

# **NISKAYUNA HIGH SCHOOL**

**&**

## **Former VFW Post #9132**



**Annual Memorial Day Service**

**31st Annual Ceremony**

**May 23, 2024**



## **Order of Events:**

- 1. Welcome by John Rickert**
- 2. Recognition of Special Guests**
- 3. Star Spangled Banner by Bel Canto Voices**
- 4. Thomas McGarry - Niskayuna High School Class of 1972 and Former Post Commander of the Hovey Post 9132 leads the Wreath Laying Service for:**  
  
**Lt. Robert Cragin Jr.  
Lt. Vernon F. Hovey III,  
Private Richard Starkey**
- 5. Special Recognition of the Class of 1964**
- 6. "In Remembrance" from Requiem by Eleanor Daley read by Anika L. Bidoshi From the Class of 2024 and President of Student Congress**
- 7. "Down in the River to Pray" Arranged by Jace Wittig.**
- 8. Tribute to 54 Deceased Niskayuna Graduates by John Rickert**
- 9. Announcement of Military Service for Members of the Class of 2024**

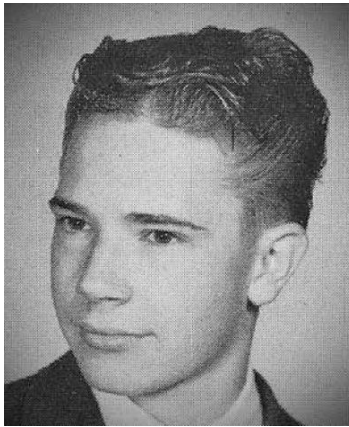
**10. "US Armed Forces Salute" Arranged by  
Douglas E. Wagner and performed by the  
Niskayuna Concert Band under the direction of  
Mr. Phil Pandori**

**11. "God Bless America" by Bel Canto Voices**

**12. Closing / "Taps" by Arin Khare  
Niskayuna High School's Class of 2024**

**We Remember Our 3 Niskayuna Graduates who Lost their  
Lives While in Combat During the  
Viet Nam Conflict**

**Lt. Robert S. Cragin Jr.                      Class of 1962  
Georgetown University (1962-1966)**



**Born: June 21, 1944**

**Died: February 26, 1968**

**1st Lieutenant, United States Army, Vietnam War  
60th Infantry - 9th Division - Infantry Unit Commander**

**Killed in action in Gian Dinh, South Vietnam**

**Name is listed on Panel 41E - Row 36 of the Vietnam  
Memorial**

**Inducted into the Niskayuna High School Hall of Fame in  
1990**

**Lt. Vernon F. Hovey III  
Norwich University (1964 - 1968)**

**Class of 1964**



**Born: June 16, 1946**

**Died: June 5, 1970**

**1st Lieutenant - United States Army  
101st Airborne Division**

**Shot down over Thua Thien, South Vietnam**

**Name is listed in Panel 9W, Row 14 of the Vietnam  
Memorial**

**Inducted in the Niskayuna High School Hall of Fame in 1990**

**Richard W. Starkey**

**Class of 1965**



**Born: August 31, 1947**

**Died: September 17, 1969**

**Private 1st Class, United States Marine Corps  
3rd Marine Regiment, Lima Company**

**Died in ground combat in Quang Tri, South Vietnam**

**Name is listed in Panel 18W, Row 106 of the Vietnam Memorial**

**Inducted into the Niskayuna High School Hall of Fame in 1990**

## Niskayuna High School Deceased Veterans

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Graduation Year</u>	<u>Branch of Service</u>
Edward Born: April 20, 1920	Beaupre Died: July 30, 2016	2001	US Army Air Force
<b>Served in World War II</b> <b>883rd Bomb Squadron in the Pacific</b> <b>*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of "Operation Recognition"</b>			
Mark Born: September 3, 1953	Beis Died: March 3, 2011	1972	US Army
<b>Served as a Sergeant in the United States Army</b>			
Peter J. Born: September 22, 1962	Bellair Died: July 14, 2007	1980	US Marines
<b>Served in the United States Marine Corps in the Beirut, Lebanon Conflict</b> <b>1st Battalion - 8th Company</b> <b>Recipient of the Purple Heart</b>			
Genesio J. Born: December 20, 1920	Benvenuto Died: January 1, 2002	2001	US Army
<b>Served in the United States Army in World War II</b> <b>*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of "Operation Recognition"</b>			
Martin A. Born: November 11, 1920	Bianchi Died: January 14, 2014	2001	US Army
<b>Served in the US Army Corps of Engineers in World War II</b> <b>Served in combat in Southern France, Belgium, and the Rhineland</b> <b>*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of "Operation Recognition"</b>			
Kirk Born: May 31, 1956	Boothe Died: February 24, 2018	1974	US Army
Graduate of West Point Military Academy Lieutenant Colonel for the 101st Airborne Division			
Barry Born: April 22, 1944	Bradt Died: February 28, 1992	1962	US Air Force



Leonard Bradt 1980 US Air Force  
Born: December 12, 1960 Died: December 20, 2001

Kenneth Carcia 2007 US Army  
Born: March 15, 1989 Died: March 15, 2017  
\*2 Tours of Duty in Iraq

Anthony J. Casso Sr. 2001 US Army  
Born: February, 1926 Died: April 14, 2013  
**Served in the US Army as an Artillery Instructor in World War II**  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of "Operation Recognition"**

Gary Chamberlain 1970 US Navy  
Born: October 28, 1952 Died: February 14, 2012

Robert Cochran 1964 US Army  
Born: August 16, 1946 Died: May 23, 2017  
Served in the US Army and Earned a PhD from Syracuse University

John A. Cooper 2009 U.S. Army  
Born: 1991 Died: November 5, 2019  
Graduate of Norwich and Sergeant in the U.S. Army

Robert Cragin 1962 US Army  
Born: June 21, 1944 Died: February 26, 1968  
**Killed in action in Gian Dinh, South Vietnam**  
**Name is listed on Panel 41E - Row 36 of the Vietnam Memorial**  
**Inducted into the Niskayuna High School Hall of Fame in 1990**

David Cross 1998 US Army Special Forces  
Born: November 22, 1979 Died: September 19, 2017  
Served in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan

Michael A. D'Ammasso 2001 US Army  
Born: March 22, 1926 Died: October 21, 2003  
**Served in the US Army during World War II**  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of "Operation Recognition"**

Dennis DeGraff 1959 US Air Force  
Born: December 9, 1941 Died: December 9, 2014  
Served 8 Years in the Air Force and was an FAA Air Traffic Controller

Edward N. Drozdyk 2001 US Marine Corps  
Born: July 30, 1928 Died: February 21, 2015  
**Served in the US Marine Corps during the Korean War**  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of "Operation Recognition"**

Dennis Erikson 1965 US Army  
Born: February 2, 1947 Died: June 9, 2009  
**Veteran of the Vietnam War**

Harry J. Ferguson 2001 US Marines  
Born: August 7, 1928 Died: May 19, 2010  
**Private First Class Marine**  
**1st Battalion - 6th Marine Regiment**  
**Served in Battle in China and Occupation of China in 1946 and 1947**  
**Received the China Service Medal**  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Harold B. Ferris 2001 US Army  
Born: May 22, 1924 Died: June 28, 2013  
**Darby Ranger in World War II**  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Gerard P. Gajewski 1966 US Marines  
Born: December 7, 1948 Died: February 5, 2011  
**Corporal in the United States Marines**  
**Veteran of the Vietnam Conflict**

Thomas Gibson 1962 U.S. Navy  
Born: December 10, 1944 Died: February 19, 2019

David Gidley 1960 US Navy  
Born: November 2, 1941 Died: April 30, 2013  
**\*Graduate of the Merchant Marine Academy and Ensign in the US Navy**

Leonard N. Gisotti 2001 US Navy  
Born: March 24, 1927 Died: July 23, 2004  
**Served in both the European and Pacific Theaters in World War II**  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Edward R. Goad 2001 US Army  
Born: December 12, 1924 Died: September 16, 2004

**Veteran of both World War II and Korea**

**POW in the Korean War**

**Received the Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Cross**

**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Frederick Graff Jr. 1968 US Air Force /  
Air National  
Guard

Born: 1950 Died: September 13, 2016

**Veteran of Viet Nam Conflict**

Sherwood J. Hamil 1960 US Air Force  
Born: October 4, 1942 Died: October 4, 2015

**Veteran of the Viet Nam Conflict**

Paul Hoffman 1966 US Marines  
Born: March 30, 1947 Died: February 17, 2022

**\*National Defense Service Medal for service in Viet Nam**

Bob Hopkins 1967 US Air Force  
Born: January 16, 1949 Died: February 3, 2016  
Spent 20 Years in the Air Force and Retired as a Master Sergeant

Brendan Houilhan 1977 U.S. Merchant Marines  
**Born: February 16, 1959 Died: February 5, 2021**

Daniel Houlihan 1967 US Coast Guard  
Born: March 3, 1949 Died: January 26, 2017  
Was with the Merchant Marines with Military Sealift Command

James Houlihan 1986 US Army  
Born: November 29, 1967 Died: November 7, 2017

Vernon F. Hovey 1964 US Army  
Born: June 16, 1946 Died: June 5, 1970  
**1st Lieutenant - United States Army - 101st Airborne Division**  
**Shot down over Thua Thien, South Vietnam**  
**Name is listed in Panel 9W, Row 14 of the Vietnam Memorial**  
**Inducted in the Niskayuna High School Hall of Fame (1990)**

Clayton Janaitis 1960 US Army Medical Core  
Born: March 31, 1942 Died: October 26, 1999  
**Captain for 3 years in the Army Medical Core**

William Kardash 1962 US Army  
Born: March 5, 1945 Died: April 13, 2013  
82nd Airborne Division of the United States Army  
**Received a Bronze Star for service in Vietnam**

John Kniskern 1960 US Navy  
Born: May 1, 1942 Died: May 28, 1960  
Enlisted in United States Navy his senior year of high school  
Died in an auto accident

Phillip Komp 1968 US Navy  
Born: April 14, 1950 Died: October 14, 2015  
**Awarded the National Defense Service Medal**  
**Vietnam Service Medal with 3 Stars**  
**Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal**

Walter B. Krul 2001 US Army  
Born: March 3, 1922 Died: May 1, 2010  
83rd Infantry Regiment in France and Germany  
**Awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart**  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Roger LaPointe 1977 US Air Force  
Born: September 1, 1959 Died: April 12, 2018

Robert Lique 1963 US Army  
Born: December 4, 1944 Died: June 11, 2013  
Vietnam Veteran

Daniel R. Masterpole 2001 US Army  
Born: October 3, 1917 Died: November 13, 2010  
182nd Infantry Regiment in the Pacific Theater in World War II  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Victor J. Micieli 2001 US Army  
Born: June 13, 1918 Died: July 2, 2001  
World War II Veteran - European Theater  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Isadore D. Miller 2001 US Army  
Born: August 19, 1922 Died: February 23, 2007  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Edward P. O'Donnell 2001 US Navy  
Born: November 11, 1924 Died: May 21, 2016  
World War II - Pacific Theater  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Raymond Phillion 2002 US Navy  
Born: February 8, 1934 Died: June 14, 2021  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

Humbert Salluzzo 2001 US Army  
Born: March 26, 1917 Died: May 4, 2011  
Staff Sergeant in the Army Signal Corps  
World War II - Combat in North Africa, Sicily, France and Germany  
**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

David P. Sinkus 1960 US Air Force  
Born: February 19, 1942 Died: October 30, 2022

Richard W. Starkey 1965 US Marine Corps  
Born: August 31, 1947 Died: September 17, 1969  
**Private 1st Class, United States Marine Corps**  
**3rd Marine Regiment, Lima Company**  
**Died in ground combat in Quang Tri, South Vietnam**  
**Name is listed in Panel 18W, Row 106 of the Vietnam Memorial**  
**Inducted into the Niskayuna High School Hall of Fame (1990)**

Michael Strykiewicz 1964 US Navy  
Born: February 25, 1946 Died: April 7, 2002

Brian Tobey 1964 US Navy  
Born: August 3, 1945 Died: October 15, 2017

Warren W. Vaughn 2001 US Air Force and  
US Army

Born: March 29, 1920 Died: September 25, 2011

**Veteran of World War II**

**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

John W. Wierzchowski 2001 US Army

Born: May 18, 1913 Died: February 17, 2000

**Veteran of World War II**

**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

**\*Diploma Awarded Posthumously**

Raymond M. Wright 2001 US Marine Corps

Born: June 16, 1924 Died: June 27, 2003

**\*Served in the Philippine Theater of Operations**

**\*Received the Purple Heart from General Douglas MacArthur**

**\*Received a Niskayuna Diploma as part of Operation Recognition**

**54 Deceased Veterans**

**"We will never forget"**

## **Niskayuna Staff with Military Service**

**Victor Alcantara - United States Army Reserves**

**Gary Connor - United States Air  
National Guard**

**Timothy Fowler - United States Navy**

## **To Present Certificates to the Members of the Class of 2024**

**Carter Fischer - Enlistment for Duty into the United States  
Army**

**Caitlyn Gibson - Enrollment in the Coast Guard Academy  
followed by active duty**

**Ali Koca - Enlistment for duty into the United States Marines**

**Ephraim Mattox Wing - Enlistment for duty into the United  
States Army**

**Alexander John Samaniuk - U.S. Army ROTC Scholarship to  
SUNY Brockport**



**Special Thanks to Jim Wilson (In Memoriam) of the VFW  
Hovey Post  
&  
Ed Carangelo for Starting this Great Traditional Ceremony  
in 1993**

