



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Scranton, Lackawanna County Co-Sponsoring Traveling Veterans' Tribute in October

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall replica and 'Cost of Freedom' tribute planned for Nay Aug Park

SCRANTON, PA. – This fall, the City of Scranton will co-sponsor a traveling exhibit honoring the veterans of the Vietnam War and the sacrifice of service members from World War I through Operation Enduring Freedom. The event is planned for Nay Aug Park, 500 Arthur Ave., Scranton, and will include an 80 percent replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. The tributes are presented in partnership with Lackawanna County.

Through America's Freedom Tribute (AFT), Scranton will host the Traveling Vietnam Wall and a unique tribute known as the Cost of Freedom from Friday to Sunday, Oct. 2-4, 2026, in the City's most celebrated park.

"Scranton and Northeastern Pennsylvania have an incredible record of service to our country, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the servicemembers who have made the ultimate sacrifice," Scranton Mayor Paige G. Cagnetti said. "We are honored to partner with Lackawanna County to present this solemn tribute to our late heroes and the families of those from our area who continue to fight for our freedom. This event presents a powerful addition to Scranton's celebrations in honor of America's 250th birthday."

"Many thousands of Lackawanna County residents, over many decades, have given their all – sometimes including their lives – for their fellow citizens, their country, and fundamental principles of the American idea," Lackawanna County Commissioner Bill Gaughan said. "It's truly fitting to honor them with this traveling tribute at Nay Aug Park, and we're proud to join the city in doing so."

"I am proud to announce our partnership with the City of Scranton to co-sponsor America's Freedom Tribute, a powerful tribute honoring our veterans and fallen heroes from World War I through Operation Enduring Freedom, set for October 2-4, 2026, at Nay Aug Park," Lackawanna County Commissioner Chris Chermak said. "With Pennsylvania ranking fourth in the nation for veteran population, this tribute underscores our commitment to honoring those who served. We invite the community to join us in this meaningful remembrance."

"I am particularly proud for our county to bring this important Memorial Wall to our region, not only to impress upon and reinforce the significance and importance of what past, present and future military service provides for in our country and community – but also to celebrate, honor and welcome home our Vietnam veterans. These men and women were the 'forgotten veterans' as a result of tumultuous times in the 60s and 70s. I urge all of our residents to join in the participation of this event while thanking all veterans for their service and sacrifice," added Commissioner Thom Welby. Vietnam veteran and retired United States Marine Corps Cpl. Sam

Kuchwara said bringing the replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall to Scranton is an honor for a number of reasons.

“It’s been over, I think, 13 years since the Vietnam Wall traveled to Scranton,” Kuchwara said. “With the 250th anniversary of the military this year, the timing is right.”

Kuchwara’s late brother Jim discussed bringing the wall back to Scranton several years ago, so the traveling tribute also fulfills a personal pledge. “One of the last things he said to me was, ‘Sam, remember one thing: Always, always, always remember a veteran, no matter what.’”

Bringing the Vietnam Wall to Nay Aug Park also combines several of Sam’s interests. He serves as the vice commander of American Legion Post 121 that meets in the Nay Aug Park Community Room, as a coordinator for Lackawanna County Veterans Court, as vice chairman of the Friends of Nay Aug fundraising group, and as a volunteer with the Scranton Municipal Recreation Authority.

In addition to the 80 percent replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, a second display titled the “Cost of Freedom Tribute” includes panels memorializing those who have made the ultimate sacrifice from World War I through 9/11, the Gulf Wars and Operation Enduring Freedom. “We are excited to partner with Scranton and Lackawanna County to offer this experience and create a memorable event,” Kylah Doherty, AFT event coordinator, said.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Pennsylvania ranks fourth nationwide in total veteran population. Scranton is home to the Gino J. Merli Veterans’ Center, a state facility providing care and respect to our local heroes; the 25th Veterans of Foreign War Post to ever be chartered in the United States in VFW Post 25, 2291 Rockwell Ave.; the Marine Corps Historical Museum at 1340 Alder St., which is home to more than 1,500 United States Marine Corps artifacts; and multiple other tributes.

Scranton’s Duffy Park is named for U.S. Army Lt. Col. Frank J. Duffy, a Scranton native who was killed in action in 1918 while serving in World War I. Nicknamed “The Fighting Colonel,” Duffy was the highest-ranking officer from Lackawanna County killed in action during the Great War.

Under Mayor Cagnetti’s leadership, the City has awarded thousands of dollars in grant funding to veterans’ service organizations each year, including \$100,000 in 2025 alone. Agencies receiving grant funding contribute to the ongoing physical and mental health of local veterans.

Officials continue to plan special events surrounding the display of both tributes, and more details will be released over the coming months.

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ABOUT THE CITY OF SCRANTON: Incorporated in 1866, the City of Scranton has a population of approximately 76,000 residents and is the sixth-largest municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Scranton City Hall is located at 340 N. Washington Ave., Scranton, PA 18503. Residents requiring services should visit www.scrantonpa.gov

ABOUT MAYOR PAIGE G. COGNETTI: Paige G. Cagnetti was sworn in as the 36th Mayor of Scranton in January 2020 and took her third Oath of Office in January 2026. Her administration is focused on public safety, driving economic growth, upgrading infrastructure, government transparency and efficiency, and improving residents’ overall quality of life.