch, dinner and T-shirts are **FREE** to our veterans. Flights depart from MacArthur Airport (ISP) in Ronkonkoma at 7:30 AM and arrive at Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI) at 8:30 AM. The return flight leaves BWI at 9 PM and arrives at ISP at 10 PM. Both flights are via Breeze Airways. Please see the ***Announcements, Benefits and Resources/Local Veteran Information and Recognition*** section of this newsletter for details on how to apply.

GoldStars Tribute Wall™ (Traveling Wall)

Date/time: Friday through Sunday, **April 9–11, 2027**, times to be announced. **Location:** Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. The Tribute to America's Fallen Foundation, Inc. through the GoldStars Tribute Wall™ seeks to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Gulf Wars, Iraq, and Afghanistan from 1990 to the present. There are over 7,000 names on the traveling wall, with 400+ from New York State and 50 from Long Island. **Donations requested:** Military Blue Star Mothers NY 14 (host of the event) is asking for donations. Sponsorships will be available. Please call (516) 476-9094 for more information.

Veteran Benefits and Resource Events

Veterans Annual Winter Stand Down

Date/time: Tuesday, **November 24**, 9 AM-1 PM. **Location:** Freeport Armory, 63 Babylon Turnpike in Freeport. **Details:** It will again be a drive-through-only event; the items distributed will be clothes, winter jackets, toiletries, and nonperishable foods. Information on housing and peer counseling will also be available. **Bring:** Each veteran is required to display proper veteran identification; the veteran must be present to receive donations. Call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 with any questions.

Embassy Diner Fundraiser to Help Homeless Veterans

Date/time: Saturday, **December 19**, time not available before we "went to press." The diner *does* have a Facebook page so give it a look a few days before the event date to find out the time. **Location:** Embassy Diner ("Home of the Brave"), 4280 Hempstead Turnpike in Bethpage. **Details:** This event is designed to assist veterans who have served the country and are currently in need of help.

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Announcements, Benefits, Programs and Resources

Policy, Benefits, and Official Updates

VA Resource Navigator

Read online or download a copy of the VA Resource Navigator, which lists a ton of information on various VA benefits and programs.

Get it here:
https://www.prevention.va.gov/PCL/docs/NCP-PCL-Handout-VA-Resource-Navigator-508.pdf

MyVetBENEFITS Free App

https://www.myvetbenefits.com/ is a free mobile app and website that instantly matches veterans, military members and their families to a personalized list of benefits and services they've earned. It is privately owned and is built and maintained by a dedicated team of veterans, military spouses and military family members. The inclusion of government-related information does not imply endorsement by any U.S. government entity, such as the Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or any state agency. There are no user fees or subscriptions; revenue comes from sponsor organizations, like Cigna Healthcare, that support their mission. MyVetBENEFITS is available for iPhone and Android devices or can be accessed via any web browser.

Guard VA Benefits Act

This act aims to protect New York veterans from fraud by unaccredited representatives who charge fees for assistance with VA benefits claims. This legislation reinstates penalties for those who engage in such predatory practices, ensuring that veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to without being exploited. Penalties include a class A misdemeanor charge and civil penalties of up to $10,000 per violation. Additionally, it creates a veterans' services fund to support certified organizations that assist veterans with their benefits claims. The bill was signed into law by Governor Hochul on November 5, 2025.

New Veterans Property Tax Exemption (Nassau County)

Recent amendments to New York state law allow the county, towns, incorporated villages and school districts the option to offer a property tax exemption to veterans with a service-connected 100% permanent and total VA disability compensation rating. The taxing authority in your area must opt in to this amendment for the veteran to receive the full property benefit.

ACTION NEEDED: Veterans will be eligible for the new tax exemption by meeting ALL the following criteria:

- The veteran must be honorably discharged or discharged under honorable conditions.
- The veteran must have a VA disability combined rating of 100% total and permanent.
- The property must be the veteran's primary residence and must be located in Nassau County.

Veterans will need to bring the following items when applying for this exemption:

- DD Form 214
- Most recent VA Disability Award Letter showing a **100% Total & Permanent rating**
- Valid photo ID

Veterans and eligible family members can apply in person by visiting the Nassau County Assessment Office at 240 Old Country Road, 4th Floor, Room 402 in Mineola.

NOTE: Call the Assessor's Office at (516) 571-1500 for the most up-to-date information since the law has been amended several times over the last 9 months. The Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 can also help. Also, this is a **State** law so veterans in other New York counties should contact their county's assessor's office.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Exemption applications for the 2027-28 Property Tax Year must be received by January 4, 2027.

Changes to How Disabled Veterans Can Get VA Automobile Grants

Qualified disabled veterans who have previously received a Department of Veterans Affairs automobile grant to purchase a specially equipped vehicle 30 or more years ago may now be eligible to apply for another one.

The Advancing Uniform Transportation Opportunities for Veterans Act, known as the AUTO Act (signed into law in January 2023), allows veterans with qualifying service-connected disabilities to receive an automobile grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs every 10 years instead of just once in their lifetimes. Under the new law, veterans who haven't received a vehicle grant in 30 years are immediately eligible to apply for another one; and they can then apply for a new grant every 10 years.

Eligibility requirements haven't changed. Veterans and active-duty service members qualify for the automobile grant if they have a service-connected disability that includes at least one of these conditions:

- Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both feet
- Loss, or permanent loss of use, of one or both hands
- Permanent decreased vision in both eyes, meaning 20/200 vision or less in the better eye with glasses; or greater than 20/200 vision but with a visual field defect that reduces peripheral vision to 20 degrees or less in the better eye
- Severe burn injuries
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Ankylosis in one or both knees or hips (this qualifies for adaptive equipment grants only, not the automobile purchase grant)

The disability must be service-connected or treated as service-connected under 38 U.S.C. 1151, which covers disabilities resulting from VA medical care.

The AUTO Act also updated how VA classifies certain vehicle modifications. The law allows VA to pay for specific modifications as medical services rather than only through the adaptive equipment

program. These modifications include van lifts, raised doors, raised roofs, air conditioning and wheelchair tie-downs for passenger use. This change matters because it provides another pathway for veterans to obtain necessary vehicle modifications through VA health care rather than solely through the benefits system.

For more details and how to apply, please go to https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/veterans-can-now-get-va-auto-grants-every-10-years-heres-what-changed.html.

VA Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) Grants

The VA Home Improvements and Structural Alterations Benefit (HISA) provides financial assistance to disabled veterans with service-connected medical conditions (and sometimes non-service-connected conditions) who require modifications to their homes, whether owned or rented by the veteran.

This benefit provides medically necessary improvements and structural alterations to Veterans/Servicemembers' primary residence for the following purposes:

- Allowing entrance to or exit from the primary residence
- Use of essential lavatory and sanitary facilities (e.g., roll-in showers)
- Allowing accessibility to kitchen or bathroom sinks or counters (e.g., lowering counters/sinks)
- Improving entrance paths or driveways in immediate area of the home to facilitate access to the home through construction of permanent ramping
- Improving plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to installation of home medical equipment

HISA will **not** pay for:

- Walkways to exterior buildings
- Spa, hot tub, or Jacuzzi
- Home security systems
- Removable equipment or appliances such as portable ramps, porch lifts, and stair glides
- Exterior decking
- New construction
- Routine repairs as part of regular home maintenance like replacements of roofs, furnaces or air conditioners

You may use HISA benefits to pay for more than one home alteration, until you exhaust your lifetime benefit. HISA benefits approved by VA for use in a particular home alteration but unused by you will remain available for future use.

$6,800 lifetime limitation:

- A service-connected condition
- A non-service-connected condition of a veteran rated 50% or more service-connected (no combining or combination of disability percentages is allowed)
- A non-service-connected condition of a veteran in receipt of benefits under Title 38, USC Section 1151 for the condition requiring such benefit

$2,000 lifetime limitation:

- All other veterans receiving medical services furnished under Title 38, USC Sections 1710(a)(2) and (3).

DO NOT START WORK BEFORE APPROVAL: Do not start a modification until you receive an approval letter from Prosthetic & Sensory Aids Service (PSAS).

For more information, go to https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/HISA2.asp.

Veteran Identification, Records, and Discounts

Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix)

Per the Vet Tix website:

Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix) is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit that supports all branches of currently-serving military, including the Guard and Reserves, honorably discharged or retired veterans of all eras, their families, including immediate family of those killed in action, and caregivers of Vet Tixers. Vet Tix provides free or deeply discounted event tickets with a nominal delivery fee to attend sporting events, concerts, performing arts and family activities. Attending these types of community events improves morale and strengthens family bonds while encouraging service members and Veterans to stay engaged with local communities.

Since 2008, Vet Tix is proud to announce that to date 42,856,564 event tickets have been donated to Vet Tix in all 50 states and Washington, DC to support our military, veterans, and their families. Vet Tix is a 99% back-to-program charity (independently audited for the past 16 years). Visit VetTix.org to learn more, and follow them on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

Nassau County DD Form 214 Recording and Veterans Discount Photo ID Card

Nassau County Clerk **Maureen O'Connell** offers a Veterans Recognition Program, allowing veterans the opportunity to record their veteran discharge papers (DD Form 214) free of charge with the Nassau County Clerk's Office. Upon recording these documents, the veteran will be eligible to receive a Veterans Discount Photo ID Card, which provides discounts at participating businesses throughout Nassau County.

For a downloadable list of participating businesses, go to: Copy of Participating Businesses - Database.

For more information, visit the Nassau County Clerk's website at www.nassaucountyny.gov/clerk.

Be on the Alert for Veteran Charity Scams

SCAM ALERT: Be especially alert during this upcoming holiday season. Making a donation to a veterans charity is a great idea, but if it's a charity that you've never heard of or one that has solicited you in person or by telephone, mail or email, it's worth taking a few minutes to check it out before writing that check, reaching for your wallet or submitting your credit card information. Phony charities claiming to support police, firefighters, veterans or sick children are not uncommon, so it makes sense

to do some research before handing over your money. Websites like Charity Navigator and Charity Watch provide information about many charities, including data on their fundraising practices, and often highlight suspect charities. The sites are free and may save you from enriching scammers and depriving legitimate charities of needed donations.

Free Discount Drug Program for Veterans

VeteranRx offers up to 80 percent off on brand-name and generic prescription drugs for veterans and their families. This free program includes more than 35,000 pharmacies around the country, including all major chains. No medical service connection to the VA is necessary. There are no enrollment forms, no age or income requirements, no waiting periods, no eligibility requirements, no exclusions, covers pre-existing conditions, no claim forms to file, no annual or lifetime limits. This program has no service connection requirements. VeteranRx is not part of or endorsed by any government or military organization. Ask your pharmacist to run both your insurance and the savings card and use the one that saves you the most money. Sometimes the free savings card will offer better prices than your insurance copay. Any veteran and family member of a U.S. Veteran with or without prescription coverage can use this free card. It even covers pet medications. Go to https://www.veteranrx.com/ for more info.

Community Notices and Public Safety

Navy Seeks Interviews with Former Grumman Employees at Calverton

The U.S. Navy is requesting interviews with former employees, or their surviving family members, who worked at the Grumman-operated Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant in Calverton between 1954 and 1996. These interviews will aid in the Navy's environmental remediation at the site, which covers approximately 6,000 acres.

Since Grumman vacated the premises in 1996, the site has been a subject of controversy over chemical contamination, with dangerous chemicals such as perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and 1,4-dioxane that have leaked into the Peconic River and threaten the groundwater in the area.
The Navy said it is particularly interested in employees' knowledge of:

- Past operations and activities
- Waste management practices
- Building utilization
- Grounds maintenance
- Aircraft fabrication practices on site
- Any other relevant information, both on- and off-property.

ACTION NEEDED: Any former employee at Grumman's Calverton facility interested in participating in an interview or in learning more is asked to send an email to NAVFAC_ML_PAO_ALL@us.navy.mil or call 800-906-9339.

Participation in the interviews is completely voluntary and all information shared during the interviews will be kept confidential.

Veteran Functions at Eisenhower Park

PERMIT REQUIRED: **All veterans organizations that wish to hold an event, ceremony or other function at the park must contact the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency to get a permit.** This requirement protects the organization as well as the park since the NCVSA holds an insurance policy covering any accidents or injuries that may occur during such events. Please call Ralph Esposito at (516) 572-6512 or Paul Vista at (516) 572-6521.

Veterans Courts and Legal Assistance

Veterans Traffic Court (Nassau County)

The Nassau County Traffic and Parking Violations Agency (NCTPVA) at 801 Axinn Avenue in Garden City holds monthly traffic court sessions on the third Thursday afternoon of each month, dedicated to assisting veterans and active-duty military members with resolving violations. NCTPVA will work with the District Court to bundle all traffic violations together. This program is a one-time-only opportunity so don't waste it on minor violations.

For more information, please call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565. Also see the following link: www.nassaucountyny.gov/4917/Veterans-Traffic-Court.

Veterans Treatment Court (Nassau County)

U.S. military veterans charged with minor nonviolent offenses may qualify for reduced charges or penalties by participating in a court-supervised treatment program. To apply, a pre-screening questionnaire must be completed and forwarded to the district attorney's office. You must then contact the Veterans Treatment Court Project Director to set a clinical evaluation for the purpose of determining treatment needs. If you are found to be eligible, you will be contacted by the D.A.'s office and a plea offer will be proposed. For more information, please visit their website at www.nassaucountyny.gov/4919/Veterans-Treatment-Court.

Volunteers are also being sought to be mentors; training will be provided. Mentors should be honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces prepared to commit for a minimum of six months. Active employees of the Unified Courts System, active members of law enforcement or members of any other organization that may present a conflict of interest with the mentor program are not eligible. If interested, please call Rosemary Walker at (516) 493-4145.

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

Veterans' Rights Project

The Veterans' Rights Project is able to assist any person who has previous military experience regardless of discharge status. All services are free. Services include housing, family law, public benefits, re-entry services and discharge upgrades. Their website is https://legalservicesli.org/resources-self-help/veterans/.

Contact information:

- Hempstead Office: 1 Helen Keller Way, 5th Floor, phone (516) 292-8100
- Islandia Office: 1757 Veterans Highway, Suite 50, phone (631) 232-2400
- Riverhead Office: 400 West Main St., Suite 200, phone (631) 369-1112

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/VDP.

Transportation Programs

Nassau County Transportation Program by GoGoGrandparent—*** Funding Discontinued ***

The Nassau County GoGoGrandparent program for senior veterans provided free transportation, but it was a pilot program. Unfortunately, the funding for this county program has been discontinued. You can still call (855) 464-6872 to schedule a ride, but you will have to pay for it.

Nassau County Veterans Service Agency Transportation Program

This program provides free transportation for scheduled VA medical appointments. The veteran will be picked up at his or her residence and driven in a Nassau County Veterans Service Agency vehicle to a designated VA facility.

Locations that are serviced for transportation are:

- VA Clinic, East Meadow
- VA Clinic, Valley Stream
- VA Vet Center, Hicksville
- VA Main Hospital, Northport

SCHEDULE TWO WEEKS AHEAD: *All appointments for transportation are required to be reserved two weeks prior to your scheduled VA appointment.* Please call Jessica DeLisi (VSA Transportation Coordinator) at (516) 572-6526 to schedule transportation.

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation

From their website:

"DAV Transportation at Northport is a volunteer service provided by veterans for veterans. The DAV office is located in Building 9 [Northport VA Medical Center] and the telephone number is (631) 754-7980. Any veteran requesting DAV transport should call at least two (2) weeks before an appointment. The DAV Transportation Coordinator will determine eligibility and availability of transportation. Since space is limited, you must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. Please call if you have any questions."

VUHC Veterans Transportation Program

Through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the VHA-UBER Health Connect (VUHC) program offers another way for eligible veterans to access transportation to VA-authorized appointments. To qualify, veterans must meet the following criteria:

- Be service connected for 30% or more
- Be traveling to/from treatment for a service-connected condition
- Receive a VA pension or disability
- Have an income that does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate

Please call Northport VA mobility manager Patricia Sangenito at (631) 261-4400 for more information.

Food, Claims, and Outreach Services

VetMart Food Pantry

The VetMart food pantry at the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency is located at 2201 Hempstead Turnpike, Building Q, East Meadow. Building Q is located on the property of the Nassau University Medical Center (NUMC), around the back of the property.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Veterans may register at the food pantry for eligibility with a Veterans ID Card or DD Form 214 Military Discharge Form. *(Note: Other forms of veteran identification may be accepted, but eligibility will be at the discretion of the agency)*. Once registered with the proper veteran documentation, the veteran may come to the food pantry once per week for food distributions; toiletries and other supplies are issued monthly. The Veterans Food Pantry is open Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 12 Noon *(closed Weekends and Holidays)*. For more information/questions about the food pantry or directions to the facility, veterans may call (516) 572-6565.

Nassau County VSA Outreach Events Available

These events are open to all veterans groups based in Nassau County. They include:

- Intake of veteran's contact information and digital storage of veteran's DD Form 214
- Access to veteran's VA digital folder (with processed VA Power of Attorney)
- Access to local experts to expedite VA disability benefit claims
- Option to file future VA claims remotely
- Presentations on the PACT Act and Aid and Attendance benefits
- Assistance in applying for VA Healthcare enrollment

Call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6565 to schedule an event for your veterans group.

Nassau County Veterans Service Agency—Filing VA Claims

Speak with a trained and certified Veterans Service Officer from the Nassau County VSA to help process your VA benefits, such as claims for:

- VA Disability Compensation for eligible veterans who got sick or injured while serving and whose condition worsened due to military service.
- Survivors Pension (DIC) Dependency Indemnity Compensation for the surviving spouse, child or parent of a service member who died in the line of duty or the survivor of a veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness.
- Aid & Attendance Benefit for qualified wartime veterans and their surviving spouses who require increased care due to disability or advanced age. Intended to help individuals cover the costs of in-home nursing care, assisted living or nursing home care.
- Burial benefits for eligible veterans to help cover burial, funeral and transportation costs.

FREE SERVICE / BRING DD FORM 214: Veterans and their families can call (516) 572-6565 to find out more about these VA benefits and to schedule an appointment. Please bring the veteran's DD Form 214 to your appointment; all services are provided free of charge.

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, Valley Stream and Freeport. For more information, please call (631) 582-3663, extension 142, or visit their website at www.licares.org/our-programs/veterans.

To book an appointment at your local food pantry for Military Appreciation Tuesdays, please click on the *First Stop Food Pantries* link in the green section of the webpage marked "Military Appreciation Tuesdays" and then click on the *Military Appreciation Booking form* link under "Important Notes." Military Appreciation Tuesdays are reserved for veterans, active-duty military and their families.

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.

Mental Health, Peer Support, and Training

Be the One App Now Available

CRISIS RESOURCE: For veterans in crisis, this app for both Apple and Android devices offers guidance and community resources. The *Be the One* app was developed by Columbia University's Lighthouse Project and tailored to The American Legion's *Be the One* suicide prevention mission. It's available on both Apple's App Store and Google Play and uses the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), that gives anyone anywhere a simple series of questions to ask to determine if a veteran is at risk of suicide, and the severity and immediacy of that risk.

The app can be installed and run on the iPhone, the iPad and Android phones. One of the app's key features is privacy. Your name, address and phone number are not requested or recorded; only your ZIP code is disclosed so that local resources can be shown.

VA Mobile Apps

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has several apps and other resources that can help veterans support their mental health. These apps can serve as a complement to traditional therapy or as a way for the veteran to track and manage symptoms on their own.

The apps can be downloaded from this website:
https://mobile.va.gov/appstore?filter%5Bapp_audience%5D=25
Some of the available apps:

- Mindfulness Coach
- PTSD Coach
- VA Health Chat
- AIMS for Anger Management

Center of Excellence at SUNY Old Westbury

SUNY Old Westbury is home to the only Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success (CEVSS) in New York State.

CEVSS:

- Provides a single point of contact to coordinate support services for veteran students, regardless of their branch or duration of service.

- Supports veterans with admissions, registration, financial aid, veterans' benefits, academic advising and career development.
- Facilitates support through disabilities services and physical, emotional and mental health counseling as well as all other services available to students.
- Provides career advice and networking opportunities to help veteran students make successful transitions to college and the civilian workforce.
- Facilitates internship opportunities to provides hands-on experience and increase employment opportunities after graduation.
- Assists with employment resources to help veteran students find job openings, create resumes and learn interview skills.

Point of contact:

Jennifer Jaikaran, LMSW
Director, CEVSS
(516) 274-7768
jaikaranj@oldwestbury.edu

CEC Health Care Veteran Support Group

Weekly meetings are held every Wednesday from 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM at the Merrick Library at 2279 Merrick Ave. in Merrick. Contact Carolyn Cerky at (516) 316-0155.

CEC Health Care has its offices at 2146 Jackson Ave. in Seaford, where they offer psychiatric care and evaluation, mental health counseling and therapy, and treatment services for addiction and substance abuse. Their phone number is (516) 622-8888, ext. 2; their website is cechealthcare.org.

CN Guidance and Counseling Services

All services by this nonprofit organization are free for veterans or loved ones of veterans. Services are available in the community or via telehealth and include outreach and engagement, peer support and linkages to community resources. They also provide referrals and warm handoffs to programs within CN Guidance based on eligibility, including therapy, medication management, medication-assisted treatment for substance abuse, case management and primary care physician. For more information, please call (516) 246-0614 or (516) 246-0621 or send an email to vetservices@centralnassau.org.

Vet Centers

They offer confidential help for veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. Their services include counseling for needs such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST). They can also connect you with more support in VA and your community.

Nassau Location: The Nassau Vet Center is located at 970 Broadway in Hicksville; the phone number is (516) 348-0088. Need help after hours? The call center is open 24/7; the number is (877) 927-8387. Please visit https://www.va.gov/nassau-vet-center/ for more information.

Suffolk Location: For Suffolk County veterans, there is the Babylon Vet Center and its satellite locations in Eastport, Rocky Point and Westhampton. The main phone number for all locations is (631) 661-3930. Please visit https://www.va.gov/babylon-vet-center/locations/ for hours, locations and directions.

Queens and Bronx Location: There are also Vet Center locations in Queens and the Bronx. Please visit https://www.va.gov/nassau-vet-center/locations/ for hours, locations and directions.

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. **Location:** 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 Lane in Levittown at 2 PM on Thursdays (biweekly). 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 (park in the municipal lot across the street; use the side parking lot and side entrance closest to the gated area.) No pre-registration is necessary.

For more information, please call (516) 489-2322, extension 1213. Their website is https://veteranshealthalliance.org/nassau-county-pfc-dwyer/.

Suffolk County Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project (Suffolk County)

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. They also provide services to student veterans at numerous Long Island college campuses and monthly community outreach in various locations. For more information, please call (631) 853-8345 or send an email to Program Coordinator Nancy Tappin at ntappin@mhaw.org. They also have a Facebook page.

Suffolk 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 or documentation is required.

Locations and times: Meetings are at:

Mondays:

- 6 PM at Liberty Village, 600 Albany Ave. in Amityville
- Women-only MST (Military Sexual Trauma) Group—Zoom meetings at 6 PM (email Nancy Tappin at ntappin@mhaw.org for meeting ID)

Thursdays: **Seniors 60 and over only**—Rose Caracappa Senior Center, 739 Route 25A in Mount Sinai at 10 AM on the second and fourth Thursday of every month.

Fridays: 2nd and 4th Friday of every month at 5 PM at Liberty Station, 1599 Route 112 in Port Jefferson Station.

Saturdays:

- Women Veterans Group—Zoom meetings on 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month, 11:30 AM–12:30 PM (email Nancy Tappin at ntappin@mhaw.org for meeting ID)
- New moms—Zoom meetings on 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month, 11:30 AM–12:30 PM (email Nancy Tappin at ntappin@mhaw.org for meeting ID)

For more information, please call (631) 853-8345 or send an email to Program Coordinator Nancy Tappin at ntappin@mhaw.org. Their website is https://mhaw.org/dwyer/.

Volunteer, Donation, and Community Support Opportunities

Volunteer Drivers Wanted for Veterans—Nassau County Veterans Service Agency Transportation Program

The Nassau County Veterans Service Agency is looking for volunteers to transport veterans to and from the aforementioned VA facilities. Please donate any time you have to give on Monday–Friday from 7 AM to 5 PM You pick whatever times and dates work for you. Nassau County will provide the vehicles; a valid New York State driver's license is required. To volunteer, please call Jessica DeLisa at (516) 572-6526. The need is urgent so please help if you can!

Volunteer Drivers Wanted for Veterans—Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

DAV is looking for volunteer drivers to help veterans get to VA medical appointments. A valid New York State driver's license is required. For more information, please send an email to Robert.Erdody@va.gov or call (631) 235-8220. For a volunteer application, please send an email to Jennifer.Pohl2@va.gov or call (631) 261-4400, extension 7182.

Nassau County Firefighters Operation Wounded Warrior (NCFF-OWW)

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization ***not*** affiliated with the Wounded Warrior Project or any other Operation Wounded Warrior organization, the NCFF-OWW is committed to helping those who put their lives in harm's way to protect the rights granted to us, the citizens of the United States of America. Their mission is to boost the morale of service members wounded in the line of duty. The NCFF-OWW works closely with military representatives of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington DC, the Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Liberty, NC and the Naval Hospital in Camp Lejeune, NC. Together, they ensure that useful clothing, personal entertainment electronics, and get-well cards are properly channeled to recovering service personnel. Donations are brought down to Bethesda Naval Hospital and other Wounded Warrior centers via Fire Truck Caravan. Firefighters from throughout the Greater New York area join their 'parade' from New York to military hospitals in the south. Volunteers are also welcome to join their ranks, even if you are not a firefighter! The NCFF-OWW is comprised of firefighter and EMS volunteers throughout Nassau County who conduct numerous fundraising events throughout the year to help meet their goal of providing material and moral support to the wounded men and women of our Armed Forces. Each year's efforts culminate with a personal visit of NCFF-OWW representatives to each of the military hospitals in the area to meet with our brave

wounded warriors and express their gratitude for the sacrifices that they have endured for our country. In addition to collecting items and visiting our wounded service personnel, the NCFF-OWW organizes, on behalf of the Nassau County fire service, welcome-home receptions for local service members who have recovered from serious injuries. Donations are accepted and greatly appreciated. Please visit their website at www.ncff-oww.org for more information.

Veterans News UVO Long Island is looking for volunteers

Volunteers are needed as crew members for its weekly show on public access TV (training will be provided.) The show airs on Cablevision channel 115 on Mondays at 6:30 PM and Cablevision channel 20 on Fridays at 6:30 PM. It is also on at various times on Verizon FIOS channel 36, on Lynbrook and Malverne public access channels, on public access MNN TV Network in Manhattan or any time on YouTube by entering *Veterans News UVO*. The crew meets at the North Shore TV Studio at 1111 Marcus Ave., Suite LL27 in Lake Success on the last Tuesday of the month to tape the program. For more information, please email Ed Aulman at mardiv1@optonline.net, or call him at (516) 921-0595.

Donate a Bicycle to Beacon House to Help a Veteran

Beacon House provides housing in forty-two 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. Email Ed Aulman at mardiv1@optonline.net or call him at (516) 921-0595. A charitable donation receipt will be provided by Beacon House.

Local Veteran Information and Recognition

Walls of Honor

See Note at end of paragraph. 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, and who are current or former Nassau County residents. There is a $100 application fee for each name to be engraved. An application is toward the end of this newsletter. **NOTE**: The Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund is not accepting applications at the present time. The program is currently on hold pending the outcome of negotiations with the Nassau County Department of Parks & Recreation.

Local Website for Veterans

We-Are-Vets.us is a local Long Island website presenting a mix of information, history and memories for active-duty troops, veterans and interested civilians. Eric Spinner is the webmaster while Gary Glick, Marvin Gold, Pat Yngstrom and Bernard Fradkin make up the rest of the team. Their website is www.we-are-vets.us.

Honor Flight Long Island

Honor Flight recognizes American World War II, Korean War and Vietnam veterans by flying them to and from Washington, D.C. to see their memorials ***at no cost***. The flights, deluxe tour bus service, lunch, dinner and T-shirts are **FREE** to our veterans. Flights depart from MacArthur Airport (ISP) in

Ronkonkoma and arrive at Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI). **APPLY TO JOIN WAIT LIST:** You must submit an application to get on their wait list, where you will be assigned to a flight on a first-come, first-served basis by order of application date. It will be approximately four to five months after applying before you are assigned to a flight. You can download and print an application to mail or you can fill out an online application. Go to http://www.honorflightlongisland.org/general-9 to do either one. You can find out more information on this same website or you can call Jamie Bowden at (631) 702-2423 or send an email to jbowden@southamptontownny.gov.

Honor Flight Long Island is also looking for Guardian volunteers. Guardians escort the veterans on the aircraft, accompany them throughout the day and make sure our veterans have everything they need for a memorable experience. Prospective Guardians must complete an application and must pay their own way, an expense of $400.

Prospective Guardians, please note:

- Spouses are NOT eligible to serve as Family Guardians.
- All Guardians must attend the Mandatory Guardian Orientation. A flexible schedule will be created so each Guardian can make one of the several sessions.
- Every Guardian must be between 18-66 years of age or be in peak physical condition and able to handle the rigors of the day (i.e., pushing a wheelchair, extensive walking, bad weather).
- Guardians pay $400 for the privilege to escort these veterans to D.C.
- Guardians DO NOT need to submit the $400 donation until it is your turn to fly.
- Guardians will be contacted by Honor Flight Long Island when they have been scheduled for an upcoming flight.

For information on filing a Guardian application, either online or by downloading the form and mailing or emailing a completed form, please visit https://www.honorflightlongisland.org/copy-of-veteran.

If you wish to make a donation to support Honor Flight Long Island in its mission, please go to https://www.honorflightlongisland.org/support-our-mission or mail a check to Honor Flight Long Island, c/o Southampton Town, 116 Hampton Road, Southampton, NY 11968. Honor Flight Long Island is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; all donations are fully tax-deductible.

MedEquip Medical Alert Device with Monitoring—FREE for Veterans

This device (available as a pendant or a wristband) with Stat-VA data is the only medical device of its kind that incorporates veteran health information. All you need to do is **press the button** and a responder will know who and where you are and handle the rest. You do not need to have a pre-existing condition to qualify.

- No monthly or subscription fees
- 24/7 responders
- Coast to coast connection
- HIPAA compliant

- Joint Commission Accredited
- GSA approved program
- No contract to sign
- Service can be terminated at any time.
- Fall Detection (available)

Ask your VA doctor or clinician about the **MedEquip Alert with Monitoring. The device must be ordered using GSA# GS-35F-202GA.** You can also call (844) 435-7808 or visit https://www.medequipalert.com/veterans/ for more info.

Vehicle, Toll, and Military Record Resources

New York Vehicle Registration Fee Refund for New Active-Duty Personnel

REFUND OPPORTUNITY: Active-duty personnel may request a New York DMV registration-fee refund if they entered the U.S. Armed Forces after registering a vehicle, will not use the registration, and the registration is not revoked or suspended. Use DMV Refund Form MV-215, available at https://dmv.ny.gov/forms/mv215.pdf. Entry into service must be documented by a commanding officer. Questions: dmv.sm.VeteransLiaison@dmv.ny.gov.

E-ZPass Disabled Veterans Non-Revenue Program

The New York State Thruway Authority offers free, unlimited travel anywhere on the Thruway to certain qualifying disabled veterans. A disabled veteran who obtains a fee-exempt vehicle registration from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) may enroll in the Authority's Disabled Veteran Non-Revenue E-ZPass Program. Eligibility is *not* determined by percent-disabled designations, specialty license plates or other similar criteria.

ACTION NEEDED: You must find out whether you are eligible for a fee-exempt registration before applying for the program by completing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Form 21-4502 (automobile and adaptive equipment) and send to your assigned VA Regional Office, either in NYC or Buffalo. The VA will rate your claim, and if approved, you will be notified. Please call the Toll-Free VA number for questions about filling out Form 21-4502 at (800) 827-1000 (hearing-impaired TDD line (800) 829-4833).

The vehicle must be in the name of the disabled veteran applying for the program. Your Tag may be used if you need to travel in another vehicle, but you must be present in that vehicle, and the vehicle must be a passenger (2-axle, 4-tire) vehicle. Veterans who are approved for the program are asked to send in a renewal application and updated fee exempt registration every two years based on the expiration date of the fee-exempt registration.

If you travel on roadways and tolling facilities offering E-ZPass other than the NYS Thruway or outside of New York State, you must establish a revenue account by completing the E-ZPass Application for Disabled Veteran Revenue Plan (TA-W5080) in order to use your Tag. *(This revenue account form is only for disabled veterans who have been approved for the non-revenue program and would like to set up a revenue account in order to travel outside of the NYS Thruway system.)*

For more information, visit https://www.thruway.ny.gov/ezpass/veterans.html.

Changes for New York Drivers under New DMV Point System

This change, effective February 16, 2026, applies to ALL NYS drivers, not just veterans.

The DMV assigns points for certain traffic violations. If you get 10 points in 24 months, your driver license may be suspended. Legal experts expect the 24-month look-back period to apply to violations that occurred before the new rules take effect.

Under the new system, points will remain active for 24 months—a six-month increase that creates a longer window during which multiple violations could lead to license penalties. The threshold for license suspension is also changing. While the old system triggered potential suspension at 11 points within 18 months, the new framework will lower this threshold to 10 points within 24 months.

For more details, go to https://trafficticketsblog/new-york-dmv-overhauls-point-system-with-tougher-penalties-for-drivers/.

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id you know . . .

. . . that, in 1970, an Air Force supersonic jet interceptor belly-landed in a field in Montana relatively intact—and without its pilot?

It was February 2, 1970, when a somewhat routine three-ship training flight of Convair F-106A Delta Darts took off from Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. It was originally supposed to be a four-ship flight, but 1st Lieutenant Gary Foust, Captain Tom Curtis (the solo instructor aggressor) and Major James Lowe had to leave their second aggressor pilot behind when that plane's drag chute somehow deployed on the ramp.

Performing high-speed (almost Mach 2) combat maneuvers at 38,000 feet, Foust tried to stay with Curtis during a high-G rudder reversal, but his plane soon got into a post-stall gyration—a very violent maneuver. Foust tried to recover, but the aircraft stalled and went into a flat spin, which is usually

unrecoverable. Lowe began relaying spin-recovery procedures to Foust, one of which is to actuate the takeoff trim button. This trims all the control surfaces to a takeoff setting, which is about the same as for landing. He had also set the throttle to idle, setting his plane on a slow, steady descent trajectory. He even deployed the plane's drag chute as a last resort.

After falling for four miles and still failing to pull out of the spin, Foust finally decided to eject at 15,000 feet. Ironically, the reduction in weight and change in center of gravity caused by the removal of the pilot, coupled with the blast force of the ejection seat pushing the nose of the aircraft down, apparently caused the aircraft to recover from the spin. Upon seeing this, Major Lowe radioed, "Gary? You better get back in that thing!"

Foust landed, unhurt, on the snow-covered Bear Paw Mountains to await rescue. He was later rescued by local residents on snowmobiles.

His plane, meanwhile, continued on at about 200 miles per hour, eventually landing in a snow-covered alfalfa field near the town of Big Sandy. It slid on its belly for a bit and then made a 20-degree turn before traveling through an opening in the field's wall and coming to a complete stop. The astonished farmer immediately called the local sheriff, who in turn contacted the nearest military base. They still had to wait almost two more hours until the plane's fuel was exhausted to examine the plane and assess the damage, which turned out to be fairly minimal, all things considered.

The plane was eventually repaired and its avionics upgraded. It would go on to serve with the 49th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, the last Air Force unit to operate the F-106. Foust, now a Major, amazingly got to fly the same plane again in 1979 while training at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida; the officer in charge had made sure that Foust was assigned to train in that same plane—tail number 58-0787—that had by then entered into Air Force lore. In August 1986 it was presented to the National Museum of the United States Air Force, the world's largest military aviation museum, located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, where it remains on display.

Foust's plane came to be known as the "Cornfield Bomber," although as Foust himself has pointed out, it wasn't a cornfield and the F-106 certainly wasn't a bomber.



F-106A tail number 58-0787 in the field after its journey, February 2, 1970
Photo credit: F-106 Delta Dart Association website



F-106A tail number 58-0787 on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force
Photo credit: National Museum of the United States Air Force

Taps

Edward Robert Chapman of Coram died on August 5 at the age of 80, ten days shy of his 81st birthday. He was an Air Force veteran who served from February 1964 to February 1968 as an Air Passenger Specialist, serving a tour in Vietnam, attaining the rank of Sergeant and being awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

He is survived by his wife Gale; his children: William (married to Amanda), Matthew (married to Antonia), Lindsey (married to Ryan) and Lauren (married to William); his siblings: Joseph, Donna and Deidre; and his grandchildren: Veronica, Lily, Samantha, Alanna, Danielle and William James.



Edward Robert Chapman in undated photo.
Photo credit: legacy.com website

(Taps continued on next page)

Taps (continued)

Vincent Speziale of Lynbrook died on August 23 at the age of 98.

Vincent served in the Air Force as a Staff Sergeant and crew chief during the Korean War. In 1951, he was stationed in Pusan, Korea, where he served with the 95th Bombardment Squadron, 452nd Bombardment Wing, 5th Air Force. As a crew chief, he was responsible for the care and readiness of a B-26 bomber.

He was the second youngest of seven siblings: Vic, Mary, AnnaMarie, Genevieve, Foe, Vinny, and Louis. He was predeceased by his parents, Rosa Garcia and Dominick Speziale. He is survived by his wife Raquel Grace Falotico; his daughters: Marianne Cromwell (married to Richard), Diane Chemick (married to Lowell) and Rosemarie Speziale; his grandchildren: Elizabeth Berthel (married to Michael), Michael Pena, Tyler Cromwell and Jillian Cromwell; and his great grandchildren: Jaxon, Emily, Henry and Olivia.



Vincent Speziale in undated photo
Photo credit: legacy.com website

(Taps continued on next page)

Taps (continued)

José A. Rivera-Carrión of the Bronx VA Hospital died on September 23, 2026, at the age of 96.

José was a U.S. Army veteran who served in Korea from 1950 to 1951 with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during the Korean War, attaining the rank of Corporal and being awarded the Silver Star for Valor.

The 65th Infantry Regiment was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, a civilian honor, in 2014.

Per the award letter:

"As the Regiment sailed to Asia in September 1950, members of the unit informally decided to call themselves the 'Borinqueneers,' a term derived from the Taino word for Puerto Rico meaning 'land of the brave lord.'"

"For its extraordinary service during the Korean War, the Regiment received two Presidential Unit Citations (Army and Navy), two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations, a Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), a Navy Unit Commendation, the Bravery Gold Medal of Greece, and campaign participation credits for United Nations Offensive, CCF Intervention, First United Nations Counteroffensive, CCF Spring Offensive, United Nations Summer-Fall Offensive, Second Korean Winter, Korea Summer-Fall 1952, Third Korean Winter, and Korea Summer 1953."

José was inducted into the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame in 2024. He was interred at Calverton National Cemetery on October 1.



José A. Rivera-Carrión (seated in wheelchair) in undated photo
Photo credit: Thomas C. Montera, Inc. Funeral Home

Requirements for the Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal

- 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);
- served in the Vietnam theater of operations in any branch of the military as per DD Form 214.

A medal application is on the next page. You can also submit the application online from our website at LIAFA.org (please click on the *Veterans* tab).

DD Form 214 *and other required documentation must still be mailed*; please black out your Social Security number and/or Service Number on DD Form 214.

LONG ISLAND CHAPTER #202 OF THE AIR & SPACE FORCES 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 mail a copy of your DD-214 (black out your Social Security Number) and this completed application to:

Fred Di Fabio, President
67 Pacific Dunes Ct.
Medford, NY 11763-2405

For information call:
631-487-7210

- Visit our web page at **LIAFA.ORG** to view a video of the ceremony.
- Also check out our Facebook page: **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.

Form 15 Jan 2026

Requirements for the Women's Military Service Medal

- 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);
- Female veteran **or** currently serving in any branch of the military as per DD Form 214 for veterans, or ID or other documentation for those currently serving.

A medal application is on the next page. You can also submit the application online from our website at LIAFA.org (please click on the *Veterans* tab).

DD Form 214 *and other required documentation must still be mailed*; please black out your Social Security number and/or Service Number on DD Form 214.

WOMAN'S RECOGNITION CEREMONY

ARE YOU A WOMAN WHO IS A VETERAN OR IS CURRENTLY SERVING?

Long Island Chapter #202 of the Air & Space Forces Association proudly presents and honors woman veterans and women currently serving and their families for their commitment and service.

(Awarded to women of all Services and Eras)

APPLICATION

Name _____

Phone #_____ Cell #_____

Address_____

_____

E-mail_____

Branch of Service_____Rank/Grade_____

Service dates_____

Please mail the completed application and a copy of documentation showing military service (DD-214 for veterans) (black out your Social Security Number) to:

Fred Di Fabio, President 67 Pacific Dunes Court Medford, NY 11763-2405	For information, call: 631-487-7210

- 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 LONG ISLAND WOMAN VETERANS AND WOMEN WHO ARE CURRENTLY SERVING

(Not Awarded Posthumously)

Form 15 Jan 2026