



# VETERANS

★★★ HALL OF FAME ★★★

## FRANK ROMEO

Frank Romeo graduated from Bay Shore High School in 1967, at the height of the ground fighting during the Vietnam War. With the likelihood of a draft, he joined the military to fight for his country.

Mr. Romeo was assigned to the 199<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade, fighting in heavy jungle enemy held territory. While on a covert mission into Cambodia, he was separated from his unit and engaged in battle alone, sustaining several gunshot wounds. He spent the next year in recovery and began showing signs of what would later be known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

Battling his condition for the next two decades, Mr. Romeo discovered art as a means of dealing with trauma. He searched for other veterans with PTSD who also used art as a means of healing, and organized an impressive compilation. Mr. Romeo's artwork hangs in the "National Veterans Art Museum" as part of a permanent collection.

Mr. Romeo developed "THE ART OF WAR" educational programs for students as a living history experience, combining hands-on art exhibits, coupled with PTSD and trauma-focused workshops and lectures. For the next 30 years, "THE ART OF WAR" travelled throughout the country.

Mr. Romeo travelled back to Southeast Asia in his senior years, and once again lived in the jungles. He met the former enemy and studied PTSD from their perspective, writing an online daily blog while students in America followed him as a lesson plan. He held lesson plans from former battle zones, via Skype, into the classrooms of America in real time.

In 2019, at age 70, Mr. Romeo walked 750 miles across New York State while living in veterans homeless shelters and eating in soup kitchens, documenting the lives of homeless veterans suffering with PTSD. His findings are in an educational documentary film.

"The Experience of the American Soldier" is based on Mr. Romeo's teachings and was piloted by Bay Shore School District to all 11<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies, American History, and Government classes in 2018. Incorporating today's veterans into the program, students will not only study the war, a battle, or policy, but they will study the soldier and the veteran throughout history.

In 2019, he received the New York State Senate Liberty Award for his 30 years of PTSD education programs. Mr. Romeo continues to lead the way in reality based education programs touching social issues, veterans, and the hearts and minds of the American people.



FRANK ROMEO WAS SELECTED AS  
A 2020 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BY  
SENATOR PHIL BOYLE.

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