

# The Aviator

## American Legion James Ely Miller Post 833

51 Juniper Ave  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
Phone: 631-724-1804  
Email: commander@alpost833ny.org  
Website: alpost833ny.org



**US95th Aero Squadron**  
the "Kicking Mules"



the first fighting aero squadron to the front



**MEETING:**  
**Post 833:** 2nd Monday of the Month  
7pm Meeting  
**SONS:** 3rd Wednesday of the Month  
7pm Meeting  
 51 Juniper Ave Smithtown, NY 11787

## Welcome

Welcome to The Aviator. The hope is that this newsletter will keep the membership better informed as to what is happening at the Post and in the community. Please read through as I hope you will find it informative. **Please take note that the June Monthly Meeting is June 10th and will start at 7pm. The Suffolk County Legion Commander will be performing the Induction Ceremony for Post 833 Officers.**

Take care,  
Bill Coderre  
Commander

## General Info:

### Upcoming Events

- JUNE 10:** Monthly Meeting  
James Ely Miller Post 833  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
7pm: Meeting  
Officer Induction Ceremony
- JUNE 14:** Flag Retirement Ceremony  
Smithtown Veterans Plaza  
6:30pm Start  
(See Page 12 for Flyer)
- JUNE 07:** Hospitality - Meet and Greet  
County Commander Nominee  
Kevin Eaton  
7:00 pm
- JUNE 19:** SAL Squadron 833  
James Ely Miller Post 833  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
7pm: Meeting
- JUNE 08:** Suffolk County Convention  
Wilson-Ritch Post 432  
Port Jeff Sta NY, 11776  
9:30am: Registration  
11am: Post Everlasting Ceremony
- JUNE 21:** 2nd Division Meeting  
James Ely Miller Post 833  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
6:30pm: Dinner  
7pm: Meeting
- JUNE 12:** Walk-A-Thon  
The Annual SAL-Aux  
Walk-A-Thon Ends  
(See Page 8 for details & 10 for flyer)

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### Post Officers

- Commander:** Bill Coderre
- 1st Vice:** Don Lettieri
- 2nd Vice:** Richie Pandolf
- 3rd Vice:** George Garcia
- Adjutant:** Ron Fischer
- Finance Officer:** George Church
- Chaplain:** Anthony Cannella
- Sgt. at Arms:** Lou Forrisi
- Judge Advocate:** Ed Hemp
- Service Officer:** Courtney Nagle
- Historian:** George Church
- Membership Chair:** Al Krauth
- Compliance:** Wayne Crerend
- Homeland Security:** Kevin Eaton

## Past Events

*"The secret of change is to focus all of you energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."*



Down the road from the home of Fred Wagner. (now the Byzantine Catholic Church Rectory) The gambrel barn, then belonging to Fred and Annie Wagner at their Sunny Brook Farm, is now the Captain James Ely Miller American Legion Post 833.

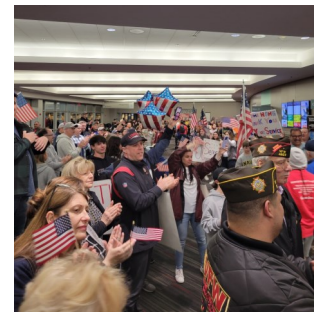
The land was once part of Fred's 180-acre Sunny Brook Farm. The land was purchased in 1928 from WWI American aviator Clarence Bernard Maloney who flew with the RAF until injured in France some seven months after Captain Miller was killed in action.

## Honor Flight - Long Island

On May 4th, Post 833 was at MacArthur Airport for Honor Flight. - Long Island.

After a full day of touring the Memorial sites in Washington and the surrounding area, the Veterans and their Guardians returned to Long Island at 11pm.

They were met with a rousing reception by a few hundred people comprised of family, friend, various Veterans organizations, Scouts, Sea Cadets and Civil Air Patrol to name a few.



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## Armed Forces Day

On May 18th, members of Post 833 attended the Armed Forces Day Ceremony at the Veterans Plaza in Hauppauge.

Suffolk County Executive Edward P. Romaine spoke and the event was highlighted with a speech given by Colonel Andrew Weinberger.



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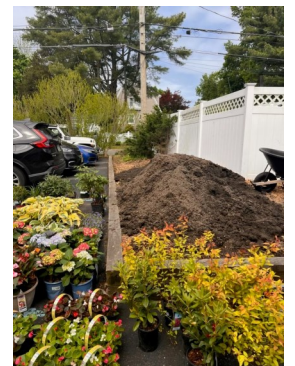
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### Post Beautification

On May 19th, members of Girl Scout Troop 1986 arrived at the Post to do a little Area Beautification. Shea Paese, Giana Borzumato, Brynn Lennon, and Shayna Simson are all working towards their Silver Award.

The young ladies approached the Post and asked if they could create a little garden in the front area near the Hall doors. A small garden was discussed but what they did was extraordinary. They worked so hard acquiring donations from various local nurseries and Lowes. Then moved six (6) yards of soil and planted a garden that, not only covers the area in front of the Hall doors, but spans almost to the road.

Girl Scout Troop 1986 went Above and Beyond for James Ely Miller Post 833 and we are forever grateful.



## Past Events

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## Memorial Day Parade

On May 27th, Post 833 attended the Memorial Day Parade hosted by the Smithtown Fire Department

Post 833 along with SAL Squadron 833 and VFW Post 10870 proudly marched down Main Street in Smithtown to the applause and gratitude of the residents of Smithtown.

The parade was followed by a Memorial Day Ceremony in front of Town Hall. The ceremony opened with Ava Bernardo singing the National Anthem. Town Supervisor Ed Wehrheim along with honored guests spoke thanking all those that made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The Ceremony concluded with Post 833 presenting a Memorial Wreath, the Rifle Squads 21 Gun Salute and the playing of Taps





## Membership

The renewal process begins in July for the upcoming 2025 membership year. The Legion Membership year is July 1st to June 31st. Renewal notices are sent out in July, October, and January.

If dues are paid to the local post, it takes a little longer for national to be notified about the renewal and the member may receive another renewal notice. If this occurs, please contact Post 833 to ensure that we have received your dues.

To avoid this, we **STRONGLY** suggest that you renew your membership online. By doing so, your membership will be renewed immediately avoiding any delays in notification to national.

**Important Note:** 2025 Dues Increase

Due to National and County raising dues, Post 833 dues will increase to \$55 for 2025 (This was voted on at the January meeting)

**VOAGC Members:**

If you have not paid your 2024 dues by January 1, 2024, Your FOB will be deactivated.

*"Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices."* Harry S. Truman, April 16, 1945



## MYLEGION

All members are encouraged to register online at [www.mylegion.org](http://www.mylegion.org) Once an account has been established, you will be able to:

- Update your personal information
- Sign up to receive the Digital Dispatch, a monthly e-newsletter sent directly to subscribers' e-mail inboxes that features stories from the print publication. The e-newsletter features headlines with clickable links to the full stories on the [Digital Dispatch website](#).
- Opt-in to receive E-newsletters on important Legion topics.



## 2025 - 2026 Elections

**March Post 833 meeting:** Nomination of candidates for elected positions were presented to the membership.

Nominations will be posted in the office and below.

**April Meeting:** Nominations for Election of new Officers are finalized.

**May Meeting:** Slate will be voted on by membership (See finalized nomination slate)

**June Meeting:** New Officers begin their office

## Building Revitalization

The Roof has been replaced. All work was completed on 11/3/2023. The DASNY reimbursement check was received on 1/2/2024.

The Hall Floor has been replaced as well. There was extensive structural damage due to water and insects over the past 100 plus years. Due to Palermo Flooring, the floor is structurally sound and will last at least another 100 years. All work was completed 3/28/2024.

The Building Revitalization program was initiated so that James Ely Miller Post 833 will continue to be able to honor it's Mission:

“To Provide Support For Veterans, Active Duty Military, and Their Families”



## Boys' State June 28—July 3, 2024

Post 833 Interviewed and will Sponsor 1 delegate for Boys' State. Payshel Sharma is presently in 11th grade (Junior), at Smithtown HS West and will be representing James Ely Miller Post 833 at Boys' State.

American Legion Boys' State is a week-long program that immerses high school youth (currently completing their junior year) in citizenship and leadership training. The Cost is \$600 per delegate which includes transportation to and from Morrisville College.

For more information, please visit the Department of New York Boys State Webpage. [Click Here for the New York Boys State Webpage](#)



### AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE AND NATION AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE

Since 1935, American Legion Boys State has been one of the country's most revered and selective government instruction programs, teaching high school students about the operation of local, county and state governments. Fifty American Legion departments conduct this program, serving more than 17,000 young men each year. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors a similar program for young women called Girls State.

At American Legion Boys State, young men learn about the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of a franchised citizen. Elected and appointed local officials offer participants objective, practical training in city, county and state governance, and activities are conducted such as legislative sessions, court proceedings, law enforcement presentations, assemblies, band, chorus and recreational programs.

American Legion posts select participants to attend their respective Boys State program after receiving recommendations from school officials. Usually posts, local businesses or community organizations pay the cost of attendance.

American Legion Boys State participants go on to achieve success in a variety of fields. Notable alumni include astronaut Neil Armstrong, basketball legend Michael Jordan and national television news journalist Tom Brokaw.

## Honor Flight - Long Island

On May 29, 2004, President Bush dedicated the World War II Memorial to honor "The Greatest Generation," 59 years after the end of WWII. One year later, the Honor Flight Program was inaugurated.

Earl Morse and Jeff Miller, co-founders of Honor Flight, realized that many World War II veterans would never have the opportunity to visit the memorial that was erected in their honor.

It is the intention of Honor Flight Long Island to honor as many of our fellow Long Islanders, who helped to preserve our freedom, as we can by providing them a free trip to visit their memorial. Along with WWII, we are now taking Korean War, Vietnam War and other conflict veterans to Washington D.C.

Please see the website for Veteran and Guardian Applications under [Apply to Fly](#)

Website: <https://www.honorflightlongisland.org/>

Next Flight: **Saturday, October 5, 2024**

Join us in welcoming all of the Veterans and Guardians from this Honor Flight Home.

October 5th Flight Info: <https://www.honorflightlongisland.org/events-1/fall-flight-saturday-october-5-2024>



## WALK-A-THON NYS



Sponsored by  
Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary

“THEY MARCHED FOR US.....  
LETS WALK FOR THEM”

A program operated in partnership for 17 years by the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Auxiliary

Date: **Kickoff March 1st, 2024**

GOAL: **\$65,000**

PROCEEDS: Awarded equally to support the following:

### SAL: NYS VA Medical Center Homeless Programs & NYS Veterans Homes

Homeless Veterans are sometimes found living in wooded areas, in cars, under bridges. Some locations, such as abandoned buildings, can pose physical dangers for outreach staff and volunteers. Assisting homeless veterans to find suitable, permanent housing and the support services necessary to help them remain self-sufficient is a number one priority of the VA.

There are 4 NYS Veteran Homes operated by the NYS Department of Health and 1 operated by the State University of New York. They are skilled Nursing Homes that provide quality care to all eligible veterans and their eligible dependents in need of skilled nursing care and rehabilitative services.

### ALA: Hope For The Warriors:

Hope For The Warriors has advocated restoring a foundation of Stability, Strength, and Community for military families since 2006 by building on:

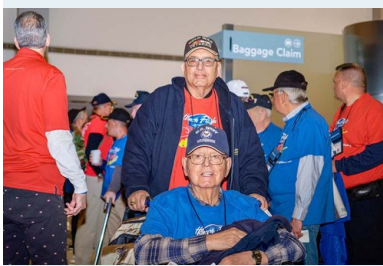
**Stability:** Financial Wellness & Career & Education

**Strength:** Physical Wellness & Emotional Wellness

**Community:** Connection & Belonging Social Support

<https://www.givesendgo.com/salvets24>

**All Donations must be submitted by June 12, 2024.**





American Legion

James Ely Miller Post 833



## Suffolk County American Legion

### NEWS YOU CAN USE

[Click](#) below for the latest news and [UPCOMING EVENTS](#) from the Suffolk County American Legion



THE AMERICAN LEGION  
VETERANS • DEFENSE • AMERICANISM • YOUTH

Suffolk County American Legion

"News You Can Use"



American Legion

James Ely Miller Post 833

51 Juniper Ave  
Smithtown, NY 11787

Phone: 631-724-1804  
E-mail: [commander@alpost833ny.org](mailto:commander@alpost833ny.org)  
Website: [alpost833ny.org](http://alpost833ny.org)



# WALK-A-THON NYS

Sponsored by  
Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary



“THEY MARCHED FOR US.....  
LETS WALK FOR THEM”

June 12, 2024

Help SAL Squadron 833  
meet their  
2024 Walk-A-Thon Goal of  
\$3000

To donate go to:

<https://www.givesendgo.com/salvets24>





***THE KOREAN WAR VETERANS  
Central Long Island Chapter, Inc.  
and the  
SUFFOLK COUNTY VETERANS  
SERVICE AGENCY***

**WILL HOLD A CEREMONY  
COMMEMORATING THE  
74th ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE KOREAN WAR and  
THE 71st ANNIVERSARY OF THE CEASE-FIRE  
(ARMISTICE)  
UNVEILING OF KOREAN WAR VETERANS  
CENTRAL LI CHAPTER MONUMENT**

***All Veterans, their families and friends are  
cordially invited to attend.***

**Date/Time:** Saturday June 8, 2024 at 2:00 pm  
**Place:** Korean War Memorial  
Armed Forces Plaza  
Veterans Memorial Highway  
Hauppauge, New York

**For Further Information, Call:  
*Salvatore Scarlato 631-724-5459 or 631-255-2060***



**AMERICAN LEGION JAMES ELY MILLER POST 833  
& SCOUT TROOP 214 INVITE YOU TO ATTEND A**

***Flag Retirement Ceremony***

**FLAG DAY, JUNE 14, 2024**

**6:30 PM**

**Smithtown Veterans Plaza**

located at 62 West Main Street, Smithtown  
(between CVS and Chase Bank - parking in rear lot)

**Rain or Shine**

**Scouts and other participants are encouraged to bring worn flags  
for retirement to this event, though not mandatory.**

For more information email: [commander@alpost833ny.org](mailto:commander@alpost833ny.org)

As seen on ESPN, HBO & Sports Illustrated

# USA PATRIOTS AMPUTEE SOFTBALL TEAM 10th Annual Long Island Visit! JUNE 14-15 2024

AKA NATIONAL WOUNDED WARRIOR AMPUTEE SOFTBALL TEAM

**FRIDAY  
JUNE 14**

**SUFFOLK COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
GRANT CAMPUS  
BRENTWOOD, NY**

330pm • Youth Clinic w/ The Team

5pm • **Home Run Derby**

6pm • **BBQ Hosted by SPVA**

**SATURDAY  
JUNE 15**

**MORICHES ATHLETIC COMPLEX  
MORICHES, NY**

11:30 AM **OPENING CEREMONY**

**12:15 PM USA PATRIOTS  
VS  
LI ALLSTARS**

**2:30 PM USA PATRIOTS  
VS  
LI SENIOR ALLSTARS**



**Games and events are FREE of charge!**

**Sponsors, donors are appreciated.**

**For more info please contact Joe Bart**

**Phone: (631)-840-7787**

**Email: Joe.Bart@raymondjames.com**



Check the website for more information  
[www.warriorsny.org](http://www.warriorsny.org)  
[www.facebook.com/wwastny](http://www.facebook.com/wwastny)





# CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

JONATHAN DOE

In recognition of your service during the period of the Cold War,  
2 September 1945 – 26 December 1991, in protecting peace and  
stability for this nation, the people of the state of New York are forever grateful.

10 April 2024

Headquarters, New York Army  
National Guard  
Latham, NY 12110

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Shields".

---

RAYMOND F. SHIELDS, JR.  
MAJOR GENERAL, NY ARNG  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

# New York State Cold War Certificate

## To whom awarded:

The Cold War Certificate may be awarded to any current New York State citizen or a person who was a New York State citizen while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during the Cold War period, 2 September 1945 to 26 December 1991, whose entire service was honorable.

## Standards:

This certificate may be awarded only to those persons whose discharge certificate indicates service under the conditions of "honorable" (Honorable Discharge) or "under honorable conditions" (General Discharge under Honorable Conditions).

This certificate may be awarded posthumously to a designated survivor of the deceased. Not more than one certificate shall be awarded to any one person. This is a one-time issue.

## How awarded:

**Applications** for the New York State Cold War Certificate will be made using [DMNA Form 105](#).

**Posthumous applications** will be submitted using the same mechanisms, using [DMNA Form 105-1](#).

**You will need to use Adobe Reader (or Adobe Acrobat) to view the applications above.**

Adobe Reader can be downloaded for free from <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>

**Applications may be submitted By Mail to: Division of Military and Naval Affairs,  
ATTN: MNGA-AWD,  
330 Old Niskayuna Road  
Latham, NY 12110**

**or electronically by Email to: [ng.ny.nyarnng.list.cold-war@army.mil](mailto:ng.ny.nyarnng.list.cold-war@army.mil)**

**For security reasons, email attachments must be in 'PDF', 'JPG' or 'GIF' format.**  
Attachments in any other format are blocked by the email system.

All requests will be sent to the New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs with supporting documents attached/enclosed to validate service during the Cold War period.

Documentation will include a copy of the recipient's Report of Separation (i.e., WD AGO Form 53-55, DD Form 214, or NGB Form 22, etc.). Documentation must include a discharge certificate indicating the character of service as "honorable" (Honorable Discharge) or "under honorable conditions" (General Discharge under Honorable Conditions). Ensure documentation submitted clearly indicates New York State residency while on duty in the Armed Forces during the applicable dates.

**Do not send original proof of military service documents.** Please ensure only the last 4 digits of the Social Security number are visible. It is also recommended the Date of Birth be crossed off.

If you do not have, in your possession, the required documentation necessary for eligibility or require confirmation of your federal service, you may request a copy of your service record by writing to:

**National Personnel Records Center,  
Veterans Special Actions Division,  
9700 Page Boulevard,  
St. Louis, MO 63132.**

# Application for New York State Cold War Recognition Certificate

## Privacy Notice

Authority: Military Law, section 247.

Principal Purpose: To secure sufficient information from an applicant or a requester to determine eligibility and to process requests for the Cold War Recognition Certificate.

Routine Uses: Information is used for official purposes within the Division of Military and Naval Affairs; specifically, to process requests for Cold War Certificates. This information may be used in accordance with established uses for the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

Disclosure: Disclosure of the last four (4) digits of the Social Security Number and other personal information is voluntary. However, failure to provide complete information may hinder proper identification of the requester, and may prevent the agency from determining eligibility of the requester for the Cold War Certificate.

**Instructions:** Fill out this application and mail with **supporting documentation** to the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, ATTN: MNGA-AWD, with your proof of military service. Acceptable supporting documents include any official government or military document that contains the recipient's name, address indicating New York State residency, last four numerals of the recipient's Social Security Number, and dates of service showing at least one day of service during the Cold War era (September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991). Examples of acceptable supporting documentation include DD Form 214, WD AGO 53-55, and NGB Form 22. **DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.**

You must certify your honorable service by signing and dating the application and returning it with a copy of supporting document(s) to:

### **First Class Mail:**

Division of Military and Naval Affairs  
ATTN: MNGA-AWD  
330 Old Niskayuna Road  
Latham, New York 12110-3514

### **Electronic Mail (Email):**

[ng.ny.nyarnng.list.cold-war@army.mil](mailto:ng.ny.nyarnng.list.cold-war@army.mil)

**Applicant's Name (First, MI, Last):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Last Four (4) Numerals of Recipient's Social Security Number: XXX-XX-**\_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:**\_\_\_\_\_ **State:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Daytime Phone Number:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Email Address (if applicable):**\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Email Address (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail my Cold War certificate.

Please Email my Cold War certificate.

By submission of this form and supporting documentation, I confirm my faithful and honorable service to the state of New York and the nation during the Cold War Era. Please enter initials in box and enter date below if submitting electronically:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You may print and sign and scan this application and email it to [ng.ny.nyarnng.list.cold-war@army.mil](mailto:ng.ny.nyarnng.list.cold-war@army.mil) with the supporting documents.





# DEFENSIVE DRIVING COURSE



Upon completion of the class, may be eligible to receive a discount on auto insurance and a point reduction on your driving record.

## 2024 Course Dates:

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April 26<sup>th</sup>

June 26<sup>th</sup>

August 30<sup>th</sup>

October 30<sup>th</sup>

4pm – 10pm



## Course Cost:

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Legion & SAL Members: \$30

All others: \$50

Location: 51 Juniper Ave Smithtown, NY 11787

Contact Don Lettieri: 631-219-2882

# Lifetime Liberty Pass



Starting April 1, 2024, New York veterans and Gold Star families will be granted free access to state parks, campgrounds, historic sites and recreational day areas throughout the state, thanks to an expansion of the Lifetime Liberty Pass Program, the governor's office announced.



This program will now give the following benefits:

- Free vehicle parking at New York State Parks and DEC-operated campgrounds, day use areas, boat launch sites, historic sites, arboretums, and park preserves
- No greens fees at State Park-operated golf courses
- No swimming pool entrance fees at State Park-operated pools
- Discounted campsite and cabin rentals at State Park and DEC-operated campgrounds

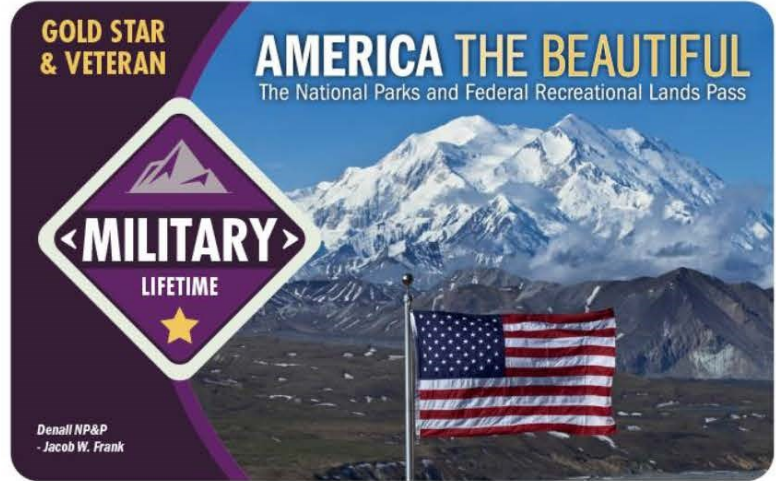
Gold Star Family Members will receive the program's benefits when they present a Lifetime Liberty Pass card to employees at staffed parks. Lifetime Liberty Pass applications will be available on the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation's website starting on April 1. **Veterans who have a veteran status designation on their New York State DMV ID can present their ID to employees and don't need to apply for a card.**

More information about the Lifetime Liberty Pass Program can be found at <https://parks.ny.gov/admission/lifetime-liberty-pass.aspx>

# LIFETIME VETERANS PASS

The lifetime pass covers entrance fees for a driver and all passengers in a personal vehicle (or passholder and up to three adults at sites that charge per person) at national parks and national wildlife refuges, as well as standard amenity fees at national forests and grasslands, and at lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Veterans can present one of the four forms of acceptable ID (Department of Defense ID Card, Veteran Health ID (VHIC), Veteran ID Card, or veteran's designation on a state-issued US driver's license or ID card) at [participating federal recreation areas](#) that normally charge an entrance fee. Gold Star Families obtain information, self-certify they qualify and download a voucher on NPS.gov.



The new lifetime pass for Gold Star Families and Military Veterans provides free entrance to national parks and other federal recreation areas.

## To obtain a Lifetime Pass:

### 1. In Person: Visit a Federal Recreation Area

Fire Island National Seashore SHIRLEY, NY  
Phone: (631) 281-3010  
Passes Available: Access Pass, Military Pass

Long Island NWR Complex SHIRLEY, NY  
Phone: (631) 286-0485

Wertheim NWR SHIRLEY, NY  
Phone: (631) 286-0485

Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS HYDE PARK, NY  
Phone: (845) 229-9115

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site OYSTER BAY, NY  
Phone: (516) 922-4788

### 2. Online <https://store.usgs.gov/MilitaryPass>

Click: Determine Military Pass Eligibility

Click: I am a Veteran (In new window)

Click: Add to cart

(There will be a \$10 service fee)

# SUPPORT OUR TROOPS CARE PACKAGES

\*\*Upon request, we are collecting donations of some of the following items to be shipped to our servicemen and women overseas~

~ Any and all donations are greatly appreciated. ~

~Monetary donations are also accepted and appreciated as well to cover postage



For further information, please contact Tara Montebello at (631)290-0979

Thank You.. ~~



God Bless our troops



## Suffolk County American Legion Auxiliary

We are collecting items to be shipped to our soldiers overseas.



The following items have been requested:

Personal hygiene items for both women and men. Hand warmers, Deodorant, Travel size Shampoo and Conditioners. Soap. Lotion, Hand Sanitizer, Lip Balm, Nail Files and clippers, Foot powder, Hats, Ear Muffs, Scarves, Socks, Disposable Razors, Shaving cream, Q-Tips, Toothbrushes and Toothpaste, Mouthwash. Playing cards, Puzzle books, Magazines, Hand held games, Stationary, Candy, Gum, Beef Jerky, Nuts, Non-Perishable Snacks.

Monetary donations are also accepted.

Items can be dropped off as Rusy Bohm Post 411 on Tuesdays 8am to 1pm at 39 Nassau Ave, Islip, NY 11751



ASSOCIATION FOR  
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



*To Advocate. To Educate. To Empower. Together.*



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL  
DAY OF WELLNESS  
FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES**

**Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck  
2 Chet Swezey Road  
Center Moriches, NY**

**Saturday June 15<sup>th</sup> 2024**

**MORE DETAILS AND REGISTRATION  
LINK COMING SOON!**

Phone: (631) 853-8345 [www.dwyerproject.org](http://www.dwyerproject.org)  
Facebook: Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project

# JOSEPH DWYER VETERANS PEER SUPPORT PROJECT

## IN PERSON GROUPS:

Liberty Village - 600 Albany Avenue, N. Amityville  
Every Monday: 6-7 pm

Liberty Landing - 58 Portion Road, Lake Ronkonkoma  
Every Wednesday: 4-5 pm

United Methodist Church - 158 W Montauk Hwy,  
Hampton Bays Every 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday: 4 - 5 pm

Sag Harbor - 3330 Noyac Road Building D Sag Harbor  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday 5 - 6pm

Senior Veteran Group: Rose Caracappa Senior Center  
- 739 Route 25A, Mt Sinai \*Open to Veterans 60 & up  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday: 10-11 am

American Legion Monthly Community Breakfast - Post  
269 215 South Ocean Ave. Patchogue  
Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday: 10 - 11am \*Open to all

## WOMEN VETERANS ZOOM GROUPS:

Women's Main Group -  
MEETING ID: 932 2123 8672  
Every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday: 11:30am-1:30pm

New Moms Group - MEETING ID: 857 3879 4618  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday: 11:30am-12:30pm

MST Group - MEETING ID: 886 6132 0754  
Every Tuesday: 6-7 pm

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# In The News

Articles sent in by members

## VA Expands Burial Benefits



# VA Expands Burial Benefits for Veterans

VA in October raised the burial and plot allowances for veterans who died in nonservice-related incidents. The department also asks veterans and families to plan ahead for VA's "end-of-life benefits."

BY DAVE SPIVA

The VA last year announced new burial allowance rates for veterans who have died in nonservice-related incidents since October.

VA announced several updates to burial benefits aimed at providing support to veterans and their families. These updates, according to VA, reflect the department's commitment to honoring U.S. veterans around the world.

### TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

In the past, VA covered costs for transporting remains to eligible national cemeteries. Now, this benefit has been extended to include transportation expenses to state and tribal veteran cemeteries.

"[For service-related deaths], VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after Sept. 11, 2001, or up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to Sept. 11, 2001," according to VA. "If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed."

For nonservice-related deaths, VA will pay a \$948 burial allowance and \$948 for a plot if the veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2023. If the veteran died between Jan. 5, 2023, and Oct. 1, 2023, VA would pay an \$893 burial allowance and \$893 for a plot. Learn more about allowance rates at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance>.

### PLAN 'END-OF-LIFE BENEFITS' NOW

VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs noted in a VA press release that in fiscal year 2022, VA delivered more than 84,000 burial benefits to families.

"Expanding burial benefits means we are able to ensure veterans are honored in their final resting place and assist their family, caregivers and survivors during the difficult time of their loved one's passing," Jacobs said.


VA's national cemeteries provide benefits for traditional casket or cremation burials. For eligible veterans and family members, VA national cemetery

burial benefits include:

- Opening and closing of the gravesite
- Inscribed headstones or markers
- Burial flag
- Award of the Presidential Memorial Certificate
- Perpetual care of the gravesite

For those being placed in private cemeteries, benefits only include:

- Headstones, markers or medallions for the gravesite
- Burial flag
- Presidential Memorial Certificate

VA also may provide burial allowances to assist with a family member's burial and funeral costs for those eligible. VA encourages veterans to consider their "end-of-life benefits" provided by the department. To learn more, visit <https://www.va.gov/plan-ahead>. More information about VA burial benefits can be found at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials>. 

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## Final rest for combat hero

Lost remains of Army vet were found by niece

BY ROBERT BRODSKY  
robert.brodsky@newsday.com

For nearly six decades, the remains of Army Sgt. George Moje Jr., a decorated combat veteran who served in Korea and during the aftermath of World War II, sat abandoned in a cold, sterile Queens storage locker — his years of meritorious service to the nation lost for generations.

The mystery of what had become of the uncle she'd never met confounded Diane Moje-Garcia of Ridge, sending her on a circuitous journey for answers that concludes on Friday as Sgt. Moje finally receives a military send-off during a Catholic Mass in Center Moriches and a burial service at Calverton National Cemetery.

"It's the right thing to do," Moje-Garcia said Tuesday. "So many times, people are just forgotten. I want to give him what he deserves."

### A hero in combat

George Moje, the oldest of two brothers raised in Jackson Heights, Queens, enlisted in the

U.S. Army in 1946 at the age of 17. After completing his basic training, Moje was sent to Japan, which was still occupied by Allied Forces after the end of the war. He was later awarded a World War II Victory Medal and the Army of Occupation Medal, records show.

Moje, who remained in the military, was later deployed to Korea with the Army's Third Infantry Division as a radio chief with the Communications Platoon.

While records are scant regarding the details of Moje's service during the Korean War, he earned a Bronze Star for his time in combat between Jan. 25 and Sept. 7, 1951, a period when his unit was engaged in a series of legendary battles for control of a region that became known as "Heartbreak Ridge."

The Second Infantry Division, and its attached units, sustained 3,700 casualties — the North Koreans lost an estimated 25,000 soldiers — during the bloody battle. Records show Moje was honorably discharged from the Army on Oct. 19, 1951, after suffering a severe battlefield injury to his stomach. He later received the Combat Infantry Badge and the Korean Service Medal.

Moje's Bronze Star certificate states that he "molded his section into a highly effective and efficient unit, and constantly strove for improvement. His will-

ingness to work long hours after the normal duty day, training new replacements and giving them the full benefit of his own valuable combat knowledge, enabled them to meet and overcome the obstacles encountered on the battlefield and resulted in the formation of an exceptionally efficient radio section."

When he returned home, Moje struggled with complications from his injuries and later, a dependency on alcohol, said Moje-Garcia, whose son attends the Citadel, a military college in South Carolina. After years of visits to VA hospitals, Moje died on April 15, 1965, and was cremated.

Moje's family, distraught over the untimely death, never claimed his remains following his Queens funeral service.

Instead, to honor his younger brother, William Moje, the father of Moje-Garcia, carried a copy of "Just for Today" — a poem from Al-Anon, a support group for people affected by alcoholism — in his wallet until his own death in 2019.

### Long-hidden remains

After her father's death, Moje-Garcia came across paperwork from Frederick Funeral Home in Flushing, which handled her uncle's services decades earlier. She contacted the facility, hoping to discover the details of his disposition.



Army Sgt. George Moje Jr. will finally be laid to rest on Friday.

After some sleuthing, she learned that her uncle's ashes had been kept for 58 years in the funeral home's storage locker.

"I just cried because I couldn't believe they had them for that long," Moje-Garcia said. "Sitting in a storage facility just breaks my heart."

With the remains finally back in the family's hands, a Catholic Mass will be held on Friday at 10:45 a.m. at St. John The Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, followed by an interment at Calverton National Cemetery.

"This is a person who served their country and is now being put to rest in a place of dignity and honor," said Daniel Moloney, president of Moloney Family Funeral Homes, which is arranging the services.

Thomas Kilmartin, a retired colonel in the Army National Guard, helped Moje-Garcia, a

family friend, navigate her uncle's military records and is working to obtain documents detailing the nature of his combat injuries.

"It's important that we recognize all service members who served this country. They deserve a final resting place," said Kilmartin, who is traveling from his home in Georgia to speak at the service of Moje, whom he never met. "This is very important to the family, and it's very important to me."

Moje-Garcia is asking Long Island local veterans groups and motorcycle clubs — her uncle rode one — to assist in the funeral procession from the church to Calverton National Cemetery.

"I wish I could have met him. He died a year before I was born," she said. "But I'm honored and fascinated with what my uncle did and what a hero he was."

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