

Major  
George  
Quamo  
and

Sar



## Major George Quamo's Awards

Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously)  
Silver Star (First Oak Leaf Cluster)  
Legion of Merit  
Bronze Star with V and First Oak Leaf Cluster  
Air Metal  
Army Commendation Medal (First Oak Leaf Cluster)  
Purple Heart (Posthumously)  
Army Good Conduct Medal  
Presidential Unit Emblem  
Presidential Unit Citation Navy  
National Defense Service Medal  
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal  
Vietnam Service Medal with (3) Bronze Stars  
Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device (1960)  
Combat Infantry Badge  
Parachutist Badge  
Path Finder Badge  
Ranger Tab  
Expert Badge with Auto Rifle, Submachine Gun and Carbine Bars  
Sharpshooter Badge with Rifle Bar  
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
Unit Citation Badge  
\*Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Medal  
New York State Conspicuous Service Cross  
New York State Conspicuous Service Star  
Vietnamese President Unit Citation  
Vietnamese Airborne Wings

\*Major Quamo is believed to have the above starred item in addition to the other awards listed and other foreign awards which are not listed! This list was last updated July 12, 2004.



## The Unveiling Ceremony of

THE  
MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO  
SUBSTATION

Thursday, November 11, 2004





**Major George Quamo**  
**June 20, 1940 – April 14, 1968**

Major George Quamo was a true American hero both at home and abroad. As a student at Averill Park High School, he was elected class president and served as captain of the football team. During the Vietnam War, he served with the elite U.S. Army Green Berets, commanding troops in combat conditions and eventually winning numerous decorations for heroism and lifesaving actions.

Major Quamo received a number of medals and commendations during his military service, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Legion of Merit and the Purple Heart, among others. Major Quamo was awarded the Silver Star for his actions in February, 1968 to help rescue his fellow troops while exposing himself to great danger from an enemy force superior in numbers and firepower.

Sadly, Major Quamo was killed in April, 1968 while transporting top secret documents by airplane. But the memory of the 1958 graduate of Averill Park High School is still strong among fellow classmates and servicemen who served under Major Quamo, who remember him for his bravery, talent and dedication to his country.

The dedication of the Sand Lake Sheriff's Office substation in honor of Major George Quamo underscores a commitment by the people and elected officials of Rensselaer County to never forget the tremendous service by veterans of the county. We know that the freedom we enjoy is due to the sacrifice and heroism of veterans like Major George Quamo and so many others who have answered the call to duty and defended our nation.

### **Welcome**

Neil J. Kelleher, Chairman

### **Post the Colors**

Dickerson Post

### **The Pledge Allegiance**

Margaret VanDeusen, Vice-Chairman/Finance

### **Taps**

Robert Reiter

### **Prayer**

Dan McIntyre, Lay Leader of the Methodist Church

### **Speakers**

Kathleen Jimino, County Executive  
Thomas M. Walsh, County Legislator  
Rich Castle

### **Presentation of Resolution**

Martin T. Reid, Vice-Chairman

### **Remove the cover from Sign**

**Sponsored By: The Rensselaer County Legislature**







The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 25, 1963, has awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously to

**Major George Quamo  
United States Army**

For extraordinary heroism in action:

Major George Quamo, Infantry, distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism on 7 February 1968 in connection with military operations against an armed and hostile enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. When the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp was overrun on 7 February 1968 by nine P79 Russian tanks and an estimated two battalions of North Vietnamese, Major Quamo immediately set about organizing a relief force, which he moved to Old Lang Vei Camp where the wounded survivors had withdrawn. Upon arrival at Old Lang Vei, which by this time was under attack, Major Quamo personally supervised the loading and extraction of the Lang Vei survivors, constantly exposing himself to deadly accurate enemy mortar and small arms fire. When it became apparent that his relief force was surrounded with no hope of extraction from that location, Major Quamo immediately set about dividing his force in half while continually exposing himself to a tremendous volume of enemy fire to bring in friendly air strikes. Under the firm hand and cool courage of Major Quamo, half of the group delivered such a withering and intense volume of fire that the enemy was unable to prevent the breakout. When the breakout force became pinned down enroute to the landing zone, Major Quamo personally maneuvered his group against the superior enemy force, driving them from their positions, allowing his personnel to reach the landing zone. Major Quamo personally supervised the extraction of his men while constantly exposing himself to enemy fire from all sides to call in friendly air strikes. He was the last person to leave the landing zone. Major Quamo's intense dedication to his men, his coolness in battle, and his extraordinary courage are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the military service.



## Vietnam War

### Recipients Of The Distinguished Service Cross



(This listing is as complete as we are able to provide from numerous resources, however it is possible that a few recipients may not be listed. You can verify if someone received the Distinguished Service Cross from this list, but absence of a name should NOT be construed to definitively negate a veteran's claim to this award.)

**1,052 Awards**

### Statistics:

- A total of 1,040 individuals received the Distinguished Service Cross
  - Twelve men earned TWO in Vietnam including:
    - 1 WWII DSC Recipient who earned a 2nd and 3rd OLC in Vietnam
    - 1 Korean War DSC Recipient who earned a 2nd and 3rd OLC in Vietnam
  - One World War II MOH recipient earned a Posthumous DSC in RVN
  - One World War II recipient earned a second DSC in Vietnam
  - Two Korean War recipients earned a second DSC in Vietnam
- In addition to members of the US Army:
  - 2 U.S. Marines earned the Distinguished Service Cross in Vietnam
  - 1 U.S. Civilian earned the Distinguished Service Cross in Vietnam
  - 1 Member of the Australian Army Earned the Distinguished Service Cross
  - 3 Vietnamese were awarded Distinguished Service Crosses



Born in Lynn, Mass., on June 10, 1940, Quamo was the oldest son of Alexander and Kaliroi Quamo, who emigrated from Albania to the United States in the 1930s. The family, including his sisters, Yllka, Tefta, Andronika and Marietta, and his brother, James, moved to Averill Park in 1953. The children attended Averill Park High School, with George joining the Army after high school in October 1958.

A natural leader, he was president of his high school junior class and a quarterback on the football team, and after joining the Army he attended Officer Candidate School. After becoming an Army Green Beret, he served as an infantry adviser to troops in Thailand, Okinawa and South Vietnam, and went on numerous missions.

Master Sgt. Charles "Skip" Minnicks, at 38, was the oldest team leader in SOG when "this fresh-faced captain" took over the reconnaissance teams in 1967. Quamo, at 27, would soon become a major in SOG on Oct. 6, 1967.

"I was madder than hell when he took over," said Minnicks, a highly decorated SOG veteran of four tours in Vietnam. "And I made no bones about it. He looked like a kid and I resented him."

"He didn't say anything about it for a few weeks, and then one day we were in the jungle somewhere and he pulled me aside. He said: 'We're both in this for the same reason. We're both fighting the same enemy. I don't want to fight you, too. We have to work as a team.'"

"Well, of course, he was right,"

Minnicks continued. "But I'll tell you something. I grew to love that man. I would have crawled up inside the barrel of an enemy cannon for him. I mean that. He was one hell of an officer."

Operating deep inside enemy lines, SOG teams conducted some 1,398 missions.

Quamo commanded three reconnaissance teams, including RT PENNSYLVANIA, which alone ran more than 20 missions along the Ho Chi Minh Trail as well as in Laos and Cambodia. The teams usually were made up of three Americans and four to six Bru guerilla soldiers.

"Our exploits did not go unnoticed," Minnicks said. "Not one wounded or captured SOG operative was ever returned to us alive. None. George Quamo knew that going in. No quarter asked, none given. His kind of game."

"Sometimes, he just defied the

enemy to come get us," Minnicks recalled. "One time on Co Roc (Mountain), he had three teams up there and there were enemy patrols chasing us all over the place. He led us up a hill and then stood up and defied them to come get us. He was one tough guy."

Sgt. 1st Class Robert Cavanaugh, the leader of recon team OKLAHOMA, who also served with Quamo on cross-border operations in Laos, said the officer had great leadership abilities. "I often think that if George had lived, he would become one of the great motivation speakers of our time. He had that kind of effect on

**George was one of the finest soldiers I ever served with. He was considered the Lawrence of Arabia of Vietnam. Everyone respected him. The men he served with, the Laotians and the Montagnards. He never asked anyone to do something he couldn't or wouldn't do himself.**

COL. DAVID C.  
'BULLDOG' SMITH  
former Green Beret  
commander

people."

Quamo's finest moment came at Lang Vei, when he led a heroic rescue of the special forces unit that was overrun by a North Vietnamese tank attack on Feb. 7, 1968. Quamo immediately went to the commander of the 26th Ma-



rines, who had been under siege themselves at Khe Sanh, and asked for help to relieve the special forces at Lang Vei. The commander denied the request, saying it would cost too many lives.

Quamo took things into his own hands. He quickly rounded up 14 special forces volunteers and about 30 Bru tribesmen. He then contacted Marine CH-46 helicopter pilots and told them to "get ready to fly," and that the order had come from their commander. Harve Saal, a SOG medic who would later write a four-volume account of SOG, said: "George just scalawagged those guys and told them 'you have to do this because your boss said so.'"

Already awarded two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star for bravery on previous missions in Vietnam, Quamo would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for "exposing himself to a tremendous volume of enemy fire" at Lang Vei.

"I really believe he should have been awarded a Medal of Honor for getting those guys out of Lang Vei," Minnick said.

Former "Hatchet Force" Platoon Sgt. Stephen "Tim" Kirk, who won a Bronze Star at Lang Vei, said of Quamo's actions: "I remember him standing out there in the LZ (landing zone) like George Patton. He was totally in control of directing everything in the midst of all that incoming."

A month and a half after the Lang Vei rescue, Quamo and "Bulldog" Smith were planning a top-secret "special project" to train indigenous Bru tribes living in Laos. But he disappeared while transporting important papers back to Da Nang on a small aircraft. A massive search turned up nothing. Six years later, on June 26, 1974, Vietnamese woodcutters discovered the wreckage of Quamo's plane in a dense jungle area. The remains of Quamo and two South Vietnamese pilots were discovered and identified. The jungle had swallowed up the plane on impact. Why it crashed is unknown.

"I asked my brother to be the best man at my wedding," James Quamo remembered. "He said he couldn't make it and that he felt bad about it. He said he had to do something important and couldn't talk about it. I got married April 13 of 1968, and he was killed on April 14, 1968."

Quamo's remains were flown back to the United States and buried in Arlington National Cemetery on Oct. 21, 1974, as his family and several Army officers and soldiers looked on. There were no bands, no generals, no parades. He died at age 27, a very "special" soldier.

## MAJOR QUAMO'S FAMILY HISTORY!

Alexander Quamo owned a store in Albania. In the 1920s, like many immigrants to the U.S., he left his wife and young daughter behind while he and his brothers came to the United States, to make their fortunes. Alexander went back to Albania briefly, but ten years before he had saved enough money to send his wife and daughter, they moved to the United States in 1935 to escape the communist take over of their native country. Alexander, his wife Kaliroi and daughter Yellka settled in Lynn, Massachusetts where he got a factory job with General Electric. During the next ten years the Quamos had five more children, Tefta, Andronika, George, James and Marietta.

Mr. Quamo's dream was that all his children become college graduates. To that end, he worked hard and the family lived frugally. He was a loving but very strict father and undisputed head of the household. When George was 11, and Jim was 9, they sold newspapers at local establishments after dinner, and sold even newspapers. Mrs. Quamo let them do this so they would have spending money like other children, with one condition, that they were back home before their father returned from work. In fact she knew her husband wanted them to have the money but couldn't provide it himself, so the charade continued.

Alexander Quamo died unexpectedly in Sept. of 1952. By that time Yillka had graduated from college, married and was a teacher at Russell Sage College in Troy, N.Y.. Adjusting to being a widow must have been very hard for Mrs. Quamo. She had five children at home to raise alone and although she spoke five or six languages, English was not one of them.

In 1953, Yillka and her husband a teacher at RP I were living in a large house at Orient Ave in Averill Park, N.Y. Mrs. Quamo took her family to live there. The children were good students, popular and participated in extra curricular activities at school. Most of them fulfilled their fathers dream and graduated from college.

George graduated in 1958 and took courses at the University of Maryland and also completed officers candidate school. From there on, George's heroism is well documented, his brilliance and tenacity cause him to rise to the top quickly. He was intense, focused, fairminded and highly competitive person. Many published testimonials

from those who served in the green beret speak of his singular, charismatic personality and leadership qualities.

Major Quamo lost his life on April 14, 1968  
This information is a quote from James Quamo  
Info by James Quamo





HIS UNDATED photo shows George Quamo in Vietnam.





April 24, 2007

Dear Judy,

Thank you so very much for all you've done for our brother (Major George Quamo). The Dedication of the Post Office was so very lovely and so wonderful. Our family was so touched by the event & also by the number of people attending. It was so nice to see you again & to talk to you.

Enclosed is a baby photo of George. You are dear, and on behalf of the Major George Quamo Family, we thank you.

Peace & Joy,

Donika Quamo Steitz  
God Bless!



CNiki  
V6-19792  
Andronika Steitz  
1204 Tuscany Blvd.  
Venice FL 34292

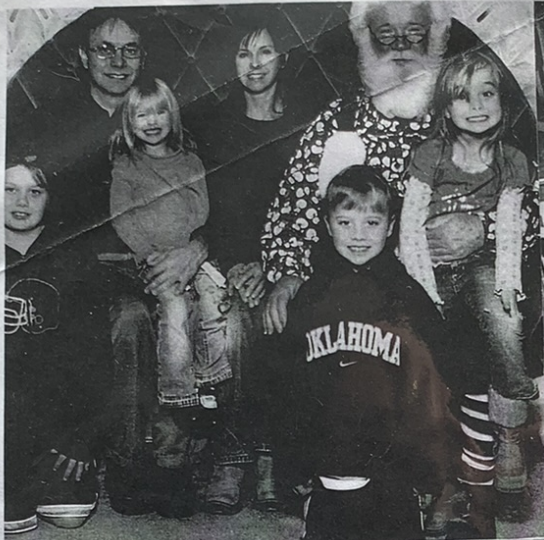
1940-1968



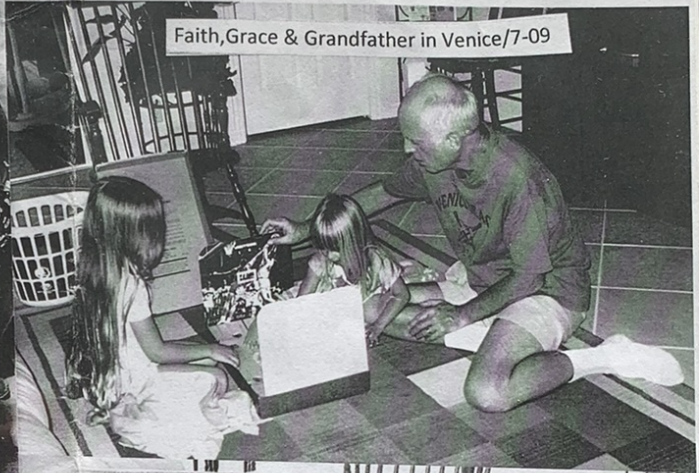
George Quamo



George Quamo's  
Family Pictures



Xmas 08 in OK-Alex, Kevin, Grace, Judy, Santa, Caleb & Faith  
Gettysburg National Military Park/9-09-Niki & Steve



Faith, Grace & Grandfather in Venice/7-09



Faith, Grace & Grandmo., Caleb & Alex/7-09



Niki & Steve up in Washington Monument/9-09



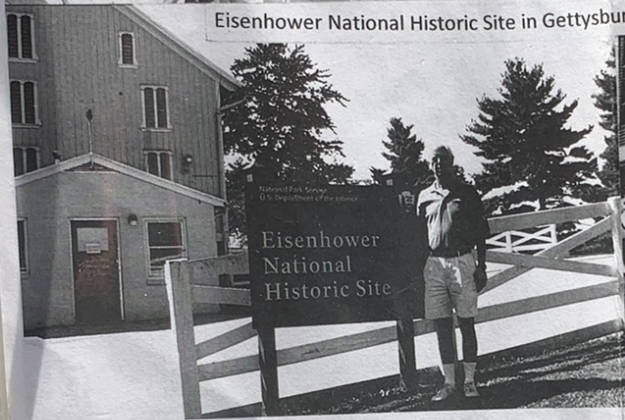
Niki VBS /6-09



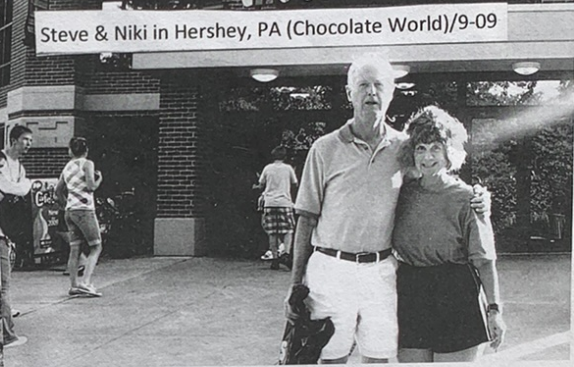




Eisenhower National Historic Site in Gettysburg/9-09-Steve



Steve & Niki in Hershey, PA (Chocolate World)/9-09



So. Jetty/7-09-Caleb, Grandmo., Grandfa., Alex, Grace & Faith



Cape Haze Bike Trip w Tennis Friends/2-14-09



Wilson Jones

287-49 Black







Left to Right: Tim Ryan, Jim Spain, Jerry Miller,  
David Barnum, Bill Dalton, Frank Carr, Tim  
Ingoldsby and Bob Rawls. All were active members  
of the Rensselaer County Vietnam Veterans  
Memorial Committee.

Photo donated to the Town of Sand Lake (by John W.  
Mullen) in honor of Major George Quamo.







The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 25, 1963, has awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously to

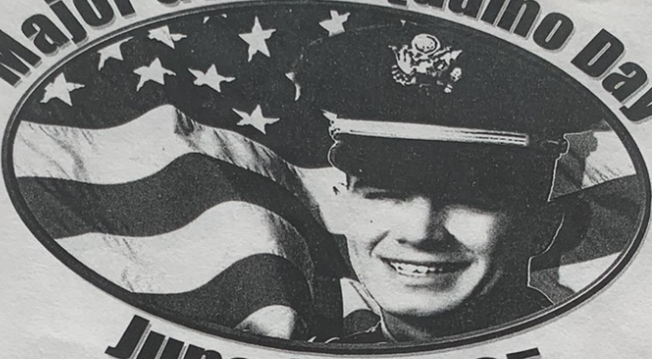
**Major George Quamo  
United States Army**

**For extraordinary heroism in action:**

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# Major George Quamo Day



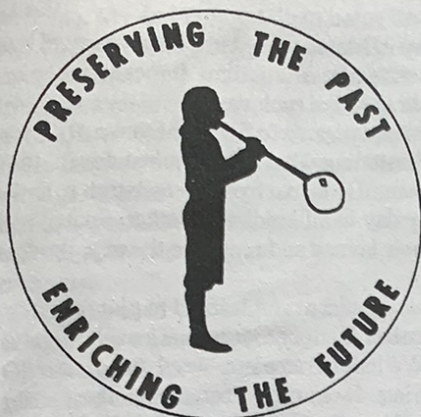
## June 20, 2005

U.S. Army Green Beret Special Forces Unit MacVsog  
 Born June 20, 1940 in Lynn, Mass.  
 Moved to Averill Park in 1953 residing at 25 Orient Ave.  
 Attend Averill Park Central High School Graduating in 1958.  
 Joined Military shortly after graduating in 1958  
 Attended U.S. Army Officers training School  
 University of Maryland  
 Defence Language Institute Presidio Monterey, Calif.  
 Joined Army Green Beret Special Forces [MacVsog] in 1963  
 Promoted to Major on Oct. 6th 1967 [Youngest Major in MacVsog]  
 Killed in Action April 14th 1968  
 Remains not discovered until June 26,, 1974  
 Buried in Arlington Cemetery on October 21, 1974  
 Awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Two Silver Stars, Bronze Star  
 Legion of Merit Award, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citations  
  
 Our Special thanks to Assemblymen Pat Casale and to Senator Joe Bruno for the  
 legislation declaring June 20, 2005, Major George Quamo Day Across New York  
 State.  
 Major Quamo will not be forgotten!  
 Committee to honor Major George Quamo

Wilson Jones  
 CENTURY with Dubble Lock™ Metal

337-49 Black  
 337-491/337-492  
 MADE IN U.S.A.





Major George Quamo feature

# Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 30, Number 2

Winter 2004

## President's "Hello"

The experience Bob Lilly and I had in co-authoring *Images of America SAND LAKE* has given me a new job. I am presently involved in co-authoring another *Images of America* book, *The Legacy of Nursing at Albany Medical Center*. Elsie Whiting, my "little sister" when I was a nursing student, is president of our nursing Alumni Association. Together with a very helpful committee, we are doing the book in behalf of the Alumni Association. Proceeds will go to the Albany Medical Center Foundation for nursing initiatives. Life is stimulating and labor-intensive. Please keep us in your prayers. Our deadline is December 30<sup>th</sup>.

Our Program committee has exciting programs planned. Ronald Berti and Barbara Neu have invited us to have our Christmas Party in the ballroom at their home, the historic Knowlson House. Come at 6:30 p.m. on December 9<sup>th</sup> with a covered dish to share. Please bring a nonperishable food item for *Doors of Hope*, formerly *Four Doors Down*. Our program will be a Christmas floral program by Barbara Neu. Upcoming programs include:

- January 13, 2004: Ross Serantino will tell us about his hobby, violin making.
- February 19: Shaker History and Life Styles by Peter and Jean O'Hare.
- March 9: to get us in the mood for Easter, Karen Kemp will share the art of Ukrainian egg decorating.



Keep watch in the *Advertiser* for publicity articles on the displays being promoted each month during the Averill Park Central School District's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. Our Society has made funds available for photographs to accompany the publicity. Do take time to visit them. (See Grace Briscoe's article in this issue.)

We will begin work next year on a new Historical Marker for the Sand Lake Baptist Church. Erected in 1805 as a meeting house for Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians, it is the oldest public building in the Town of Sand Lake.

Everyone who attended Beverly Mills' reenactment (1) of Harriet Tubman, the famous Underground Railroad personality, had rave reviews of the evening. Beverly thanked us for the honorarium she had requested be sent to the A.M.E. Zion Church and told us it would be sent to the Harriet Tubman Historical Home in Auburn. — Mary French, President



This is in the School  
Hall of Fame Case!



In Memory of  
Major George Quamo

RENSSELAER COUNTY  
HONOR - A - DECEASED - VETERAN



Major George Quamo  
KIA - Vietnam  
January 9, 2006

C-Line.com  
Style #52027 1-888-850-9120



# PROCLAMATION



## Office of the County Executive Veteran of the Month George Quamo United States Army Vietnam War

Whereas, George Quamo was born June 20, 1940 in Lynn, Massachusetts, one of six children of Alexander and Kalirio Quamo, along with brother James, and sisters Ylika, Tefia, Donika, and Marietta; and,  
Whereas, during his teenage years, George Quamo relocated with his family to the Town of Sand Lake, where the youth became an active member in his community, especially at Averill Park High School, where he eventually served as captain on the scholastic football, basketball, and baseball teams, in addition to serving as Class President; and,  
Whereas, following graduation from high school, George Quamo enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 18, and upon his successful completion of basic training and Army infantry school, continued his military education by attending Officer Candidate School, the Defense Language Institute Presidio of Monterey, California, and the University of Maryland; and,  
Whereas, commissioned as an officer within his first year and two months as a member of the United States Army, George Quamo was transferred from Fort Benning, Georgia, to Fort Riley, Kansas, where as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant he received a citation "for honorable and meritorious Service during the period 1 July 1961 to 14 June 1962, while serving as Executive Officer, Company C, 1<sup>st</sup> Battle Group, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division," one of a number of awards, citations, and decorations paying tribute to the veteran's illustrious military service; and,  
Whereas, in October, 1962, then Captain George Quamo began to distinguish himself in ground and aerial support operations against the hostile forces in the Republic of Vietnam, achieving his first Bronze Star Medal (First Oak Leaf Cluster) and the Air Medal with the accompanying citation noting: "He was quick to grasp the implications of new problems with which he was faced as a result of the ever changing situations in a counterinsurgency operation and to find ways and means to solve those problems," while, at the same time, actively participating in more than twenty-five aerial missions over the same hostile territory; and,  
Whereas, early during his tour of duty in Vietnam, George Quamo was assigned to the Army Green Beret special forces unit Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group, and in October, 1967 became the youngest Major in the group where his special leadership skills, including his intense dedication to his men, his coolness in battle, and his extensive courage, were immediately called upon and resulted in the evacuation of wounded forces from the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp; and,  
Whereas, George Quamo paid the supreme sacrifice while contributing to the United States mission of assisting the Republic of Vietnam in disposing of the communist threat to its freedom when on April 14, 1968 contact with the aircraft on which he was a passenger, transporting classified information from Khe Sang to Da Nang was lost; and,  
Whereas, George Quamo, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star Medal, the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Army Air Medal, was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery in October, 1974, approximately six and-a-half years after he was first listed as Missing in Action.

Now, Therefore, I, Kathleen M. Jimino, Rensselaer County Executive, do hereby issue this proclamation honoring George Quamo as Rensselaer County Veteran of the Month for January, 2006.

*Kathleen M. Jimino*  
Kathleen M. Jimino  
Rensselaer County Executive

January 9, 2006

## State of New York Legislative Resolution

Senate No. 315

BY: Senator Bruno



MEMORIALIZING Governor George E. Pataki to declare June 20, 2005, as Major George Quamo Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, In the course of American military history, there are certain individuals who are legendary for their unparalleled bravery in lending their might to the defense of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor George E. Pataki to declare June 20, 2005, as Major George Quamo Day in the State of New York, a highly-decorated Army Green Beret, who bravely served with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group; and

WHEREAS, George Quamo was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, on June 20, 1940; his family moved to Averill Park, New York in 1953 where he attended Averill Park High School, serving as President of his class, quarterback on the football team and captain of the football, baseball and basketball teams; and

WHEREAS, He was a popular leader and a gifted athlete; after graduating in 1958, he joined the United States Army in the fall of that year; and

WHEREAS, George Quamo attended the Army's Officer Candidate School (OCS), the Defense Language Institute Presidio of Monterey, California and the University of Maryland; he spoke three languages, Laotian, Vietnamese and Thai and was a smart, well-educated soldier; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, George Quamo joined the Army Green Beret unit called MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group); this group, formerly known as the Special Forces Unit, took their orders directly from Washington, D.C., which made all missions top secret; and

WHEREAS, On October 6, 1967, George Quamo was promoted to Major, the youngest Major in MACV-SOG; he quickly earned the respect of the men he served with as well as his superior officers; and

WHEREAS, Major Quamo's finest moment came at Lang Vei when he led a heroic rescue of the Special Forces unit that was overrun by a North Vietnamese tank attack on February 7, 1968; the outpost, located some nine miles from Khe Sanh, came under a surprise attack, although SOG observers had been warning of tank tracks and NVA troop movement for several days; and

WHEREAS, Major Quamo was in Khe Sanh when he heard accounts of the battle over the radio; he immediately went to the commander of the 26th Marines, who had also been under siege at Khe Sanh and asked for help to relieve the Special Forces at Lang Vei; the commander denied the request, saying it would cost too many American lives and the 3rd Marine Division commander also recommended that Lang Vei should be abandoned; and

WHEREAS, Major George Quamo gathered a few dozen Special Forces commando volunteers from the MACV-SOG base at Khe Sanh (FOB No. 3) and led a heroic reinforcing mission into Lang Vei; his arrival enabled the Lang Vei defenders to evacuate the area, many by Marine helicopters in the late afternoon saving the lives of 14 surviving Special Forces soldiers; and



WHEREAS, On April 14, 1968, Major George Quamo lost his life when his plane crashed while he was on a mission delivering top secret papers back to Danang; an extensive search was conducted but the plane was not found until six years later on June 26, 1974; he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on October 21, 1974; and

WHEREAS, Having already been awarded two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star for bravery on previous missions, Major George Quamo would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for exposing himself to a tremendous volume of enemy fire at Lang Vei; the DSC citation reads "He was the last man to leave the landing zone"; Major Quamo's intense dedication to his men, his coolness in battle and his extraordinary courage are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved with great respect and reverence, and, on behalf of all the citizens of the Empire State, to pay tribute to Major George Quamo, who so courageously served this State and Nation in defense of freedom and democracy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor George E. Pataki to declare June 20, 2005, as Major George Quamo Day in the State of New York, a highly-decorated Army Green Beret, who bravely served with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Major George Quamo.

*Joseph L. Bruno*

Joseph L. Bruno, Majority Leader

ADOPTED IN SENATE ON  
February 9, 2005

By order of the Senate,

*Steven M. Boggess*

Steven M. Boggess, Secretary



WHEREAS, He was a popular leader and a gifted athlete; after graduating in 1960, he



County  
Neil J. Kelleher, Chairman



January 9, 2006  
Quamo Family

TIMES UNION



# City of Lynn

Office of  the Mayor

## Official Citation

Be it Known to all who read these presents that the  
Honorable

Edward J. "Chip" Clancy, Jr.,

Mayor of the great City of Lynn hereby extends his sincerest congratulations to:

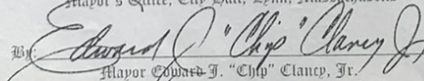
**MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO**  
(Posthumously)  
In Recognition of:

Lynn native Major George Quamo's extraordinary heroism while serving with the United States Special Forces during the Vietnam War and his family's efforts to honor his memory. We it further known that the entire City of Lynn extends its very best wishes for continued success and good fortune in all endeavors; that this citation by duly signed by the Mayor of the City of Lynn



Given this 25th day of November, 2004

Mayor's Office, City Hall, Lynn, Massachusetts

  
Mayor Edward J. "Chip" Clancy, Jr.

Offered By: \_\_\_\_\_  
City of Lynn



### An honor for a veteran

The Sand Lake Sheriff's Substation was renamed on Veterans Day in memory of Maj. George Quamo. Sand Lake native Quamo was a highly decorated Army Green Beret who served in the Vietnam War from 1963 until his disappearance in 1968. The sign above, his brother, James, his sister, Donika Quamo-Steltz, and Martin T. Reid, vice chairman of the County Veterans Association, left, Robert Reiter, plays "Taps" during the ceremony.

PHOTOS BY LUANNE M. FERRIS  
TIMES UNION



### Major George Quamo's Awards

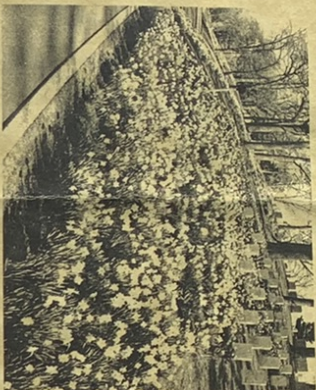
Distinguished Service Cross [Posthumously]  
 Silver Star [First oak leaf Cluster]  
 Legion of Merit  
 Bronze Star  
 Air Medal  
 Army Commendation Medal [first oak leaf Cluster]  
 Purple Heart [Posthumously]  
 Army Good Conduct Medal  
 Presidential Unit Emblem  
 Presidential Unit Citation Navy  
 National Defense Service Medal  
 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal  
 Vietnam Service Medal with [4] Bronze Stars  
 Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device [1960]  
 Combat Infantry Badge  
 Parachutist Badge  
 Path Finder Badge  
 Ranger Tab  
 Expert Badge with Auto Rifle, Submachine Gun and Carbine Bars  
 Sharpshooter Badge with rifle bar  
 Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
 Unit citation badge  
 \*Republic of Vietnam civil Action Medal  
 New York State Conspicuous Service Cross with gold and one silver cross attachment  
 New York State Conspicuous Service Star with four silver shields attachments  
 Meritorious Citation  
 Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation  
 Vietnamese Airborne Wings  
 republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Gold Star  
 Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross With Silver Star

Note! Major Quamo is believed to have the above starred item in addition to the the other awards listed and other foreign awards which are not listed! This list was our late update 8/27/04

NEW LIST

*"War drew us from our homeland  
 in the sunlit springtime of our youth.  
 Those  
 who did not come back alive remain  
 in perpetual springtime  
 -- forever young --  
 and a part of them is with us always."*

Author Unknown



Over 20,000 daffodil blooms cover the steep hillside  
 of Burial Section 3  
 in Arlington National Cemetery every spring.  
 Major Quamo was laid to rest, as an American hero,  
 in Arlington.

### Averill Park Post Office Dedication Ceremony

honoring

## Major George Quamo

April 14, 2007

*"As we express  
 our gratitude,  
 we must never forget  
 that  
 the highest  
 appreciation  
 is not to utter words,  
 but to live by them."*

John Fitzgerald Kennedy











"As we express  
our gratitude,  
we must never forget  
that  
the highest  
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John Fitzgerald Kennedy



April 14, 2007

## Major George Quamo

Averill Park  
Post Office  
Dedication Ceremony  
honoring

"War drew us from our homeland  
in the sunlit springtime of our youth.  
Those  
who did not come back alive remain  
in perpetual springtime  
-- forever young --  
and a part of them is with us always."

Author: Unknown



## County Names Soldier to Post Office

AVERILL PARK — The Averill Park Post Office will be dedicated Saturday for Major George Quamo, a Sand Lake native who served in the Vietnam War and was killed in action on April 14, 1968. Members of the Rensselaer County Legislature welcomed the

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often heard of Maj. Quamo and his great athletic skills while a student, and his great athletic skills while a soldier. He accomplished a tremendous amount during his short life, and all his friends and family have great respect for him, said Legislator Martin Red, who introduced the bill. "This post office ensures his memory and his achievements live on."

New York's U.S. senators, Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton, last year sponsored federal legislation for the renaming of the post office on Route 43. This week, the County Legislature approved a resolution during his career, Quamo earned 26 medals including the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, a Bronze Star, a

Legislature also supported the dedication of a Sheriff's Department station in Sand Lake "after Quamo."

"Major Quamo was known as a man of great accomplishment and courage," said Legislator John Schwartz. "He took on a mission of the most dangerous in the world, the Vietnam War, performed heroically and saved the lives of the men he served with. Those of us in Rensselaer County are very proud of our association with him. Quamo and proud to have played a role in this dedication."

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Dedication of the

**MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO  
POST OFFICE BUILDING**

Averill Park NY April 14, 2007

**WELCOME**

Martha MacDonald  
Manager, Post Office Operations, United States Postal Service

**POSTING OF COLORS**

Lt. Perry Williams VFW Post 3025 Honor Guard  
Averill Park, NY Commander Dan Holsen  
American Legion Post 1268 Color Guard  
Nassau, NY Commander Steve Senrick

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Ms. MacDonald

**INVOCATION**

Deacon Donald Koch

**INTRODUCTION of GUESTS**

Andrew Cook  
Postmaster  
Averill Park, NY

**FROM GEORGE'S COMMUNITY**

Michael Phil

First recipient of the Major George Quamo Memorial  
Scholarship at Averill Park High School, now attending RPI

Martin Reid

Rensselaer County Legislature

Darius Shuhinfar

Regional Representative, Office of Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand

Richard Castle

Member of the Major Quamo Recognition Committee and  
classmate

**FROM GEORGE'S COMRADES**

Colonel Roy W. Bahr

Colonel David Smith

**FROM GEORGE'S FAMILY**

James Quamo

Major Quamo's brother

**UNVEILING of PLAQUE**

by Postmaster Cook and Mr. Quamo

**CLOSING REMARKS**

by Mr. Cook

**BENEDICTION**

by Deacon Koch

**DISMISS COLORS**

by Mr. Cook

Entry made by Alexander Marston

**RENSSELAER COUNTY**  
**HONOR - A - DECEASED - VETERAN**



**Major George Quamo**  
**KIA - Vietnam**  
**January 9, 2006**







# Post office to be renamed after local soldier

Kathryn Gaglianelli  
The Record/Lead

**1/6**  
A local, highly decorated World War I soldier who served with the Special Forces Unit in Vietnam, and led a daring rescue mission in a more provincial way than the efforts of a group of men, will soon be honored with the name of the post office and U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., and Rep. John Sweeney, R-Clinton

in Massachusetts they were asked to name the post office when they grew up. I wanted to be a fireman or a cowboy. I wanted to be a soldier," Quamo said.

Two decades later George fulfilled his wish when he enlisted in the US Army. He went on to command the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, and was awarded 26 medals, including the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, and a Bronze Star, Legion of Merit and Presidential Unit Citation.

George's military career was a reconnaissance mission Feb. 7, 1968 in Lang Vei that saved the lives of 14 of his men. He was relentless, even acting without proper authority. When he returned, he was promoted to sergeant and assigned to a unit in the same area that was under siege by North Korean forces, James Quamo said.

"If that mission hadn't been successful he would probably have been court-martialed," Quamo said. "He was killed in 1968 when the helicopter he was traveling in crashed outside of Laos. Because he was a hero, he was classified. Friends and relatives knew very little about his heroics until word of his death on April 14, 1968. Six years later his remains were discovered and returned to the US National Cemetery.

Castle and two more former classmates, Fred Shoemaker and John Sweeney, are on the Committee to Honor Major George Quamo. They, and a number of friends, have worked tirelessly to see that Quamo is not forgotten. Those of late journalist Tom Haggerty have reportedly increased recognition about Quamo on a local level.

Quamo is not forgotten. Rensselaer County Executive Michael E. Flannery presented the award, he admitted he didn't know who Quamo was. Matthew McKeely, his English teacher, gave him a reading assignment to bring him up to speed. The

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## Push to honor war hero advances

George Quamo never married. He was committed first to the U.S. military.

He died in 1968 as a highly decorated Army Officer (O-5), Sergeant, and Assistant Commandant. He served in Vietnam, Studebaker and Observation Group.

James Quamo said his brother took part in top secret operations and served several tours in Vietnam. He spoke of his brother's name, Studebaker, and Observation Group.

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## Averill Park native takes command of Air Force's 508th



**HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah** — A Rensselaer County native has been given command of the U.S. Air Force's 508th Aircraft Sustainment Wing.

Col. Scott W. Jansson, a native of Averill Park, formally took control of the unit in a change-of-command ceremony at Hill Air Force Base on Tuesday.

Jansson, who retired after 23 years of service, Maj. Gen. Kevin J. Sullivan, Ogden Air Logistics Center commander, officiated.

"I am truly honored to serve as your new commander and to serve our country as part of this organization," Jansson told

members of the 508th ASW in attendance.

"You can be sure that my focus will be on supporting our war fighters and our U.S. national forces as well as our international allies and coalition partners."

"I'm confident that we will build upon the many successes you've achieved under Col. Schaefer's leadership," he continued, "and that together, we will meet the challenges that lay ahead."

The 508th ASW is comprised of 800-900 active-duty members, civilians and contractors. The unit is responsible for providing sustainment of 40 percent of the aircraft in the Air Force inventory — such as the F-16 and A-10 fighters and the T-38 trainer — and two-thirds of all the simu-

lating and our simulators available for training," he said in an earlier interview.

"From our military to our civilians to our contractors, to the international partners working with members of the wing's staff in an effort 'to deliver the very best in combat capabilities and top-notch sustainment support — on time and on cost. And, as a result, we will continue to play a part in helping our nation with the global war on terrorism."

Jansson, a 1984 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, said he looks forward to working with members of the wing's staff in an effort "to deliver the very best in combat capabilities and top-notch sustainment support — on time and on cost. And, as a result, we will continue to play a part in helping our nation with the global war on terrorism."

**Barbara Fisher, 75th Air Base Wing Public Affairs and G.A. Vol. Ogden Air Logistics Center Public Affairs.**

## Averill Park native to command 508th

Record 6/17/06

**HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah** — The 508th Aircraft Sustainment Wing received its second commander as Col. Scott W. Jansson took control in a change of command ceremony here Wednesday.

Jansson, a native of Averill Park, took the reins of leadership from outgoing commander Col. Larry Schaefer, who retired after 23 years of service.



JANSSON

"I am truly honored to serve as your new commander and to serve our country as part of this organization," said Jansson to members of the 508th ASW in attendance.

"You can be sure that my focus will be on supporting our war fighters — our U.S. operational forces as well as our international allies and coalition partners."

"I'm confident that we will build upon the many successes you've achieved under Col. Schaefer's leadership," he continued, "and that together, we will meet the challenges that lay ahead."

The 508th ASW is comprised of 800-900 active-duty members, civilians and contractors. The unit is responsible for providing sustainment of 40 percent of the aircraft in the Air Force inventory — such as the F-16 and A-10 fighters and the T-38 trainer — and two-thirds of all the simu-

lators used for training aircrews and maintenance specialists.

The wing is currently working to extend the service life of the A-10, F-16 and T-38 and keep them flying to 2025 or beyond.

"These aircraft are already pretty much at the end of their original design life," said Schaefer, "and now we're trying to double that and keep them flying for another 20-plus years. This is a significant set of challenges — a lot of engineering challenges — but we're up to the task."

Jansson said he looks forward to working with members of the wing's staff in an effort "to deliver the very best in combat capabilities and top-notch sustainment support — on time and on cost. And in so doing, we will do our important part in helping our nation with the global war on terrorism."

Jansson is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1984 and Averill Park High School in 1980.

From: <Tfhag@aol.com>  
To: <rcastle@localnet.com>  
Sent: Monday, September 01, 2003 4:32 PM  
Subject: (no subject)

Here's a story I wrote on George Quamo last year for the Albany Times Union and the Khe Sanh Marines magazine. Thought you might want it.

## Major George Quamo: An American hero

*"You have never lived until you have almost died. For those who have fought for it, life has a special flavor the protected will never know."*

Special Operations motto

By TOM HAGGERTY

Since Sept 11, Americans have become familiar with the term "Special Forces" and the role they are playing in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It wasn't always that way, as the story of a young man from Averill Park, N.Y., will attest. So secret were the missions of America's Special Forces in Vietnam in the 1960s that even now, decades after the war, many "official" accounts have never been made public. Most were reportedly destroyed even before the war ended in 1975.

The name George Quamo is etched on the Rensselaer County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Troy, N.Y., and of course, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. But few outside of the select group of men who served with him know anything about the extraordinary heroism and leadership Quamo exhibited there.

"I still receive phone calls from guys who served under him," said his brother James Quamo, now of Spencerport, N.Y. "Some of them even cry telling me how they felt about my brother."

Major George Quamo was a highly-decorated Army Green Beret who served in MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group, formerly known as the Special Operations Group) from 1963 until his death in 1968. About 2,000 people served in SOG during the Vietnam War. It was an all-volunteer organization composed of some of the nation's best military personnel — Green Berets, Navy Seals, and Air Force Air Commandos.

SOG took its orders directly from Washington where a small staff operating under the acronym SACSA (Special Assistant to the Chairman for Special Activities) coordinated information and orders from the Joints Chiefs of Staff, White House and Central Intelligence Agency. Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the theater commander in Vietnam, did not have complete authority over SOG, but was kept fully informed of its missions, both before and after, and often sat in debriefings. Covert operations in Southeast Asia were entirely a CIA mission in its early years, but in 1964 it was turned over to the Department of Defense and SOG was established. To maintain secrecy, SOG's budget was hidden in top-secret Navy appropriations.

SOG teams performed some of the most dangerous and heroic missions of the Vietnam War, including cross-border reconnaissance and lightning "Hatchet Force" attacks on North Vietnamese positions along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. SOG teams were also involved in recovering downed U.S. pilots, making prisoner of war rescue attempts and penetrating deep into Laos and Cambodia to lead guerrilla

9/1/2003

3 of 7

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New York





Major George Quamo  
10 June 1940 – 14 April 1968

By all accounts this young “tough as nails” Army Officer from Averill Park, was both handsome and brilliant. Known for being cool under pressure and a square shooter, it didn’t take this soldier long to become one of America’s finest warriors and at 27 years of age, the youngest major in MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group) when he was promoted to that rank on October 6, 1967. He spoke three languages – Laotian, Vietnamese and Thai- and was even an instructor in Vietnamese at the Army language school in Monterey, California.

Who was this American hero who lived among us back in the 1950’s? Well to Yllka, Tefta, Andronika, Marietta and James he was their brother, to others in our community, he was the boy next door, the kid down the street, the Class President or the quarterback on the High School Football Team. “I still receive phone calls from guys who served under him”, said his brother James, now of Spencerport, New York. “Some of them even cry telling me how they felt about him.”

In a newspaper article, written by Tom Haggerty for The Albany Times Union and Khe-Sahn Marines Magazine the following story is related. Master Sergeant Charles “Skip” Minnicks, at 38 was the oldest team leader in SOG when “this fresh-faced captain” took over the reconnaissance team in the fall of 1967. “I was madder than hell when he took over”, said Minnicks, a highly-decorated SOG veteran of four tours in Vietnam. “And I made no bones about it. I didn’t hide my feelings at all. He looked like a kid and I resented him.” He didn’t say anything about it for a few weeks and then one day, we were in the jungle somewhere and he pulled me aside. He said, “We’re both in this for the same reason. We’re both fighting the same enemy. I don’t want to fight you, too. We have to work as a team.” “Well, of course he was right,” Minnicks continued. “And I really felt bad about how I had acted. But I’ll tell you something. I grew to love that man. I would have crawled up inside the barrel of an enemy cannon for him. I mean that. He was one helluva of an officer. I can’t say enough about him. He was just excellent.”



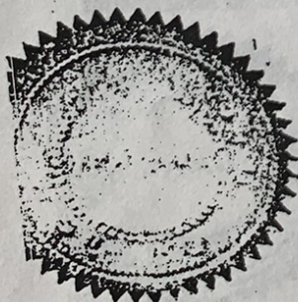


The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, has awarded the Silver Star (First Oak Leaf Cluster) to

MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO  
UNITED STATES ARMY

for gallantry in action:

Major George Quamo, Infantry, distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions from 7 to 17 January 1968 as Commander of a Special Forces task force consisting of three specialized long range patrols on combat operations deep in enemy territory. Throughout this period, Major Quamo skillfully and professionally directed his teams under extremely adverse conditions. Lacking food and water and with enemy units constantly moving throughout the area, his task force remained undetected for six days as he led it in locating and destroying a number of enemy sites. On 13 January, his unit was heavily engaged by a numerically superior hostile force which quickly surrounded its position on three sides. Completely ignoring his welfare, Major Quamo remained with the point element and directed deadly air strikes on the determined attackers. Fighting furiously, he personally engaged enemy soldiers moving to within ten meters of his lines. He remained in his exposed position and continued to repel the encircling enemy until darkness prevented further visual direction of air support. The insurgents continued to press their attack, and he led his force under a curtain of fire through the hostile lines to a more tenable position. Fearlessly refusing to break contact with the enemy, he called in radar controlled ordnance which repelled the insurgents' assaults and forced them to withdraw. Major Quamo's gallantry in action was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.







# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AUTHORIZED BY ACT OF CONGRESS JULY 9, 1918  
HAS AWARDED

## THE SILVER STAR

TO  
CAPTAIN (THEN FIRST LIEUTENANT) GEORGE QUAMO, INFANTRY, UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR  
GALLANTRY IN ACTION

IN VIETNAM ON 27 MARCH 1963

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS 13TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 1974



*Harold G. Callaway*  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

*James H. Brown*  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
HAS AWARDED THE  
**PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION**  
TO THE

STUDIES AND OBSERVATION GROUP,  
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE  
COMMAND, VIETNAM

FOR  
EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN MILITARY  
OPERATIONS AGAINST AN ARMED ENEMY.

24 January 1964 to 30 April 1972

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

THIS 250 DAY OF AUGUST 2003



*James H. Brown*  
RECORDING OF THE ARMY



By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today awarded

THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY)  
FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM  
TO THE

STUDIES AND OBSERVATIONS GROUP.

UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM

The Studies and Observations Group is cited for extraordinary heroism, great combat achievement and unwavering fidelity while executing unheralded top secret missions deep behind enemy lines across Southeast Asia. Incorporating volunteers from all branches of the Armed Forces and especially, U.S. Army Special Forces, Special Operations Group's ground, air and sea units, Military Assistance Command, which contributed immeasurably to the American war effort in Vietnam. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam-Special Operations Group, reconnaissance teams comprised of Special Forces soldiers and indigenous personnel penetrated the enemy's most dangerous redoubts in the jungled Laotian wilderness and the sanctuaries of eastern Cambodia. Pursued by human predators and even bloodhounds, these small teams out-manuevered, out-fought and out-ran their human and electronic sensors, capture valuable enemy facilities, rescue downed pilots, plant wiretaps, mines and electronic sensors, capture valuable all out of proportion to their own losses. When enemy counter-measures became dangerously effective, Special Operations Group operators innovated their own counters, from high altitude parachuting and unusual explosive devices, to tactics as old as the French and Indian War. Fighting alongside their Montagnard, Chinese Nung, Cambodian and Vietnamese allies, Special Forces-led Hatchet Force companies and platoons staged daring raids and captured key enemy facilities in Laos and Cambodia, overran major munitions and supply stockpiles, and blocked enemy highways to choke off the flow of supplies to South Vietnam. Special Operations Group's divers diverted 50,000 soldiers to rear area security duties, far from the battlefield of North Vietnamese Army operations. Supporting these hazardous missions were Special Operations Group's own North Vietnamese Army, South Vietnamese Air Force transport and helicopter squadrons, along with U.S. Air Force Forward Air Controllers and helicopter units of the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. These courageously hopeless often flew through heavy fire to extract Special Operations Group operators from seemingly hopeless situations, saving lives by skillfully taking their own. Special Operations Group's Vietnamese naval surface forces - instructed and advised by U.S. Navy SEALs - boldly raided North Vietnam's coast and won surface victories against the North Vietnamese Navy, while indigenous agent teams penetrated the very heartland of North Vietnam. Despite casualties that sometimes became universal, Special Operations Group's operators never wavered, but fought throughout the war with the same flair, fidelity and intrepidity that distinguished Special Operations Group from its beginning. The Studies and Observations Group's combat prowess, martial skills and unacknowledged sacrifices saved many American lives, and provide a paragon for America's future special operations forces.



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AUTHORIZED BY ACT OF CONGRESS JULY 20, 1942  
HAS AWARDED

THE LEGION OF MERIT

TO

MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO, INFANTRY, UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR

EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS CONDUCT  
IN THE PERFORMANCE OF OUTSTANDING SERVICES

FROM SEPTEMBER 1967 TO APRIL 1968

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS 13TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 1974

*Lyndon B. Johnson*  
LYNDON B. JOHNSON  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General



*Robert B. Callaway*  
ROBERT B. CALLAWAY  
Adjutant General of the Army



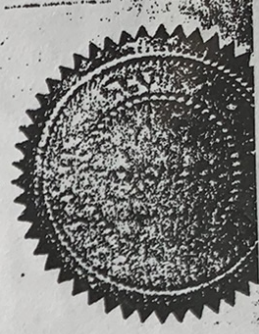
The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 20, 1942, has awarded the Legion of Merit to



MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO  
UNITED STATES ARMY

for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services:

Major George Quamo distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service during the period September 1967 to April 1968 while serving concurrently as Special Projects Officer and Executive Officer, Forward Operational Base 3, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), First Special Forces in the Republic of Vietnam. In his capacity as Special Projects Officer, Major Quamo commanded three long range reconnaissance and combat teams which operated for extended periods of time deep in enemy held territory. As the leader of a unit consisting of untried and undaunted Montagnard tribesmen, he molded the group into a well-trained, finely disciplined and aggressive fighting force. His own demonstrated courage and dauntless leadership inspired his men to optimum effort in inflicting numerous casualties upon the enemy and in destroying large quantities of insurgent materiel. During the evacuation of the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp in January 1968, Major Quamo personally led a helicopter assault in support of the besieged camp. His fortitude and singular tactical ability were instrumental in saving many friendly lives from the hostile onslaught. In his concurrent position as Executive Officer, he coordinated the defensive efforts of the base and other operations involving Marine, Air Force and Navy elements. His ability to work with other services was clearly reflected in the fine rapport that he established with all forces with which the command conducted missions. Displaying unique technical acumen, he created a radio broadcasting system which proved invaluable in the execution of the unit's preventative measures resolved many operational difficulties which immeasurably enhanced the attainment of the objectives of the camp and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.







# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS  
HAS AWARDED

## THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

TO

MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO, INFANTRY, UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR  
EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN ACTION

IN VIETNAM ON 7 FEBRUARY 1968

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS 13TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 1974



VIRGIL L. DOWERS  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

*Herbert R. Callaway*  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

NAME AND TITLE OF ISSUING OFFICER	
GENERAL L. CRENS, LTJG, ARMY	
JOB TITLE	Advisor
DOB	1 Oct 41
HOME ADDRESS	POB 3
NAME	SAAL, HARVEY W
PERM	
PASS NUMBER	96
COMMAND & CONTROL DETACHMENT	

Front of POB's pass for  
Harvey W. Saal who was  
team leader of Brown Team  
B.E.R. This is an emergency  
pass. Actual size of pass is  
3-1/2 x 4-1/2

A man with a  
big, big heart

Loyal Friend

Author of  
SOG History

Dedicated  
Soldier

01 Dec 97  
to  
01 Oct 41

HARVEY SAAL

SPECIAL ISSUE: ARMY ACTIVITIES DURING THE SIEGE

Issue No. 41 (Spring, 1998)

**RED CLAY**  
A Publication of  
Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.





State of New York

Legislative Resolution



Assembly No. 585  
BY: M. of A. Casale

HONORING the memory of Major George Quamo, a highly decorated Army Green Beret, who bravely served with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group

WHEREAS, in the course of American military history, there are certain individuals who are legendary for their unparalleled bravery in tending their might to the defense of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, Abundant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Assembled Body to honor the memory of Major George Quamo, a highly-decorated Army Green Beret, who bravely served with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group; and

WHEREAS, George Quamo was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, on June 20, 1940; his family moved to Avenel Park, New York in 1953 where he attended Avenel Park High School, football, baseball, and basketball teams; and

WHEREAS, He was a popular leader and a gifted athlete, when he graduated in 1958, he joined the United States Army in the fall of that year; and

WHEREAS, George Quamo attended Army Officer Candidate School, the Defense Language Institute Presidio of Monterey, California and the University of Maryland; he spoke three languages, Luchan, Vietnamese and Thai, and was a smart, well-educated soldier; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, George Quamo joined the Army Green Beret unit, called MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group), this group, once known as the Special Forces Unit, took their orders directly from Washington, D.C. and all the missions were top secret; and

WHEREAS, On October 8, 1967, he was promoted to Major, the youngest Major in MACV-SOG; he quickly earned the respect of the men he served with and his superior officers; and

WHEREAS, Major Quamo's finest moment came at Lang Vei when he led a heroic rescue of the Special Forces unit, that was overrun by a North Vietnamese tank attack, on February 7, 1968; the outpost, located some nine miles from Khe Sanh, came under a surprise attack, although SOG observers had been warning of tank tracks and NVA troop movement for several days; and

WHEREAS, Major Quamo was in Khe Sanh when he heard accounts of the battle over the radio; he immediately went to the commander of the 21st Marines, who had been under siege themselves at Khe Sanh, and asked for help to relieve the Special Forces at Lang Vei; the commander denied the request, saying it would cost too many American lives and the 3rd Marine Division commander also recommended that Lang Vei should be abandoned; and

WHEREAS, Major George Quamo gathered a few dozen Special Forces commando volunteers from the MACV-SOG base at Khe Sanh (FOB #3) and led a heroic retooling mission into Lang Vei; his arrival enabled the Lang Vei defenders to evacuate the area;



## RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE



ation Number P/486/04

ored by Legislators Reid, Kelleher, VanDeusen, Mirch, Bauer, Brearton, Brownell, Durkee, Herrington, McHugh,  
ury, Stammel, Swartz, Walsh, Wright

### RESOLUTION NAMING THE RENSSELAER COUNTY SHERIFF'S SUBSTATION IN SAND LAKE, NEW YORK IN HONOR OF MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO

WHEREAS, The Rensselaer County Legislature takes great pride and pleasure in recognizing  
ns who distinguish themselves through deed, courage, commitment and talent; and

WHEREAS, Rensselaer County owes a great debt to the men and women of our loyal Arm  
es who so bravely fought to preserve our American heritage; and

WHEREAS, We must never forget our veterans whose determined spirit led us to victory  
us freedom, peace and unity; and

WHEREAS, It is consistent with the duty of this Legislative Body to recognize the contributi  
e citizens of our county and on behalf of the residents of Rensselaer County, we remember w  
est respect and admiration the life and career of Major George Quamo, of the United States Arm  
ng served his country with pride and distinction during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, It is important that we regard Major George Quamo as an American Hero,  
e citizen willingly left the safety of his home to defend our nation and lost his life embarking upon  
erous mission on behalf of freedom; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That it is both an honor and most fitting for the members of this Legislative Body  
nd sincere commendation and gratitude by memorializing the life and legend of Major Quamo; a  
further

RESOLVED That the Rensselaer County Legislature hereby designates and names

Major George Quamo  
20 June 1940 – 14 April 1968

By all accounts this young "tough as nails" Army Officer from Averill Park, was both handsome and brilliant. Known for being cool under pressure and a square shooter, it didn't take this soldier long to become one of America's finest warriors and at 27 years of age, the youngest major in MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group) when he was promoted to that rank on October 6, 1967. He spoke three languages – Lao-tian, Vietnamese and Thai- and was even an instructor in Vietnamese at the Army language school in Monterey, California.

Who was this American hero who lived among us back in the 1950's? Well to Yilka, Tefta, Andronika, Marietta and James he was their brother, to others in our Sand Lake community, he was the boy next door, the kid down the street, the Class President or the quarterback of the Averill Park High School Football Team. "I still receive phone calls from guys who served under him", said his brother James, now of Spencerport, New York. "Some of them even cry telling me how they felt about him."

In a newspaper article, written by Tom Haggerty for The Albany Times Union and Khe-Sahn Marines Magazine the following story is related. Master Sergeant Charles "Skip" Minnicks, at 38 was the oldest team leader in SOG when "this fresh-faced captain" took over the reconnaissance team in the fall of 1967. "I was madder than hell when he took over", said Minnicks, a highly-decorated SOG veteran of four tours in Vietnam. "And I made no bones about it. I didn't hide my feelings at all. He looked like a kid and I resented him." He didn't say anything about it for a few weeks and then one day, we were in the jungle somewhere and he pulled me aside. He said, "We're both in this for the same reason. We're both fighting the same enemy. I don't want to fight you, too. We have to work as a team." "Well, of course he was right," Minnicks continued. "And I really felt bad about how I had acted. But I'll tell you something. I grew to love that man. I would have crawled up inside the barrel of an enemy cannon for him. I mean that. He was one helluva of an officer. I can't say enough about him. He was just excellent."

"In another incident up on Co Roc Mountain, in an area swarming with North Vietnamese Regulars", Minnicks recalled. "He had all four teams up there. There were patrols chasing us all over the place. He led us up a hill and then stood up and defied them to come get us. He was one tough guy".

But again according to Tom Haggerty's article, Major George Quamo's finest moment came at Lang Vei, (a Special Forces camp in the northwestern corner of South Vietnam along Route 9, a mile and a half from the Lao-tian border). Quamo was in Khe Sanh when he heard (over the radio) accounts of the battle raging at Lang Vei. To make a long story short, he gathered a few dozen Special Forces commando volunteers from

Wilson Jones  
CENTURY with Durlack "Metal

WY/18 HICK  
GALILEO  
WY/18 HICK  
GALILEO



the MACV-SOG base at Khe Sanh (FOB #3) and then led an heroic rescue mission into the Special Forces camp. His arrival in Lang Vei enabled its (14 surviving) defenders to evacuate the area, many by Marine helicopter in the late afternoon. Reflecting back, Master Sergeant Minnicks stated, "I really believe he should have been awarded the Medal of Honor for getting those guys out of Lang Vei. "He saved their lives." Already awarded two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star for bravery on previous missions, Quamo would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for "exposing himself to a tremendous volume of fire" at Lang Vei. "He was the last man to leave the landing zone" the DSC citation reads. "Major Quamo's intense dedication to his men, his coolness in battle and his extraordinary courage are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army."

A month and a half later, on April 14, 1968 Quamo disappeared in an aircraft enroute to deliver some top-secret papers to Danang. An extensive search was undertaken as soon as Quamo's plane was reported missing, including a naval search. Since Danang was near the sea, it was thought the plane might have drifted out to sea and crashed. Six years later, on June 26, 1974, Vietnamese woodcutters discovered the wreckage in a dense jungle area and the remains of George Quamo were flown back to the United States, and he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on October 21, 1974, as his family and several Army officers and soldiers looked on. There were no bands, no generals and no parades. He died at 27, a very special soldier: truly an American hero.

#### Grace

From: "Grace" <gbriscoe@nycap.rr.com>  
To: "jim quamo" <qquamo@rochester.rr.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2004 4:09 PM  
Subject: Fw: Quamo Family Background

Hello again Jim. Please review this update. Thanks, Grace

#### Original Message

From: Grace  
To: jim quamo  
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2004 7:29 AM  
Subject: Quamo Family Background

Hi Jim

This is what I put together from our conversation the other night. Please look it over to be sure it's accurate. It's to be more human interest than anything else, and will probably go to the Sand Lake Advertiser and the Town Historian for the local archives along with the information about George's actual military record. I understand from Rich that the Albany Times Union will be calling you, and doing an article. That's great news! I am going out of town for 2 weeks on Sat. so please get any info back to me asap. I want to finish this before I go away.  
Thanks so much,  
Grace

Alexander Quamo owned a store in Albania. In the 1920's, like many immigrants to the U.S., he left his wife and young daughter behind while he and his two brothers came here; "the land where you could pick gold off a tree", to make their fortunes. His mother travelled with them to keep house for her boys, and also to keep an eye on them!

Alexander went back to Albania briefly, but it was ten years before he had saved enough money to send for his wife and daughter. They moved to the United States in 1935, in time to escape the Communist take-over of their native country. Alexander, his wife Kalroi, and daughter Ylika settled in Lynn, Massachusetts where he got a factory job with General Electric. During the next ten years the Quamo's had five more children: Tefta, Andronika (Donika), George, James (Jim) and Marietta.

Mr. Quamo's dream was that all his children become college graduates. To that end, he worked hard and the family lived frugally. He was a loving, but very strict father, and the undisputed head of the household. When George was 11 and Jim 9, they went around to local establishments after dinner and sold evening newspapers. Mrs. Quamo let them do that so they had spending money like other children, with one condition; they were to be back in the house before their father returned from work! In fact, she knew her husband wanted the boys to have the money but couldn't provide it himself; so, the charade continued.

Alexander Quamo died unexpectedly in September 1952. By that time Ylika had graduated from college, married, and was a teacher at Russell Sage College in Troy, N.Y. Adjusting to being a widow must have been especially hard for Kalroi Quamo. She had five children at home to raise alone, and, although she spoke five or six languages, English was not one of them.

In 1953 Ylika and her husband Dan Runkle, a teacher at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, were living in a large house on Orient Avenue in Averill Park, N.Y. Mrs. Quamo, Tefta, Donika, George, Jim and Marietta went to live there. The children were good students, popular, and participated in extra-curricular activities at school. Most of them fulfilled their father's dream and graduated from college.

4/23/04



George was a gifted athlete and served as Captain of the Football Team and Class President one year. He was intense, focused, fair-minded and highly competitive. Jim said that as George grew older he liked a good time, and was a very protective big brother. George's advice to his little brother was "Don't do as I do, do as I say....Hit the books and do well."

George joined the military immediately after graduating from Averill Park High School in 1958, took courses at the University of Maryland, and also completed Officer's Candidate School. His brilliance and tenacity caused him to rise to the top quickly. His heroism is well documented. He is one of the most highly decorated veterans in New York State. Not only was he a "man's man", he became a man among men. Many published testimonials from those who served in the Green Berets with Major George Quamo speak of his singular courage, charismatic personality and leadership qualities.

He wasn't one of the lucky ones who was able to come home to Sand Lake after the Viet Nam War, and raise a family of his own here. He never realized goal of completing his college education. Major George Quamo gave his life for his country on April 14, 1968. He was only 27 years old.

4/23/04

RESOLUTION # 80-04  
*A Day in Honor of Major George Quamo*

Councilwoman Fasoldt moved and Councilman Glasser seconded the following resolution:

*WHEREAS* George Quamo, born June 20, 1940 in Lynn, Mass., moved to Averill Park in 1953 and resided at 25 Orient Avenue in Averill Park; and

*WHEREAS* George Quamo was class president, quarterback and captain of the football team during his junior year at Averill Park Central High School in 1957; and

*WHEREAS* George Quamo joined the United States Army after graduating from high school in October of 1958; and

*WHEREAS* George Quamo joined the Special Forces, Army Green Beret, and was one of about two thousand Green Berets, Navy Seals and Air Force Commandos to join the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG) in 1963, an elite group involved in covert operations; and, upon being promoted to the rank of Major on October 6, 1967, was the youngest Major ever appointed to the SOG; and

*WHEREAS* Major George Quamo, recruiting Special Forces and tribal volunteers, led a rescue of a Special Forces unit that was overrun at Lang Vei by North Vietnamese on February 7, 1968, saving the lives of 14 Special Forces soldiers; and

*WHEREAS* Major George Quamo was one of the most highly decorated soldiers in the Vietnam Conflict and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, the Bronze Star with "V" device, the Purple Heart, the Legion of Merit, and citations from South Vietnamese Government; and

*WHEREAS* Major George Quamo served until his death in action on April 14, 1968; and

*WHEREAS* Major George Quamo's remains are interred in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.; and

*WHEREAS* Major George Quamo served unselfishly from 1958 to 1968, and

*WHEREAS* the innumerable contributions and sacrifices of Major George Quamo can never be fully or sufficiently recognized, and

*WHEREAS* the Town of Sand Lake wishes to honor its warrior from Averill Park, Major George Quamo, on this Memorial Day 2004, now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Board of the Town of Sand Lake hereby honors Major George Quamo by dedicating this Memorial Day, May 31, 2004, to his memory, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a suitable plaque in honor of Major George Quamo be purchased and displayed in the Town Hall.

ADOPTED = AYES 4 NAYS 0





## LOCAL VIETNAM HERO'S STORY CONTINUES TO BE TOLD

Many books and articles have been published with amazing stories of the Vietnam War; stories of what our soldiers endured in the jungles of Vietnam. Many of these writings include the life and legend of our own hero from Sand Lake, Major George Quamo.

If you are interested in reading some of these publications, contact your local library for availability. We suggest the following:

1. Night Of The Silver Star --- by William R. Phillips
2. Valley Of Decision (Siege of Khe Sanh)--- by John Prados & Ray Stubbe
3. Tanks In The Wire--- by David Stockwell
4. Red Clay Issue #41 (Spring of 1998) published by Khe Sanh Veterans Inc
5. Battalion Of Kings published late summer 2005
6. SOG; The Secret Wars Of America's Commandos In Vietnam  
--- by John L. Plaster
7. SOG; A Photo History Of The Secret Wars--- by John L. Plaster

We can only say God bless each and everyone of you who served your country honorably during this war and all wars. You have protected our freedoms and make us sincerely proud to be Americans!

The Committee To Honor Major

Quamo

## Friends seeking Medal of Honor for fallen soldier

Quamo killed in 1968 while serving in Vietnam War

*Record 6/21/05*

By James Allen  
The Record

AVERRILL PARK — As Rich Castle read an address regarding his friend George Quamo Monday evening at the Lakeview Inn, he had to stop before becoming overcome by emotion.

Even though Quamo died in 1968, his classmates and friends still get choked up talking about the 1958 graduate of Averill Park High School.

The state declared June 20, 2005, as Maj. George Quamo Day. State Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno and Assemblyman Pat Casale read proclamations Monday to mark the event.

Quamo, a member of an elite Special Forces unit, died on April 14, 1968, during a fight in DaNang. His remains were not discovered until six years later, and he was buried on Oct. 21, 1974, in Arlington National Cemetery.

Friends of George Quamo, a group spearheaded by the efforts of Castle and Fred Shoemaker, have worked to get the military accomplishments of Quamo recognized. Medals he received include the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, a Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and a Presidential Unit Citation.

"Each little thing we accomplish we feel adds to George's legacy," Castle said. "As I've said, there is but one hero in this story and it George Quamo. We just tell his story. It is hard for people to understand all the things he accomplished because they didn't know George. Our efforts are blossoming."

Jim Quamo, George's younger brother and also a graduate of Averill, was in attendance Monday. He praised the efforts of men like Castle and Shoemaker.

"What they've done is truly amazing," Jim Quamo said. "Everything George did was classified, so for him to be getting recognition is gratifying. George was always very humble. He never wanted to stick his chest out."

At the time of his death, Quamo was 27 and the youngest major in Mac V Sog (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observation Group) and the second youngest in the Army.

A captain of the football, basketball and baseball teams at Averill Park, Quamo joined the army after graduation. In 1963, he joined Mac V Sog.

See QUAMO, B3 ▶

▶ Continued from B1

Dave Barnum, also a Vietnam veteran, told the gathering of Quamo's greatest military accomplishments. "It was an honor and a privilege to research George," he said.

Quamo's finest moment came

during a rescue at Lang Vei on Feb. 7, 1968, when Quamo saved 14 Special Forces soldiers from certain death.

Many who served with and under Quamo in Vietnam believe he deserves the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions at Leng Vei — a movement Castle, Shoemaker

and others are pushing forward with the help of Bruno and U.S. Rep. John Sweeney.

The Medal of Honor is something we feel is possible, given all the medals George earned including the Distinguished Service Cross," Castle said. "His story is just now becoming known."

## NYS SENATE ANNOUNCES MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO DAY

The New York State Senate has proclaimed June 20, 2005 as Major George Quamo Day. The day coincides with George's birthday.

Major Quamo's combat valor during the Viet Nam War was legendary. It could not be publicly recognized when he lost his life because the missions were top secret. He earned The Distinguished Service Cross, 2 Silver Stars, The Legion of Merit, a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart and several Presidential Unit Citations. His picture and medals are on display at the Sand Lake town hall. He graduated from A.P.S. in 1958 and was Captain of the Football Team and Class President.

The Committee to Honor Major Quamo invites George's former classmates and friends to attend a celebration dinner in his honor on June 20. Special guests will include George's brother and sister-in-law, Jim and Pam Quamo of Spencerport, NY. The event will be held at Lakeview in Averill Park, starting at 5:30pm with a cash bar "meet and greet." A family-style roast beef dinner will be served at 6:30pm. Reservations are \$17.50 per person and include tax and tip. To be included please contact Mary Pat Hart at 283-2705, or mail your payment to her at PO Box 214, West Sand Lake, NY 12196. The cut-off date for reservations is June 12.

Gather any old pictures you might have, your tales of George and his exploits (of which there were many), and share them with the rest of his relatives, classmates and friends on June 20. Ask yourself how many times in your life you have been able to say that you personally knew a true hero! Come ready to celebrate him and to have a great time in honor of a great guy!



J.S. Carras/The Record

Rich Castle of Waterford, Jim Quamo of Spencerport (brother of the late Maj. George Quamo) and Fred Shoemaker of West Sand Lake hold medals awarded to the late Maj. Quamo (shown in portrait at right) Monday at the Lakeview on Crystal Lake in Averill Park.



# Veterans honored at VFW post ceremony

TU 5/15/05

## SAND LAKE PARADE

The Town of Sand Lake's annual Memorial Day Parade will be held on Monday, May 30, in Averill Park, sponsored by the Sgt. Walter A. Adams Post 1021 of the American Legion.

The parade will assemble at Crystal Lake Park, Averill Park, at 9:00 AM and will step off at 10:00 AM. The parade will proceed east through the hamlet of Averill Park, along Route 43 to the Sand Lake Elementary School where a service will be conducted at the memorial monument in front of the school. After the service, the public is invited to the Sgt. Walter A. Adams Post where the post members will serve refreshments.

Your organization is cordially invited to participate in the parade. Please RSVP by calling one of the following individuals at the telephone number indicated so that a line of march may be established: Maria Gallerie, Post Commander, 674-2748; Charles J. Wierger, 1st Vice Commander, 674-2804 or 674-5992; Sidney Gallant, Finance Officer, 674-3064. Your participation is needed to make this parade the success that we hope that it will be.

Adv 5/27/05 5/20



JAMES GOOLSBY/TIMES UNION

COUNTY EXECUTIVE Kathleen Jimino pins a medal on Frederick Kainer of Troy, above, for his service in World War II during a ceremony at the Sullivan-Jones VFW Post in Poestenkill. Below, Mike Stahlman and Dale Loucks, members of the Lt. Perry William VFW Post in Sand Lake serve in the color guard for the occasion.



# They're acting to help the veterans park

TU 1/13/05 Vets

SAND LAKE — Circle Theatre Players' performance of "Grace & Glorie" at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, will benefit the Sand Lake Veterans Memorial Park.

Pfc. D. Richard Ashdown, stationed with the Army at Fort Riley, Kansas, leaves for Iraq at the end of January and his grandmother, CarolLynn Langley, is director of the production. Langley helped organize a benefit performance for the memorial park.

Tickets are \$12 and reservations can be made by calling 674-2007 or online at <http://www.ticketleap.com>.

The cafe, gallery and gift shop will be open one hour prior to curtain.

The Sand Lake Center for the Arts is located at 2880 Route 43, one-half mile east of the blinking light in Averill Park.

For more information on the theatrical benefit performance, contact Langley at 283-4769. For news on the Memorial Park, contact committee member Bill Glasser at 674-3965 or Chairman Bill Hoffay at 674-5187.



CIRCLE THEATRE PLAYERS

THE CIRCLE THEATRE PLAYERS and members of the Sand Lake Veterans Memorial Park committee are coordinating a benefit performance of the theater group's next play. From left are Bill Glasser of Averill Park, Pfc. D. Richard Ashdown and CarolLynn Langley, both of East Poestenkill, and Bill Hoffay of Averill Park.



# 9/10/04 LOCAL HERO TO BE HONORED IN CITY WHERE BORN

Major Quamo was a member of the Special Forces Army Green Beret. Plans are being made in the city of Lynn, MA where a local Hero, Major George Quamo, was born in 1940. Major Quamo lost his life during the Vietnam conflict in Vietnam in 1968. The Major's remains were not found until 6 yrs later. His remains were buried in Arlington Cemetery in 1974. Major Quamo was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) two Silver Star, Legion of Merit Award, bronze star, two army accommodation medals, Purple Heart and many, many more. Major Quamo Graduated from The Averill Park Central High School in 1958. While in School, Major Quamo was president of his class, captain of the football team and a very gifted athlete in all sports. Major resided at 25 Orient Ave. in Averill Park. There are many plans in the near future to see that this highly decorated soldier gets the Honor that he truly deserves. We are very pleased that Mayor Clancy and the veterans of Lynn, MA are working very hard to honor Major Quamo in their city and are very pleased at the response we received from the people in Lynn, MA.  
~E. Rich Castle, Committee to Honor Major Quamo

## POKER TOURNAMENT A HUGE SUCCESS

Through the extreme hard work of Tom Little from Postenkill, John Whalen and Mark Abele, well over \$5,000.00 was raised for the Town of Sand Lake Veterans Memorial Park. The Tournament packed the Harvest House and everyone had a great time, including the eleven winners that evening! Tom and his crew did a great job, from getting the food donated and setting up all the tables to making all of the aspects of this event run smoothly. The Sand Lake Veterans Memorial Park Committee cannot thank everyone enough who helped make the night as successful as it was. Whether you donated the food, the tables, or helped wait on the players, all of your efforts are greatly appreciated. Once again, Tom, John, Mark and all the others who helped, Thank You!  
#du 12/10/04

# 9/10/04 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK FUNDRAISER

Come and enjoy the fun! The Veterans are looking for donations to help with the Veterans Memorial Park. There is going to be a 4 person scramble at Burden Lake Country Club at 9am, Monday, September 13th, (10am shotgun start) and all donations gathered will be going towards the park. We are asking for companies to help the Veterans by sponsoring signs that will be on the tee boxes for all 18 holes, and/or provide a Raffle Prize. Registration is \$80 per person. This includes domestic turn (hot dog/burger, salad, chips), and a BBQ dinner at finish (chicken, ribs, sausage, pasta, salad, etc.). Make checks payable to: Sand Lake Memorial Park, 171 Blittig Road, Averill Park, NY 12018. For more information, please contact Jack Welcome at 424-4594, or Bill Hoffay at 674-5187.  
#du 11/19/04

## HONORABLE DAY IN THE TOWN OF SAND LAKE



E. Rich Castle, committee person, family of Major Quamo, and committee to honor Major George Quamo. On a day that we salute all veterans, a local Hero, Major George Quamo, was given a special honor by the Renss. County County Legislators, and Sheriff Jack Mahar. The Renss. County sheriff sub-Station was dedicated in honor of our fallen hero to many friends, classmates, residents, family and County Govt. officials attending. A Resolution was read and presented to the Quamo Family and the Sign was unveiled naming the Sub-Station "Major George Quamo Sub-Station". We are all ever so grateful for this wonderful honor given to our Hero. With the help of so many people such as Corporal William Dickerson Post 8758, Lt. Perry Williams Post 3025, Robert Reider, Renss. County Veterans Affairs, for playing Taps, Margaret Van Deusen, for the Pledge of Allegiance, Dan McIntyre, of the Methodist Church for leading us in Prayer, to Kathleen Jimino (County Executive), Neil J. Kelleher (County Chairman) Thomas Walsh (County Legislator), and our own Martin Reid, Sheriff Jack Mahar. If we have forgotten anyone, please accept our apologies. Thank You!  
#du 11/19/04

## 9/10/04 A DAY IN HONOR OF OUR HOMETOWN HERO!

A Joint resolution was passed in the New York State Assembly and the New York State Senate declaring June 20th, 2005 Major George Quamo Day across New York State. Major George Quamo resided at 25 Orient Ave in the village of Averill Park from 1953 until his death in 1968. He attended Averill Park Central High School, graduating in 1958. While in School, Major Quamo was president of his class, quarterback of the football team, Captain of the football, baseball, and basketball team and active in all school activities. He joined the military in 1958 after graduation. In 1963, he joined the Army Green Beret Special Forces Unit (MACVSOG). On October 6th, 1967, he was promoted to Major [the youngest Major in MACVSOG]. Major George Quamo was killed in action on April 14th, 1968. His remains were not discovered until June 26th, 1974. He was buried in Arlington Cemetery in Washington, D.C. on October 21st, 1974. With family, a few friends, and a few soldiers, but sadly no bands, no parades, no generals. Major Quamo was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Two Silver Stars, Legion of Merit Award, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citations and many, many more. There are many books with inserts about the Major such as "Night of the Silver Star", "Valley of Decision Seigh of Khe Sanh", "Tanks in the Wire", and "Red Clay", issue no. 41 Spring 1998. We are so grateful to Assembly Pat Casale and to Senator Joe Bruno and to the State of New York for this special day in honor of our fallen hero, Major George Quamo. He Will Not Be Forgotten!  
~E. Rich Castle

SHERIFF'S SUBSTATION TO BE RENAMED  
FOR MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO  
The Rensselaer County Sheriff's Office's Sand Lake substation was dedicated Thursday, November 11th, in memory of Maj. George Quamo. A member of the late U.S. Army Green Berets, Major Quamo died in action in 1968, while transporting top secret documents. Major Quamo received a number of medals and awards for his service, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, the Purple Heart, and many others. Major Quamo was distinguished before joining the military. He was elected class president, participated in the 2004 Sand Lake Memorial Day Parade, and was captain of the football team. The substation was dedicated in honor of Major Quamo.  
#du 11/17/04

# State of New York Legislative Resolution



Senate No. 315

BY: Senator Bruno

MEMORIALIZING Governor George E. Pataki to declare June 20, 2005, as Major George Quamo Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, in the course of American military history, there are certain individuals who are legendary for their unparalleled bravery in lending their might to the defense of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor George E. Pataki to declare June 20, 2005, as Major George Quamo Day in the State of New York, a highly-decorated Army Green Beret, who bravely served with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group; and

WHEREAS, George Quamo was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, on June 20, 1940; his family moved to Averill Park, New York in 1953 where he attended Averill Park High School, football, baseball and basketball teams; and

WHEREAS, He was a popular leader and a gifted athlete; after graduating in 1958, he



[illegible]

Adm 971104  
LOCAL HERO TO BE  
HONORED IN CITY  
WHERE BORN  
Major Quemo was a member  
of the  
Adm 971104  
VETERANS  
MEMORIAL PARK  
FUNDRAISER  
7/10/74  
HONORABLE DAY IN THE  
TOWN OF SAND LAKE  
Vets





The 75th Anniversary Celebration November snowdays  
The 75th Anniversary Celebration in the main lobby at Averett Park High  
bulletin board displays in the main lobby at Averett Park High  
School feature former students who served in the armed forces  
• What better time to recognize the heroism of US Army Green  
Beret Major George Quamo? His name is etched on Vietnam  
Veteran's Memorials in Washington DC and in Troy, but few  
local people realize the extraordinary bravery and leadership  
he exhibited in Vietnam.

George was captain of the Averill Park football team and freshman class president. After graduating in 1958, he joined the Army, attended Officer's Candidate School, and rose through the ranks to become legendary among those he served with.

Major Quamo was part of the Special Operations Group (SOG), an all-volunteer group of 2000 Army Green Berets, Navy Seals, and Air Force Air Commandos. His unit was awarded The Presidential Unit Citation and received 10 of 17 Medals of Honor for special forces in Vietnam.

Honor given to special forces in Vietnam. SGO orders included cross-border reconnaissance and lightning strikes the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Laos and Cambodia. Major Quamo commanded three reconnaissance teams, comprised of American and guerrilla soldiers. One of George's jobs was to go behind enemy lines to enlist and train guerrilla soldiers. His ability to speak Vietnamese, Laotian, and Thai, his motivational skills and the fact that he never asked anyone to do something he wouldn't do himself earned the respect of the men he served with, and the native tribesmen.

George Quamo earned the Distinguished Service Cross when he personally commandeered a Marine helicopter, enlisted 34 volunteers to rescue another SOG team trapped behind enemy lines at Lang Vei. He also received 2 Silver and 1 Bronze Star for bravery in Vietnam.

The Quamos moved to Avenir Park in 1953 after George's father died. His sister Yika was teaching at Russell Sage College at the time. George and his siblings Tefta, Donika

College at the time. George and Marietta and Jim attended school here. Jim Quamo remembers asking George to be best man at his April 13, 1968 wedding. George declined because of a top secret assignment he had to go on. On April 14th, the day after Jim's marriage, Major George Quamo was killed when his plane went down enroute to Da Nang. George Quamo was 27 years old. He was listed as missing in action until the wreckage was discovered six years later. His remains are buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

The public is invited to visit the main lobby showcase and bulletin board displays at the Averett Park High School, Monday to Friday, from 3-5pm, or whenever the building is open. Future topics for monthly displays include Holiday Events, The Art Generations of Alumnae Within Families, Women's Rights Proms and the 75th Anniversary Gala. *Adv. 11/14/03*

Members of the Quamo family, school mates and former comrades from the Special Forces, US Army, will be in attendance.

The dedication will take place on Saturday, April 14, at 10:30am in the gymnasium of the Sand Lake Elementary School, which was the high school at the time of Major Quamo's attendance. The elementary school is located at 2910 NY Route 43 in Averill Park. Major Quamo was killed in a helicopter crash outside of Laos on April 14, 1968.

But again according to Tom Haggerty's article, Major George Quamo's finest moment came at Lang Vei, (a Special Forces camp in the northwestern corner of South Vietnam along Route 9, a mile and a half from the Laotian border). Quamo was in Khe Sanh when he heard (over the radio) accounts of the battle raging at Lang Vei. To make a long story short, he gathered a few dozen Special Forces commando volunteers from the MACV-SOG base at Khe Sanh (FOB #3) and then led an heroic rescue mission into the Special Forces camp. His arrival in Lang Vei enabled its (14 surviving) defenders to evacuate the area, many by Marine helicopter in the late afternoon. Reflecting back, Master Sergeant Minniks stated, "I really believe he should have been awarded the Medal of Honor for getting those guys out of Lang Vei. "He saved their lives." Already awarded two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star for bravery on previous missions, Quamo would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for "exposing himself to a tremendous volume of fire" at Lang Vei. "He was the last man to leave the landing zone" the DSC citation reads. "Major Quamo's intense dedication to his men, his coolness in battle and his extraordinary courage are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army."

A month and a half later, on April 14, 1968 Quamo disappeared in an aircraft enroute to deliver some top-secret papers to Danang. An extensive search was undertaken as soon as Quamo's plane was reported missing, including a naval search. Since Danang was near the sea, it was thought the plane might have drifted out to sea and crashed. Six years later, on June 26, 1974, Vietnamese woodcutters discovered the wreckage in a dense jungle area and the remains of George Quamo were flown back to the United States and he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on October 21, 1974, as his family and several Army officers and soldiers looked on. There were no bands, no generals and no parades. He died at 27, a very special soldier: truly an American hero.

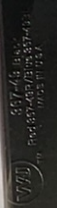
### Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Washington D.C.

GEORGE QUAMOC

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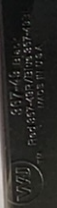
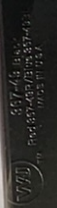




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Left to Right: Jim Davey w/Troy Fire T-shirt, noted artist Eileen Barry w/white shirt, David Barnum w/back to camera and John W. Mullen w/camera in hand.

This photo was taken (in the Fall of 1991) at the foundry in Bridgeport, CT. and donated to the Town of Sand Lake (by John W. Mullen) in honor of Major George Quamo.

RENSSELAER TO

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2004

ALBANY, NEW YORK

TIMES UNION

# DEDICATION

## THE MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO SUBSTATION



## An honor for a veteran

The Sand Lake Sheriff's Substation was renamed on Veterans Day in memory of Maj. George Quamo. Sand Lake native Quamo was a highly decorated Army Green Beret officer who served in the Vietnam War from 1963 until his disappearance in action there in April 1968. Unveiling the sign are, from left above, his brother, James, his sister, Donika Quamo-Steitz, and Martin T. Reid, vice chairman of the County Legislature. At left, Robert Reiter, plays "Taps" during the ceremony.

PHOTOS BY LUANNE M. FERRIS  
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*Old comrades recall  
George Quamo as a  
natural combat leader*

By TOM HAGGERTY

Special to the Times Union

*You have never lived until you  
have almost died. For those who  
have fought for it, life has a  
special flavor the protected will  
never know.*

—Special Ops motto

Since Sept. 11, Americans have become familiar with the term *special forces* and the role they are playing in Afghanistan.

It wasn't always that way, as the story of a young man from Averill Park will attest.

So secret were the missions of America's special forces in Vietnam in the 1960s that even now, decades after the war, many "official" accounts have never been made public. Most reportedly were destroyed even before the war ended in 1975.

The name George Quamo is etched on the Rensselaer County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Troy, and of course, the Vietnam

Veterans Memorial in Washington.

But few outside of the select group of men who served with him know about the extraordinary heroism and leadership Quamo exhibited there.

"I still receive phone calls from guys who served under him," said his brother James Quamo, now of Spencerport, Monroe County. "Some of them even cry telling me how they felt about my brother."

Maj. George Quamo was a highly decorated Army Green Beret officer who served in MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group, formerly known as the Special Operations Group) from 1963 until his death in April 1968. About 2,000 people served in SOG during the Vietnam War. It was an all-volunteer organization composed of Green Berets, Navy Seals and Air Force Air Commandos.

SOG took its orders directly from Washington. Its teams performed some of the most dangerous and heroic missions of the Vietnam War, including cross-border

reconnaissance and lightning "Hatchet Force" attacks on North Vietnamese positions along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in North Vietnam, and in Cambodia and Laos. Of the 17 Medals of Honor awarded to special forces troops in Vietnam, SOG troops received 10.

In the years George Quamo served in SOG, he would establish himself as one of the Army's most highly respected field commanders, according to comments by his superiors. Young, handsome and brilliant — he spoke three foreign languages: Laotian, Vietnamese and Thai — the 5-foot-10, 180-pound Quamo was fearless and "tough as nails."

Col. David C. "Bulldog" Smith was one of Quamo's last commanders in Vietnam.

"George was one of the finest soldiers I ever served with," said Smith, a former Army Ranger during the Korean War who served two different tours with Quamo. "He was considered the Lawrence of Arabia of Vietnam. Everyone respected him. The men he served with, the Laotians and the Montagnards. He never asked anyone to do something he couldn't or wouldn't do himself."

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