

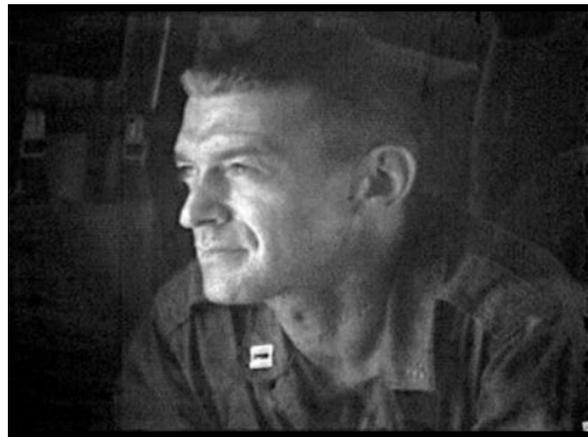
Capodanno Building

Bldg. 785

There are very few people who have made such a lasting mark on this world in such a short lifetime as Vincent R. Capodanno.

Born Feb. 13, 1929, in Elm Park, Staten Island, N.Y., to Rachel and Vincent Capodanno, he was the youngest of five girls and four boys.

After graduating from Curtis High School in Staten Island, he studied at Maryknoll to become a Roman Catholic missionary. He was ordained a priest in 1958. He served as a missionary in Taiwan and Hong Kong, but during the Vietnam War felt he was needed in the combat zones.



Father Capodanno became Lieutenant Capodanno when he joined the Naval Reserves Dec. 28, 1965, and was sent to Vietnam in 1966. Near the end of his tour, he asked for an extension of six months. In the fourth month of the extension, he was killed in action on Sept. 4, 1967, at the age of 38 while serving with the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in Quang Tin Province.

His Medal of Honor citation reads: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Chaplain of the 3d Battalion, in connection with operations against enemy forces. In response to reports that the 2d Platoon of M Company was in danger of being overrun by a massed enemy assaulting force, Lt. Capodanno left the relative safety of the company command post and ran through an open area raked with fire, directly to the beleaguered platoon. Disregarding the intense enemy small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire, he moved about the battlefield administering last rites to the dying and giving medical aid to the wounded. When an exploding mortar round inflicted painful multiple wounds to his arms and legs, and severed a portion of his right hand, he steadfastly refused all medical aid. Instead, he directed the corpsmen to help their wounded comrades and, with calm vigor, continued to move about the battlefield as he provided encouragement by voice and example to the valiant marines. Upon encountering a wounded corpsman in the direct line of fire of an enemy machine gunner positioned approximately 15 yards away, Lt. Capodanno rushed a daring attempt to aid and assist the mortally wounded corpsman. At that instant, only inches from his goal, he was struck down by a burst of machinegun fire. By his heroic conduct on the battlefield, and his inspiring example, Lt. Capodanno upheld the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the cause of freedom."

Since his death, many structures/objects/organizations have been named in his memory. Among them:

- USS Capodanno (DE 1093). It was launched Oct. 21, 1972, commissioned Nov. 17, 1973, and decommissioned July 1993.
- Three chapels: Naval War College in Newport, R.I.; Camp Pendleton, Calif., home base of the First Marine Division with whom he served; and Thiankou, Taiwan.

- Staten Island renamed Seaside Boulevard "Father Capodanno Boulevard."
- Father Capodanno Boulevard, Newport, R.I., Naval Base.
- U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps named their division after him in 1996. Outside the chapel at the Armed Forces Reserve Center, Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, N.Y., where the Capodanno Division drills, there is a larger-than-life bronze statue of a helmet-clad priest administering the last rites to a dying combat soldier in memory of Father Capodanno.
- Father Capodanno Council #6522, Knights of Columbus, in New Jersey.
- Capodanno Hall at Hunters Point Bay, San Francisco, Calif. (Naval Shipyard).
- Father Vincent Capodanno Chapter #1101, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Staten Island.
- Father Capodanno Memorial Scholarship, Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation.
- Entered into the Italian American National Hall of fame in 1977.
- The Four Chaplains, Gold Medal Hall of Heroes.
- Honored at Freedom's Foundation, Valley Forge, Pa., with tree and monument in the Medal of Honor Grove.
- Issued a New York City Medal of Honor by the mayor.
- Capodanno Association that works towards better relations between the American military community and the residents of Gaeta, Italy. Father Capodanno's family originated in Gaeta.
- The seaport of Gaeta named a square after him (Piazzo Capodanno).
- Capodanno Building (S-785), home of Navy Personnel Research and Development Command. The 55,825 square foot building was initially constructed in 1986 as a training building for Naval Air Technical Training Center. After NATTC moved to Pensacola, Fla., the building was remodeled for NPRDC's use.
- Capodanno has only two surviving members of his immediate family, his brother James ("Jim") and a sister, Gloria Holman, who resides on Staten Island.

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Since the publication of this story the Naval Personnel Research and Development Command, was disestablished in November 1999 following the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC-IV) recommendation to disestablish the organization and realign its functions. The core functions of research and development for manpower and personnel were assumed by the Navy Personnel Research, Studies and Technology (NPRST) division of Navy Personnel Command in November 1999. In September 2016, NPRST was disestablished and the Pay and Personnel Management Department (PERS-2) moved into the Capodanno Building.