

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: 1st Monday of the Month
8pm Meeting
SONS: 3rd Wednesday of the Month
7pm Meeting
 51 Juniper Ave Smithtown, NY 11787

Welcome

Welcome to The Aviator. I hope that you are all enjoying summer. As you know, there were no meetings in July due to the summer Hiatus. I attended the Department Convention in Niagara Falls as a Delegate from Suffolk County July 15-19; It was a great experience. I would encourage others to look into attending future events held at the County, Department and National level. There is a whole Legion Family world out there that some of you may find interesting. August 24th is the Veterans BBQ. Please see the flyers on pages 7-8 and let us know if you will be attending.

Take care,

Bill Coderre
Commander

Upcoming Events

- AUG 05: Monthly Meeting**
James Ely Miller Post 833
Smithtown, NY 11787
7pm: Dinner
8pm: Meeting
- AUG 21: SAL Monthly Meeting**
James Ely Miller Post 833
Smithtown, NY 11787
7pm: Meeting
- AUG 24: BBQ**
Byzantine Catholic Church Field
Start: 2pm
End : 6pm
(See Pages 7-8 for flyer)
- AUG 30 Driver Safety Course**
James Ely Miller Post 833
Start: 4pm
(See Page 12 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



2

Department Convention

The 106th American Legion Department of New York Convention took place the week of July 15-19th. I, along with Post 833 member and County Commander Kevin Eaton, attended the Convention in Niagara Falls, NY. As Delegates from Suffolk County, we had the privilege of fully participating in the process to pass resolutions and elect Department officers for the 2024-2025 year.

Legionnaire Keith Koster was elected Commander of the Department of New York American Legion for 2024-2025.

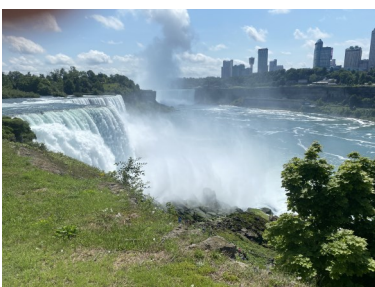
Gaither Espey was elected Detachment Commander of the Sons Of The American Legion 2024-2025.

Kimberly A. Quick was elected Auxiliary President of the Department Of New York 2024-2025.

Tom Wagner of Brentwood Post 1006, and 10th District Vice Commander was nominated and elected to Department Vice Commander of the 2nd & 10th Districts 2024-2025.

Gene Ordmandy of Wilson-Ritch Post 432, and 10th District Chaplain was nominated and elected 10th District Commander 2024-2025.

It was a great experience! I would encourage others to look into attending future events held at the County, Department and National level. There is a whole Legion Family world out there that some of you may find interesting.





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 the beginning of July.

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.

Go to: <https://mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Membership/Renew>

You will need your Legion ID # and Last Name

Scroll Down (slightly) and you'll see where to enter your info.

VOAGC Members:

If you have not paid your 2025 dues by January 1, 2025, Your FOB will be deactivated.

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)

"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 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

American Legion Boys' State is a week-long program that immerses high school youth (currently completing their junior year) in citizenship and leadership training.

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

Suffolk County wound up with 65 boys attending the program in Morrisville this year. 565 boys graduated the program.

Northport Post 694's delegate, Nolan Reinhardt, was elected Governor.

We have 3 members of the County Legion that were part of the everyday activities in Morrisville.

County Commander Kevin Eaton (City Counselor), Department Commander's Aide Mike Pankowski (Federalist Party Assistant) and Northport Post 694 Commander Bill McKenna (State Police)

I want to thank all of you for your hard work to make this one of the best programs in the nation.

Jim Beecher
Boys State Coordinator



Department Commander Tim Collmer congratulating Nolan Reinhardt, Delegate of Northport Post 694, for his election to Governor of Boys State 2024.



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: **Ended June 14, 2024**

GOAL: **\$65,000**

PROCEEDS: Awarded equally to support the following:

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

ALA: Hope For The Warriors:

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

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

SAL Squadron 833 raised **\$4600**

Thank You to ALL Who Participated

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
Website: alpost833ny.org



You're Invited to a

Veterans BBQ

Sponsored by the
Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church
American Legion Post 833, VFW Post 10870,
& The Veterans of America Gun Club

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24th
2pm - 6pm

Location:
Edgewater and Juniper Ave
Smithtown, New York

All Family Members Welcome!

Free!!!

**Hamburgers – Hotdogs - Water
Provided**

Sign Up and let us know how many will be attending!

Volunteer to bring items: Potato, Macaroni, Coleslaw etc.

Sign Up/Questions Contact: Donna Kearney

veteransgunclub@gmail.com

917-412-7781





FAMILY BBQ

**American Legion Post 833,
Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church,
VFW Post 10870 &
Veterans of American Gun Club**

Saturday, August 24, 2024

**Juniper Ave & Edgewater Ave
2:00 PM to 6:00 PM**



All Invited !!

FREE !!! Hamburgers, Hotdogs, Corn On Cob, Water !!

All are welcome to bring Salads, Chips, Sodas, more!!

Bring bats, gloves, any games you want!!

Please email us and let us know how many are coming and if anyone is bringing additional food items so we can be prepared!!



**veteransgunclub@gmail.com
Donna Kearney 917-412-7781**



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:

April 26th

June 26th

August 30th

October 30th

4pm – 10pm



Course Cost:

Legion & SAL Members: \$30

All others: \$50

Location: 51 Juniper Ave Smithtown, NY 11787

Contact Don Lettieri: 631-219-2882

New York State Commemorative Medals for Korean War and Vietnam War Veterans

You can apply online at <https://dmna.ny.gov/awards> or fill out the paper application, which is attached below.

Eligibility requirements:

Korean War Veterans: Service members who served in one of the following locations between June 27, 1950 and January 31, 1955:

- Korean Peninsula
- its contiguous waters
- Korean airspace

Vietnam Veterans: Service members who served in one of the following locations between November 1, 1955 and May 17, 1975:

- Vietnam
- Thailand
- Laos
- Cambodia
- its contiguous waters
- Vietnam airspace

If you have any questions regarding this application process, please contact the NYS Military Awards Office at 518-786-0468.



<https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/>

**NEW YORK STATE
KOREAN WAR
COMMEMORATIVE
MEDAL**

<https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/korea.html>



**NEW YORK STATE
VIETNAM WAR
COMMEMORATIVE
MEDAL**

<https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/vietnam.html>



**NEW YORK STATE
SILVER ROSE VETERANS
SERVICE CERTIFICATE**

<https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/>



APPLICATION
(For use of this form, see DMNA Reg 672-1. Proponent is MNP-AWD)

SECTION I
PERSONAL DATA

From: _____
(FIRST NAME) (MIDDLE INITIAL) (LAST NAME)

Full Home Address: _____

Phone Number / E-mail Address: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Please place a check mark alongside of the award(s) you are requesting.

- NEW YORK STATE KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL
 NEW YORK STATE VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL

This is to certify I have reviewed the eligibility criteria for the award I am requesting. I am forwarding herewith substantive documentation to support this request. Attached is a copy of Report of Separation from Active Duty (i.e. NGB-22, DD Form 214, etc.). This documentation will include my Honorable Discharge, list of awards or certificates or permanent orders for awards and will indicate current New York State citizenship while serving on federal active duty.

Signature of Applicant or Posthumously Requested By

MAIL TO: The Adjutant General
Division of Military and Naval Affairs
ATTN: MNP-AWD
Latham New York 12110-3514

DMNA Form 106A-R
(01 FEBRUARY 2024)

***Privacy Act and NY State Personal Privacy Protection Law information. See DMNA Reg 672-1 for details**



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

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

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 with the supporting documents.

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

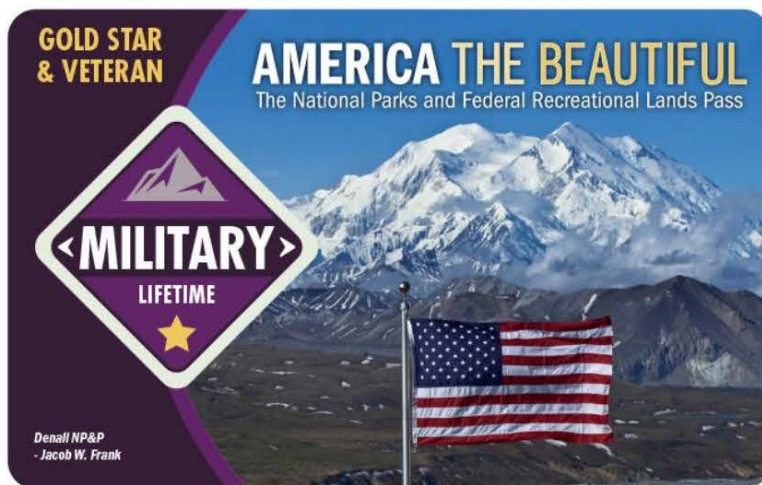
Gold Star Family Members will receive the program's benefits when they present a Lifetime Liberty Pass card to employees at staffed parks. Lifetime Liberty Pass applications will be available on the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation's website starting on April 1. **Veterans who 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)

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 1st & 3rd Thursday: 4 - 5 pm

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

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

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

WOMEN VETERANS ZOOM GROUPS:

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

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

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

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK:

**JOSEPH P. DWYER VETERANS PEER SUPPORT
PROJECT**



**DWYER GROUPS
ARE OPEN TO ALL
VETERANS AND
SERVICE
MEMBERS.**

**GROUPS ARE
ANONYMOUS,
CONFIDENTIAL,
AND FREE.**

**REGISTRATION
AND PROOF OF
SERVICE ARE NOT
REQUIRED**

For more
information:
(631) 853-8345

In The News

Articles sent in by members

Knife 13 Memorial Monuments

By the Vietnam Security Police Association, Inc.



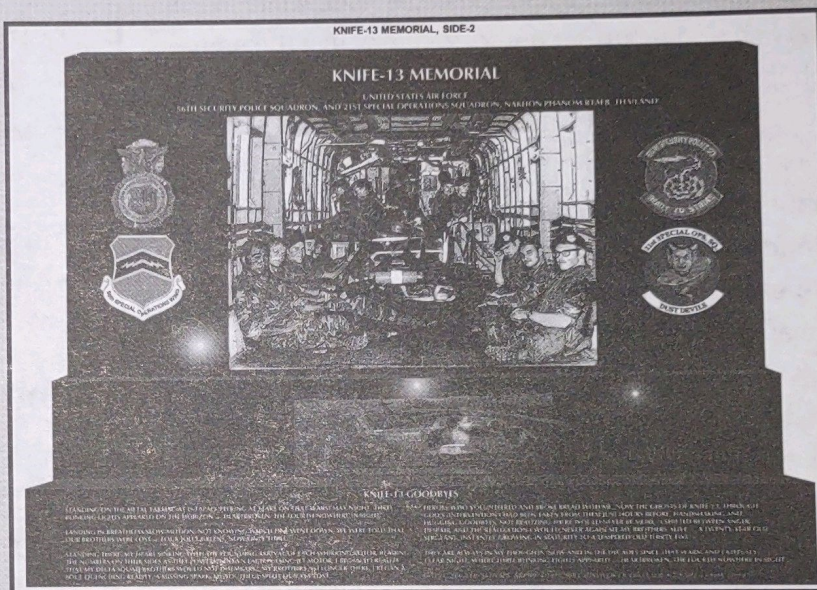
The Vietnam Security Police Association, Inc. (VSPA) is raising funds to deliver two long-overdue recognition memorial monuments to honor the 18 Security Policemen and five aircrew members (all assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand) who perished in the crash of United States Air Force Helicopter, Knife 13, on 13 May 1975 in Thailand. The monuments will be located at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona (current home of the 56th Fighter Wing and 56th Security Forces Squadron) and the Security Forces Museum at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

The VSPA is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt organization of military war veterans who served as United States Air Force Air Policemen, Security Policemen, and Augmentees in Vietnam and Thailand. All

donations to the memorials will be tax deductible for donors.

The anticipated cost of both granite monuments has been estimated at \$100,000 and fund raising is already underway using VSPA's extensive network of retired and active-duty Security Forces Defenders, including K-9 and others, plus the Special Operations community.

You may donate two ways: by check or on the website. A check will avoid PayPal fees that we must pay for processing through our VSPA website at www.vspa.com. If donating by check, please make the check payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association and mail to our Treasurer, Richard Garcia, 400 Jefferson Street, Massapequa, NY 11758. Please write Knife-13 in the memo section of the check. Thanks for your consideration. ❖



In The News

Articles sent in by members

VA Expands Burial Benefits

AIR FORCE PHOTO



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>. ✦

EMAIL dspiva@cfw.org