â€œMy cousin Frankieâ€• by Mario De Lucia

Description

From NewsDay.com, a story of years of inspiration and an email 38 years later that answered some questions. A good read.

My cousin Frankie

How a childhood hero killed in Vietnam was a lifelong inspiration

BY MARIO DE LUCIA

With the inception of home computers and the Web, I began to hunt around for some information about Frankie. I placed my e-mail address on various Marine Corps Web sites and Vietnam blogs, asking for anyone with information to contact me.

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I became active with the alumni association of my high school in Patchogue, and over the years have been introduced to many of Frankâ€™s former classmates, teachers and friends. Many of them remember him fondly and all have a story about him that they long to tell. I think of those stories every time I visit that school and see the gray plaque and the eternal flame in the lobby with Frankieâ€™s name and the dozen or so names of other graduates of Patchogue High School who lost their lives in Vietnam.
After the Sept. 11 attacks in New York City, Washington and Pennsylvania, I finally retired from the New York City Police Department. My wife and I relocated our family to the

mountains of east Tennessee several years ago. While unpacking, I took a break to check my e-mail. There was one unread message from an unknown person. After opening it, I stared at the stark message, which stated simply: â€œI was there when he was killed. E-mail me back for more info.â€• It was signed â€œSgt. Doyle Clark.â€•

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Read the rest for a bittersweet story of family relationships.

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Date Created
August 27, 2007
Author
admin

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