



Apr-Jun 2020

# LI 202 AFA news

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Visit us on the WEB:  
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*Long Island Air Force Association—LIAFA*

Email us at: [LIAFA202@gmail.com](mailto:LIAFA202@gmail.com)

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## CALENDAR OF LIAFA EVENTS 2020

### **Vietnam Medal Ceremonies:**

#### Thu, Jul 23, 2020 CANCELED

Shootout for Soldiers at Town of Oyster Bay Field of Dreams  
5619 Old Sunrise Hwy.  
Massapequa  
5:00 PM

#### Sat, Sep. 26, 2020

Cradle of Aviation Museum  
Charles Lindbergh Blvd.  
Garden City  
11:00 AM

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

#### Mon, Dec. 7, 2020

American Airpower Museum  
Farmingdale  
10:30 AM

## President's Message

Although we've had to cancel several of our Vietnam Medal Ceremonies over the past few months due to COVID-19 and may have to do so again, we're still accepting applications from any 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 32 Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremonies and have presented medals to almost 1,000 veterans.

The requirements are:

- Served in the Vietnam 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)

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.

***Please note that, due to the ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, we MAY have to postpone the September 26<sup>th</sup> Vietnam Medal Ceremony. Please look to the LIAFA Facebook page and our website at liafa.org for future notices regarding upcoming events.***

Be sure to practice social distancing and wear a mask when going to a store, meeting or restaurant, which will help to protect not only you but also others with whom you may come in contact. Let's be safe out there!

## **Flyovers Honoring Frontline Workers**

It wasn't all doom and gloom during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. The USAF Thunderbirds and the USN Blue Angels both honored healthcare workers, first responders, military and other essential personnel with a formation flight over New York City and New Jersey on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The Thunderbirds flew six F-16C/D Fighting Falcons (AKA Vipers) and the Blue Angels flew six F/A-18C/D Hornets. The flyovers started at noon and lasted approximately 35 minutes.



*Still photo from video courtesy of Chris Lukowski*

The GEICO Skytypers Air Show Team, flying six vintage WWII T-6 Texan airplanes, took off from Republic Airport in Farmingdale around 11:30 AM on May 5<sup>th</sup> and headed for the Statue of Liberty before traveling down the Hudson River and circling over the five boroughs of New York City. They continued on to Norwalk, Connecticut and then back down to fly over most major Long Island hospitals. On their travels they did skywriting in support of essential personnel; these messages spanned 5-10 miles and could be seen within a 15-mile radius.

The 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, stationed in Westhampton Beach, also got into the swing of things on May 15<sup>th</sup> with a flyover of their own. Taking off from Gabreski Air National Guard Base, an HC-130J Combat King II aircraft accompanied by two Sikorsky HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters flew east along the south fork, turned north to Greenport, headed west along the North Shore and looped around to New Hyde Park before flying over the South Shore's major hospitals on their way back to base.



Photo courtesy of EnJOYment Photography

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### Other Upcoming Events, Meetings and Programs

**Please look to the LIAFA Facebook page and our website at [liafa.org](http://liafa.org) for future notices regarding possible postponements or cancellations of scheduled upcoming Vietnam medal ceremonies due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.**

**We also strongly recommend calling or emailing the appropriate organization for any events that are listed below to make sure that they have not been canceled or postponed, as many of them have been.**



From the website <http://www.shootoutforsoldiers.com/>:

**"Shootout for Soldiers has made the difficult decision to cancel all Shootout for Soldiers events for 2020. The decision was made after significant evaluation with the recent events of COVID-19. The health and well-being of the entire Shootout for Soldiers community is our utmost priority."**

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

We look forward to next year's event by which time we hope the current pandemic is under control.

### **Military Appreciation Tuesdays by Long Island Cares**

Every Tuesday from 9 AM to 5 PM at their Huntington Station, Freeport and Lindenhurst locations. This is a chance for veterans and their families to access food, personal care items, household products and pet food (also school supplies when available). There is also a mobile food pantry for disabled vets. For more information, please call (631) 582-3663.

### **General Needs Ltd.**

Located in East Northport, this is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that distributes NEW clothing as well as personal items such as toiletries to needy veterans on a monthly basis. If you would like to donate, volunteer, sponsor a distribution or if your business or organization would like to assist General Needs (or if you would just like more information), please call them at (631) 266-1672 or email them at [Info@GeneralNeeds.org](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.

### **VetsWork by Long Island Cares**

This program provides help for veterans seeking employment by assisting with creating a resume, writing a cover letter, learning interview skills and more. They also offer online courses, seminars and exercises that help veterans handle career adjustment issues. For more information, please call Fern Summer at (631) 824-6385 (email at [fsummer@licares.org](mailto:fsummer@licares.org)) or Michael Haynes at (631) 824-6386. Their website is [www.vetswork.org](http://www.vetswork.org).

### **Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project**

A joint initiative of the Suffolk County United Veterans and the Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency, it serves veterans, service members and their families with post-service transitional issues such as PTSD and traumatic brain injury; a diagnosis is NOT required for attendance. All groups are confidential and anonymous. Weekly group meetings are held in Amityville (Mondays), Bay Shore, Yaphank, Sag Harbor (Tuesdays), East Patchogue, Riverhead, Patchogue (Wednesdays), and Mount Sinai (Thursdays). Snacks and light refreshments are served at all meetings. They also provide services to student veterans at numerous Long Island college campuses and monthly community outreach in Sachem, Huntington Station, and Patchogue. For more information and exact meeting locations, please call (631) 853-8345, send an email to [vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:vetspeertopeer@suffolkcountyny.gov) or go to [mhaw.org/dwyer/programs-services/peer-support-groups](http://mhaw.org/dwyer/programs-services/peer-support-groups). 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 Lane in Levittown at 2 PM on Thursdays (biweekly); 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. 1213 or email at [brussell@mhanc.org](mailto:brussell@mhanc.org); Audrey Lewis at (516) 489-2322, ext. 1260 or email at [alewis@mhanc.org](mailto:alewis@mhanc.org). Also check out their website: [veteranshealthalliance.org](http://veteranshealthalliance.org).

### **Veterans Defense Program**

Justice-involved veterans often do not have the funds to hire an attorney and are represented by public defenders. Public defense attorneys are rarely trained to adequately represent veterans who suffer from the invisible wounds of war or to translate the combat experience of their clients to explain resulting criminal behavior. This program provides training, support and legal assistance to promote trauma-informed effective representation of veterans and service members. The Veteran Defense Program (VDP) is a project of the New York State Defenders Association (NYSDA), a statewide nonprofit organization working to improve the quality and scope of publicly-supported legal representation for people who cannot afford a lawyer. For information and assistance, please call Director Gary A. Horton at (585) 219-4862 or email him at [ghorton@nysda.org](mailto:ghorton@nysda.org).

### **Donate a Bicycle to Beacon House to Help a Veteran**

Beacon House provides housing in 42 locations throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties. On any given day, over 255 men, women and children from the tri-state area benefit from programs that address homelessness, physical disabilities, PTSD, TBI, mental health issues and addiction. Non-veterans, too, have access to housing, drug/alcohol addiction services and job skills/readiness development programs. Contact Ed Aulman at [mardiv1@optonline.net](mailto:mardiv1@optonline.net) or call him at (516) 921-0595. A charitable donation receipt will be provided by Beacon House.

**Veterans News UVO Long Island is looking for volunteers** to act as crew members for its weekly show on public access TV. The show airs on Cablevision channel 20 on Tuesdays at 6:30 PM and on channel 115 on Thursdays at 3:30 PM or any time on YouTube by entering Veterans News UVO. The crew meets at the Cablevision Studio in Hauppauge to tape the program, usually on the last Tuesday of each month at 1 PM. Please contact Ed Aulman at [mardiv1@optonline.net](mailto:mardiv1@optonline.net) or call him at (516) 921-0595.

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### **Lockheed F-104 Starfighter**



F-104G Starfighters fly in formation over Arizona. Although they have USAF markings, these particular aircraft were actually owned by West Germany, whose pilots were undergoing training at Luke AFB, Arizona.

The Lockheed F-104 Starfighter ("the missile with a man in it") was a single-engine supersonic interceptor aircraft that transitioned to the fighter-bomber role during the Cold War. It was the first combat aircraft capable of sustained Mach 2 flight. Although developed primarily for the USAF, it was eventually produced by several other nations and was eventually operated by the air forces of more than a dozen nations from 1958 to 2004. Its design team was headed by the legendary Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson, who contributed to the development of the P-38 Lightning, U-2 Dragonlady, SR-71 Blackbird and other Lockheed aircraft.

The F-104's genesis dates to the Korean War, where US pilots were struck by the speed and maneuverability of the MIG-15 compared to their own F-86 Sabres. Kelly Johnson toured USAF air bases across South Korea in November 1951 speaking with American fighter pilots about what they wanted in a fighter aircraft. The pilots requested a small and simple aircraft with excellent performance, especially high-speed and high-altitude capabilities. The design that Kelly's team came up with in 1952 was a smallish 12,000-lb. single-engine fighter to be powered by the then-new General Electric J79 turbojet, which was still being tested. In 1954 the two XF-104 prototypes flew with the Wright J65 engine since the J79 development was not yet complete. The USAF liked what it saw and the design was accepted in November 1955.

A distinctive feature of the F-104 is the stubby and thin wing design, a stark contrast to the delta-wing or swept-wing configuration used by most other fighter jets of the period. Lockheed's tests had determined that the most efficient shape for high-speed supersonic flight was a very small and thin, straight mid-mounted trapezoidal wing. In fact, the leading edge of the wing was so sharp (.016 inches or 0.41 mm) that protective guards had to be installed on the edges for the ground crew's safety during maintenance.

The basic armament of the F-104 was the 20 mm M61 Vulcan autocannon. As the first aircraft to carry this weapon, there were some early teething problems with misfeeding and FOD (Foreign Object Damage) as discarded links were occasionally sucked into the engine. The upgraded M61A1 cannon installed in the F-104C featured a linkless ammunition feed system that essentially solved these problems. The cannon was fed by a 725-round drum, which would be emptied after about 7 seconds of continuous fire due to the 6,000-rounds-per-minute firing rate. Two AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles could be carried on the wingtip stations, which could also be used for fuel tanks. The F-104C and later models added a centerline pylon and two underwing pylons for bombs, rocket pods or fuel tanks.

The F-104 did see service in the Vietnam theater from 1965 to 1967, performing armed reconnaissance, close air support, bomber escort and barrier combat air patrol (to protect the EC-121D Warning Star airborne early warning aircraft patrolling off the North Vietnamese coast). They flew a total of 5,206 sorties with a total loss of 14 aircraft, mostly due to ground fire, SAMs and engine failure. Curiously, the F-104s recorded no air-to-air kills in Vietnam; the F-104 pilots felt that the North Vietnamese, well aware of the F-104's performance, deliberately avoided engaging them.

Over time, the USAF began to lose interest in the F-104 due to its limited range, unforgiving flying characteristics, engine problems, wide turning radius and limited payload. The last aircraft left the USAF inventory in 1969. A total of 2,578 F-104s were produced by Lockheed and under license by various foreign manufacturers, although the USAF procured only 296 including both single-seat and two-seat versions.

The legacy of the F-104 was marred by its poor safety record, especially in Germany where the Luftwaffe lost 292 planes (out of a total of 916) in addition to 108 German pilots and 8 USAF instructors during peacetime between 1962 and 1984. Between 1968 and 1972, between 15 and 20 German F-104s crashed every year and continued at a rate of about 10 F-104s per year until it was gradually replaced by the F-4 Phantom and Panavia Tornado during the 1970s and 1980s. The Luftwaffe was actually the primary user of the F-104, operating over 35 percent of all F-104s built. The German public

was not so enamored with the Starfighter, giving it the nickname *Witwenmacher* ("widowmaker") along with several other pejoratives. Many have pointed out that the relatively harsh Northern European weather (compared to the weather in Arizona, where the German pilots trained) and the fact that the aircraft's mission in Germany was low-level high-speed attack (for which it was not originally designed) contributed to the Starfighter's poor safety performance.

Also tarnishing the F-104's reputation was Lockheed's bribing of many foreign political and military officials to secure purchase contracts, which caused considerable political controversy in West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Japan in the mid to late 1970s. These bribes took place from the late 1950s to the 1970s and in the USA the scandal almost lead to the company's downfall.

From Wikipedia: "The F-104 was the first aircraft to simultaneously hold the world speed and altitude records. On 7 May 1958, USAF Major Howard C. Johnson, flying YF-104A 55-2957, broke the world altitude record by flying to 91,243 feet over Edwards AFB. On 16 May 1958, USAF Captain Walter W. Irwin, flying YF-104A 55-2969, set a world speed record of 1,404.012 miles per hour over a course 15 miles long at Edwards AFB. ... On 14 December 1959, USAF Captain "Joe" B. Jordan, flying F-104C 56-0885 at Edwards AFB, set a new world altitude record of 103,389 feet, in the process becoming the first aircraft to take off under its own power and cross both the 30,000-meter and 100,000-foot thresholds. He also set a 30,000-meter (98,400 ft.) time-to-climb record of 904.92 seconds. USAF Major Robert W. Smith, flying NF-104A 56-0756, set an unofficial world altitude record of 118,860 feet on 15 November 1963, and on 6 December 1963 he flew the same aircraft to another unofficial altitude record of 120,800 feet."

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### **Did you know . . .**

**The United States Department of Defense is considered the largest employer in the country**, with over 3 million employees. In second place is Walmart, with 1.3 million employees, and in third place is Exxon-Mobil with 950,000 employees.

**In the 1960s, the United States Air Force created functional robots** that stood over 26 feet high and were able to carry up to 2,000 lbs. Called the "Beetle," the robots were designed to change out nuclear materials, payloads, and irradiated parts in situations that were too dangerous for a human. The Beetle never saw any official use in the US military as the missions it was designed for were canceled.

**During the start of the Civil War in 1861**, John Lincoln Clem attempted to enlist in the Union Army at the age of 9. After being rejected once, Clem succeeded in joining the 22<sup>nd</sup> Michigan Volunteer Infantry, which sawed down his musket to make it more kid-friendly. Clem was promoted to sergeant and became a national hero before his discharge in 1864 at the age of 12. He rejoined the US military in 1871 and went on to become a major general before his final retirement in 1915.

## Taps



**Angelo Ciotta**, Marine and Iwo Jima survivor, passed away at his East Meadow home on April 22 at age 95 of natural causes. Angelo was a corporal and a demolition specialist with the 28<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, Fifth Marine Division. His "job" on Iwo Jima was crawling up to Japanese pillboxes, tunnels, caves and bunkers, and blowing them up with C-4. He earned a Purple Heart for a leg wound that he sustained during a detail to pick up some wounded Marines caught in the crossfire. Angelo was the president and founder of the Iwo Jima Survivors Association of New York. He was also the voice behind Eisenhower Park's Veterans Plaza. All of the monuments in place at the plaza had to get permission from Angelo before placement. Approximately 5 years ago he transformed the tower at Veterans Plaza into a veterans museum. Angelo was also a driving force in the UVN (United Veterans Organization of Nassau County). He was a remarkable man and will be sorely missed by all who were privileged to know him.



Angelo Ciotta (with cane) at Eisenhower Park's Veterans Plaza, with Nassau County Executive Laura Curran to his right, receiving a plaque and a citation for his tireless work on behalf of veterans. June 23, 2018.

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## Taps



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**Philip Felix Kahn**, US Army Air Forces Sergeant during World War II, passed away at his Westbury home on April 17 at age 100 of Covid-19. In an odd twist of fate, his twin brother, Samuel, died of the Spanish flu during the 1918 influenza pandemic a few weeks after they both were born. Philip served as a flight engineer on a B-29 Superfortress in the Pacific theater, participating in the Battle of Iwo Jima and later in firebombing raids over Japan and was awarded two Bronze Stars. He also helped perform aerial surveillance of the damage wrought by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After the war, he worked as an electrical foreman and helped build the World Trade Center and the first New York City blood bank.



*Picture courtesy of New York Times*



## 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 living Long Island Vietnam Vets of all services)**



### COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Vietnam service dates \_\_\_\_\_

Units assigned and location during war \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a copy of your DD-214 (block out your Social Security Number) and this application to:

Fred DiFabio, President  
67 Pacific Dunes Ct.  
Medford, NY 11763



For information call:  
631-754-6383

- Visit our web page at [LIAFA.ORG](http://LIAFA.ORG) to view a video of the ceremony.
- Attendance is FREE. Bring your family, friends and neighbors.
- You will be contacted to schedule you for one of our upcoming ceremonies upon receipt of your application.