ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AWARDS BANQUET
November 6-8, 2008 • Washington, DC
The Directors of the American Veterans Center express their gratitude to the following organizations and individuals for sponsoring the 11th Annual Veterans Conference & Awards Banquet. Your generous support enabled the American Veterans Center to acknowledge the tremendous sacrifices of our military in defense of liberty throughout the three day Conference to Americans young and old, culminating in the Awards Banquet.

In addition, the generosity of our sponsors provided tables and seats for distinguished veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan and members of their family, as well as ROTC Cadets, Midshipmen, active duty personnel and servicemen and women wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. Your generous support is greatly appreciated.

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The mission of the American Veterans Center is to preserve and promote the legacy of America’s servicemen and women from every generation.

The Center is comprised of two divisions - The World War II Veterans Committee and the National Vietnam Veterans Committee. The American Veterans Center is also the sponsor of the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington.

“Bringing the legacy of the Greatest Generation to the latest generation” is the motto of the World War II Veterans Committee. Through documentary work, oral history programs, its quarterly publication World War II Chronicles and now American Valor Quarterly, the World War II Veterans Committee seeks to bring the history of WWII to today’s students and young people.

The newest division of the American Veterans Center is the National Vietnam Veterans Committee. Based on the outline of the World War II Veterans Committee, the National Vietnam Veterans Committee not only seeks to tell the combat stories of Vietnam veterans, it also seeks to tell their stories after they returned home. While the popular media and film depictions of Vietnam veterans were those of disillusioned men unable to adapt to life following the war, the truth is that most returned home to live productive and successful lives, and were proud to have served. The National Vietnam Veterans Committee, through its programs which include the publications Valor: The Veterans of Vietnam and American Valor Quarterly, is working to tell the true story of Vietnam veterans which has so often been ignored.

Programs of the American Veterans Center include:

- **The National Memorial Day Parade.** The parade is held each year along the National Mall in Washington, DC. Following the outbreak of World War II, the tradition of a Memorial Day parade in the nation’s capital was ended. In 2004, the World War II Veterans Committee sponsored “A Parade Salute to World War II Veterans,” to coincide with the dedication of the National World War II Memorial. The parade proved such a success that it was decided that the old tradition of a Memorial Day parade be returned. Thus, the National Memorial Day Parade was born. In a magnificent tribute to America’s veterans and honored war dead of all eras, the National Memorial Day Parade features thousands of participants, including military and school bands, military units, floats, and youth groups, as well as hundreds of veterans from World War II through Iraq and Afghanistan. The 2008 parade was televised worldwide on the Pentagon Channel and drew a crowd of 250,000 spectators, making it the largest Memorial Day event in the nation. Visit the parade’s website at www.nationalmemorialdayparade.com.

- **American Valor Quarterly.** The official magazine of the American Veterans Center, AVQ is devoted to providing first-hand accounts from veterans and active duty service members who have been a part of the defining moments in American military history. Mailed to an audience of nearly 25,000 readers with copies donated to VA hospitals around the nation, AVQ is dedicated to providing a forum for our military men and women to share their experiences with the public and future generations. American Valor Quarterly builds on the success of our previous publications, World War II Chronicles and Valor: The Veterans of Vietnam. Issues of all three publications can be read at the Center’s website at www.americanveteranscenter.org.
• **Documentaries**: Following in the tradition of *World War II Chronicles*, the American Veterans Center has produced a number of radio documentary programs on World War II and military history, including *D-Day: They Were There*, *Pearl Harbor: 60 Years of Echoes*, and *No Greater Love: The Four Chaplains and the Sinking of the Dorchester*.

• **Veterans Chronicles and Proudly We Hail**: Working with the Radio America network, the American Veterans Center currently sponsors two weekly radio series, *Veterans Chronicles* and *Proudly We Hail*. Hosted by Gene Pell, *Veterans Chronicles* features interviews with the eyewitnesses to the great and tragic moments in military history. *Proudly We Hail* is a weekly radio magazine recorded on location at America’s military bases, historical sites, and museums, featuring tales of heroism, bulletins on veterans’ health issues, and news. Podcasts of both programs can be downloaded from iTunes and our website at www.americanveteranscenter.org.

• **Youth Activities**: The Center supports an annual essay contest with cash awards, a high school scholarship program, a college scholarship program, and a summer internship program. Additionally, youth groups such as the Young Marines, National Guard Youth ChalleNGe, and Boy and Girl Scouts participate in the annual National Memorial Day Parade.

• **World War II Curriculum**: The World War II Veterans Committee is about to unveil a comprehensive curriculum on World War II to be distributed to high school teachers across the country. The curriculum is designed to introduce students to the issues leading to World War II, the great battles of the war, and the civilian and military leaders involved.

• **Annual Conference**: Each year the American Veterans Center’s national conference is held in Washington, DC, featuring some of America’s most distinguished veterans as speakers. Several hundred high school and college students participate in the conference. Additionally, the event includes wreath-laying ceremonies at the national war memorials, veteran-themed events around the city, and an annual awards banquet, honoring the service of the United States military’s greatest heroes.

• **Library and Archives**: Each day, books on American military history are received, cataloged, and added to the Center’s library, which now numbers several hundred volumes. The Center also welcomes memoirs, personal accounts, newspaper clippings, and other records pertaining to American military history for inclusion.

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**The American Veterans Center**

www.americanveteranscenter.org

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The American Veterans Center
11th Annual Conference
November 6-8 - Washington, DC

Schedule of Events:

Thursday, November 6

Sessions begin at 8:30 AM and end at 3:15 PM
Held in the Auditorium, Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel

8:30 AM - Military Intelligence Service Veterans:
P.O. Box 1142 in the Allied War Effort
Including: Dr. H. George Mandel George Frenkel

9:10 AM - The Doolittle Raiders
Featuring veterans of Jimmy Doolittle’s legendary attack on Japan.
Including:
Lt. Col. Richard E. Cole Maj. Thomas Griffin
Lt. Col. Robert Hite M/Sgt. Edwin Horton
Maj. General David M. Jones Sgt. David Thatcher
Moderated by Col. C.V. Glines - Official historian of the Doolittle Raiders.

10:05 AM - The Korean War - Lt. General Julius W. Becton, USA (Ret) - Decorated veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, former Director of FEMA, President of Prairie View A&M University and Superintendent of Washington DC Public Schools.

10:45 AM - The Last Ace - Brig. General R. Steve Ritchie, the only Air Force “ace” pilot in the Vietnam War and recipient of the Air Force Cross.

11:25 AM - The Tet Offensive: 40 Years Later - Veterans of the major turning point of the Vietnam War recall the true story of Tet.
Including:
Brig. Gen. Michael Downs - Veteran of the 1st Marine Division in Vietnam and the Battle of Hue City; recipient of the Silver Star, Distinguished Service Medal, and Purple Heart
Col. Charles Krohn - Veteran of the Tet Offensive and author of The Lost Battalion of Tet; recipient of the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, and Bronze Star with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

12:10 PM - Lunch & Book/Memorabilia Signing with the Doolittle Raiders

1:00 PM - Reflections: Looking Back at the Vietnam War - Dr. Lewis Sorley - Vietnam veteran, acclaimed historian, and author of the Pulitzer Prize-nominated A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America’s Last Years in Vietnam.

1:40 PM - Today’s Heroes - Several of the most highly decorated veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom
Including:
SSgt. David Bellavia, US Army - Silver Star, recommended for Medal of Honor
HM2 Luis Fonseca, US Navy - Navy Cross
Capt. Walter Bryan Jackson, US Army - Distinguished Service Cross
SSgt. Jeremiah Workman, USMC - Navy Cross

2:30 PM - War and the New Media - Featuring veterans who have used the new media to change how war is covered.
Including:
Matthew Currier Burden
Blackfive.net
Jim Hanson
UncleJimbo.com
Major Chuck Ziegenfuss
From My Position...On The Way!
4:15 PM - AFTERNOON EVENT - Wreath laying ceremonies at the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.


NOTE: Bus transportation to wreath laying ceremonies departs at 3:45 PM from the Renaissance Washington Hotel. Meet in hotel lobby (K Street side of hotel). Bus will then proceed to Army & Navy Club and will return to Renaissance following reception and discussion.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Sessions begin at 9:00 AM and end at 3:30 PM
Held in the Auditorium, Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel

9:00 AM - THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO THE UNITED STATES MILITARY
Featuring: Brig. General Wilma Vaught, retired Air Force brigadier general and president of the Board of Directors of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation.

Lorraine Dieterle - Only female photographer in the Coast Guard in the Third Naval District in World War II.


9:50 AM - THE FILTHY THIRTEEN – The men of the 101st Airborne Division in WWII who made up the true story behind the famous film, *The Dirty Dozen*.
Featuring: Jake McNiece, John “Jack” Agnew, Jack Womer, Miguel “Mike” Marquez, Robert “Bob” Cone

10:40 AM - WE ARE SOLDIERS STILL – The story of the epic battle of Ia Drang.
Featuring:
Lt. General Hal Moore – Commander of 1/7 Cavalry at LZ X-RAY and co-author of *We Were Soldiers Once...And Young* and its long-anticipated sequel.

Joseph Galloway – UPI correspondent who covered the battle and the only civilian to be awarded the Bronze Star by the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War.

Col. Ramon “Tony” Nadal – Commander of Company A, 1/7 Cavalry under then Lt. Col. Moore at LZ X-RAY.

Col. Walter Joseph Marm – 2nd Platoon, A Company; awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism at Ia Drang

Larry Gwin - Executive Officer of A Co, 2/7 Cavalry and recipient of the Silver Star for heroism at Ia Drang.

11:45 AM - LUNCH & BOOK/SIGNING WITH GENERAL HAL MOORE & JOSEPH GALLOWAY - WE ARE SOLDIERS STILL

Maj. Nicole Malachowski
Capt. Kaitlyn M. Cogan

12:40 PM - THE MEDAL OF HONOR – Recipients of our nation’s highest award for military valor.
Featuring:
Col. Harvey C. “Barney” Barnum
Capt. Thomas J. Hudner
Col. Gordon Roberts
Col. Wesley Fox
Col. Walter Joseph Marm

Moderated by Lt. General Nicholas B. Kehoe - President, Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation.

1:45 PM - BACK TO IRAQ – Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom return to Iraq in the summer of 2008 to witness the changes inside the country.
Featuring:
SSgt. David Bellavia
Capt. Pete Hegseth
Spc. Kate Norley

2:25 PM- BASEBALL AND WORLD WAR II – Major League Baseball players who put their careers on hold to serve in the military during WWII.
Featuring
Joe Anders
Lou Brissie
Jerry Coleman
Bob Feller
Monte Irvin
Ralph Kiner
Bob Feller on board the USS Alabama, where he led an anti-aircraft gun team. Feller, like many other Major League Baseball players, left the game to serve in the military during World War II.

Saturday, November 8
Sessions begin at 9:00 AM and end at 1:15 PM

9:00 AM - The Bloody Battle of Iwo Jima
Featuring Col. Dave E. Severance, Commander of E Company, 28th Marines on Iwo Jima – the men who took Mt. Suribachi and raised the flags.
Donald Mates, veteran of the Third Marine Division and platoon mate of Jimmy Trimble, the Major League Baseball prospect whose life was cut short after falling in battle.
James White, veteran of the Third Marine Division whose experience was featured in an article by Leatherneck Magazine.

10:00 AM - The Tuskegee Airmen – The legendary first African American pilots in U.S. military history.
Featuring Phillip Broome, William Fauntroy, Cicero Satterfield, Ivan Ware
Moderated by Jerry Burton, Speakers’ Bureau Chairman, East Coast Chapter Tuskegee Airmen Inc.

10:50 AM - Accounting for America’s Heroes – Featuring Adrian Cronauer, famed Vietnam DJ portrayed by Robin Williams in the acclaimed film.

11:30 AM - Black Hawk Down: The Battle of Mogadishu
Featuring Matthew Eversmann, former U.S. Army Ranger and leader of Chalk 4 during the Battle of Mogadishu; portrayed in the book and film Black Hawk Down.

12:10 PM - The Medal of Honor: A New Generation of Valor – Service members who served alongside the Medal of Honor recipients of Iraq and Afghanistan help to share their stories of valor.
Featuring:
Major James M. “Brooks” Schultze, USA, who served with SFC Paul Ray Smith
Captain Rudy G. Salcido, USMC, who served with CPL Jason Dunham
Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Corry Hull, USN, who served with Lt. Michael Murphy
Officer Candidate (SEAL) Tom DeShazo, USN, who served with MA2 Michael Monsoor
Sergeant 1st Class Cedric Thomas, USA, who served with SPC Ross McGinnis, USA

1:15 PM - Lunch

2:30 PM - Afternoon Event – A wreath laying ceremony at the National World War II Memorial.

NOTE: Bus transportation departs at 2:00 PM from the Renaissance Washington Hotel. Meet in hotel lobby (K Street side of hotel). Bus will return to Renaissance following the wreath laying ceremony.

7:00 PM - Evening Event – The 11th Annual American Veterans Center Awards Banquet, Honoring the United States Military’s Greatest Heroes.
Doors open at 6:00 PM with Reception in Foyer.
Eleventh Annual Conference Speakers

John “Jack” Agnew was born in Northern Ireland and moved to Philadelphia as a boy. Although he already knew how to fly, he decided to enlist in the Army volunteering for the paratroopers, thinking, “If I did not fly them (airplanes) I might as well jump out of them.” He was a member of the Filthy 13 since their training at Camp Toccoa, Georgia where he met Jake McNiece for the first time. Jack’s first two combat jumps were D-Day and Market Garden in Holland. In Normandy he fought alongside Jake, first completing his mission at the Douve Canal bridges and then to help liberate the first major city in France, Carentan. In Holland he would fight alongside Jake and his other Filthy 13 buddies for over 78 days. Learning that Jake had volunteered for the Pathfinders prior to the start of Battle of the Bulge he volunteered for this unit as well. During the siege of Bastogne, his third jump was made as the skies cleared, guiding the planes to resupply the beleaguered city.

Joe Anders was offered a contract by the New York Yankees in 1942. Instead of accepting the contract, Anders chose to join the U.S. Army. He fought in the South Pacific and was discharged from the Army four years later. While in the Army, he played baseball against and with Lou Brissie. In 1948, he was offered a contract by the Dodgers to play on one of their farm teams in Texas, but Anders chose to remain in South Carolina and play in the textile leagues. Anders learned baseball from “Shoeless Joe” Jackson and was his lifelong friend.

Colonel Harvey “Barney” Barnum was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in 1962. As a Marine officer for over 27 years, Barnum served multiple tours as an artilleryman with the 3rd and 2nd Marine Divisions, including two tours in Vietnam. Barnum earned the Medal of Honor on December 18, 1965 in Vietnam. His other decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V, and Presidential Unit Citation.

Lieutenant General Julius W. Becton Jr. enlisted in the Army on July 22, 1944 at age 18. He graduated from OCS in August 1945 and saw some action in the Pacific theatre at the end of World War II. Becton served in the Korean War as a first lieutenant where he received the Silver Star. He served a tour of duty in Vietnam as lieutenant colonel with the 101st Airborne. Becton retired from the Army in 1983. He has served as director of FEMA, the CEO/superintendent of public schools in the District of Columbia, and president of Prairie View A & M University.

David Bellavia is a former army staff sergeant who served in the First Infantry Division (Task Force 2-2). He has been recommended for the Medal of Honor for actions he took in a fierce urban firefight in the Battle of Fallujah. He has received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and the Conspicuous Service Cross. He has also been nominated for the Distinguished Service Cross. He and his platoon were the subjects of a Time magazine cover story “Into the Hot Zone.” David is the vice-chairman for the Vets for Freedom Action Fund. David returned to Iraq in June 2006 as an embedded reporter with the Iraqi Army.

Lou Brissie signed with the Philadelphia Athletics in 1941 at age 17. He volunteered for military service in 1942 and served with the 88th Division in Italy. On December 7, 1944, he was hit by artillery fire, shattering his left shinbone in more than 30 pieces, breaking his left ankle and right foot. He convinced doctors not to amputate his leg. The surgeon who saved Brissie’s leg was awarded a Surgeon General’s Special Commendation for his work. Brissie returned home with an intense desire to return to Major League Baseball. Twenty three operations, three years, and countless hours of rehabilitation later, he made his debut with Philadelphia Athletics. He spent 7 years pitching in the major leagues.
Lieutenant Colonel Richard E. Cole was born in Dayton and completed two years at Ohio University before enlisting as a Flying Cadet in November 1940. He completed training in July 1941 and was the co-pilot for Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle on the first plane off the carrier Hornet. He remained in the CBI until June 1943, flying cargo from India to China. He returned to the CBI in October 1943 and flew with the AAF’s famed 1st Air Commandos in support of Allied operations behind Japanese lines. He had several operational assignments, including operations advisor to the Venezuelan Air Force, before retiring to Texas in 1967.

Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Coleman joined the Marine Corps on October 23, 1942. He flew 57 combat missions in the Pacific during World War II. In January 1946, he was put on the inactive reserve list and resumed his baseball career, playing second base for the Yankees. During the Korean War, Coleman was called to active duty and flew another 63 combat missions. In August 1953, he returned to second base for the Yankees. He joined the Marine Corps Reserve, where he did promotional work for the Marines until he retired in 1964. He is the only major league player to see combat in two wars. Coleman was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, 13 Air Medals and three Navy Citations.

Robert “Ragsmen” Cone enlisted in the National Guard in 1938. He joined the Filthy 13 as a replacement in England before D-Day. Prior to jumping on D-Day, he completed boxing exhibitions for the Army throughout England. After fighting for 3 days in Normandy, he was wounded in the shoulder. Unable to shoot his gun due to this injury he took refuge in a barn where a French farmer turned him over to the Germans. His dog tags were found after his capture, and he was presumed KIA. His parents were notified. It was three months before they received word that he was alive and a POW. He was a POW until just about the end of war. After being liberated by the Russians in Poland, he fought briefly with them. He then traveled though Poland, Romania, Russia, Egypt and finally Italy and was imprisoned twice (once by the Russians and once by the British) before he was reunited with the U.S. Army. He never reconnected with his unit before the end of the war or upon return to America. After the war, it was not until 2002 that the other Filthy 13 members learned that he had survived the war.

Adrian Cronauer served for four years in the U.S. Air Force. He co-authored the original story for the major motion picture, Good Morning, Vietnam!, which is loosely based on his experiences as a military disc jockey in Saigon during 1965 and 1966. A subsequent special on National Public Radio about the role of military radio in Vietnam earned him a 1992 Ohio State Award and two 1991 Gold Medals from the New York Radio Festival. Cronauer received his Doctor of Law degree in 1989 from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was Special Projects Editor of the Law Review. Currently, Cronauer is Special Assistant to the Director of the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). In this position he serves as a confidential advisor to Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) Ambassador Charles Ray.

Officer Candidate (SEAL) Tom W. DeShazo was born in 1975 and raised in Huntsville, Alabama. Tom graduated from Grissom High School in Huntsville and joined the Navy in July, 2003. After graduating from Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, he completed Interior Communications “A” school. Upon completion, Tom transferred to Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training at the Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, California and graduated with BUD/S class 250. After graduation he attended and successfully completed the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Georgia and SEAL Qualification Training at Coronado. After receiving his Trident Tom reported to SEAL Team 3 and joined Task Unit Bravo, Delta Platoon. Tom remained at SEAL Team 3 for three years and served in Iraq before being selected for the Seaman to Admiral-21 program and is currently attending the University of Southern California in Los Angeles where he will be commissioned upon graduation in 2010.

Matt “Blackfive” Burden enlisted as a Paratrooper when he was 17. He left the military as a Major in the US Army Reserve in July 2001. Burden served as a Sergeant in Special Operations before becoming a Cavalry Officer and ultimately serving as an Intelligence Officer for the Defense Intelligence Agency where his Detachment received the Meritorious Unit Award. He has a Master’s in Computer Science from the University of Chicago and a MBA from the University of Illinois. He is an IT Executive in Chicago. After a friend’s heroic sacrifice went unnoticed by the media, Matt started Blackfive (www.blackfive.net) in mid-2003 to support the troops fighting the War on Terror and tell their stories. Since then, Blackfive has become one of the most popular military websites with millions of readers and has won numerous awards for blogging. Matt is the editor and an author of The Blog of War, a book about the effects of Web 2.0 on the military and military bloggers’ stories from the War on Terror.
Lorraine S. Dieterle was born July 5, 1925. She enlisted with the U.S. Coast Guard SPARs in January 1944. She was stationed at the U.S. Coast Guard’s Photographic Laboratory in New York City where she trained men in combat and aerial photography and darkroom procedures. She saw the war through the many photographs taken by the men on the front. Dieterle had the privilege of photographing German submarines surrendering on the East Coast and many Liberty ships as they passed the Statue of Liberty carrying troops home. Her most rewarding assignment was photographing the joyous crowd in Times Square on VJ-Day. Dieterle was released from military service in 1946.

Brigadier General Michael P. Downs entered the Marine Corps and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1961. In 1967 he was transferred to the 1st Marine Division in Vietnam, where he served successively as Commanding Officer, Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines; Assistant Operations Officer, 5th Marines; and Operations Officer, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. Upon his return to the U.S. in 1968, Downs held assignments in Washington, D.C., North Carolina, California, The Netherlands, and Okinawa. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1986. Downs retired from the military in 1992. His decorations include the Silver Star, Distinguished Service Medal, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation with one bronze star and the Meritorious Unit Commendation with two bronze stars.

Sergeant Matthew Eversmann enlisted in the Army as an infantryman in December 1987. He spent over eight years with the Third Battalion, Seventy Fifth Ranger Regiment. While serving as a sergeant in the Ranger Regiment, he traveled the world. In August of 1993, Eversmann and his company deployed to Mogadishu, Somalia in support of Operation Gothic Serpent. His decorations include the Bronze Star with Valor device and the Combat Infantryman’s Badge. Eversmann recently returned to the U.S. after serving 15 months in Iraq. He retired from the Army as an Infantry Company First Sergeant after 20 years of service. He is co-author of The Battle of Mogadishu (2004).

Bob Feller was a star pitcher for the Cleveland Indians during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Feller immediately enlisted in the United States Navy, where he was assigned to command a 24-man gunnery squad on the battleship Alabama. After a year of service in the North Atlantic, Feller and the Alabama were sent to the Pacific, where he participated in eight invasions including Iwo Jima. Feller was discharged in August of 1945, after almost four years of service. He returned to baseball and resumed a career that led to his induction into the Hall of Fame.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Luis E. Fonseca enlisted in the Navy on July 12, 1999, at age 18. From January 2003 till June 2003, he was deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 2nd Marine Division 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion. Upon his return from Iraq, Fonseca was transferred to 2nd Battalion 8th Marines where he was deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan from November 2003 till May 2004. Fonseca served a second tour of duty in Iraq from February 2005 till September 2005. In June 2007, Fonseca was assigned to the USS Bataan (LHD 5), where he currently serves as a general duty corpsman and sick call work center supervisor. His personal awards include the Navy Cross, Combat Action Ribbon with gold star, Military Outstanding Volunteer Medal and various unit and service awards.

Colonel Wesley Fox enlisted in the Marines on August 4, 1950, and served two tours with the 1st Marine Division in Korea where he held billets from BARman to Platoon Sergeant. He served as commander of Company A, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines in Vietnam. He retired from active duty in September 1993. Upon retirement, Fox served for eight years as the Deputy Commandant of the Corps of Cadets at Virginia Tech. He is author of two books, Marine Rifleman: Forty-three Years in the Corps and Courage and Fear. His personal decorations include: Medal of Honor, Legion of Merit with Star, Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, Purple Heart with 3 Stars, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V and Star, Joint Service Commendation Medal, and Combat Action Ribbon with star.
Eleventh Annual Conference Speakers

George Frenkel came to the United States from Berlin in 1937, was drafted in 1941. He was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division. When he became a citizen in 1943, he took intelligence training. After interrogating POW at the IPW at Ft. Bullis, TX, he was transferred to PO Box 1142 where he was in charge of the men transcribing the interrogation of German scientists. He was then transferred to Europe and was assigned to a mobile field interrogation center where he interrogated POWs about strategic matters. He was inactivated in 1945. He stayed in Germany for a short time as a civilian/military government official and processed applications for licenses for aspiring German publications. He returned to the U.S. in 1947 and left the military for a short time. He rejoined the military during the Korean War. He served an additional twenty years. After retiring from the military, he was a public servant for eighteen years. He currently teaches advanced German.

Joseph L. Galloway is author of a weekly syndicated column on military and national security affairs and recently retired as senior military correspondent of Knight Ridder Newspapers. He is the co-author, with Lt. Gen. Hal Moore, of the national bestseller, We Were Soldiers Once...And Young, later made into the critically acclaimed movie We Were Soldiers. In 1998, he was decorated with the Bronze Star with V for rescuing wounded soldiers under fire in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965. His is the only medal of valor the Army awarded to a civilian for actions during the Vietnam War.

Colonel Carroll V. Glines, historian for the Doolittle Raiders, entered flight training in May 1941 and graduated in January 1942. He was a flight instructor during WWII followed by tours in Panama and Europe. He received MBA and MA degrees while on active duty and served on the Air University staff before a seven-year tour in the offices of the Secretary of the Air Force and Assistant Secretary of Defense. His final assignment was as Chief, Public Affairs for the Alaskan Command. After retirement in 1968, he was an aviation magazine editor and authored 36 books, including three books on the Tokyo Raid.

Major Thomas C. Griffin was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Alabama in 1939 and entered service as a second lieutenant in the Coast Artillery but requested relief from active duty to enlist as a flying cadet. He was rated as a navigator and was re-commissioned on July 1, 1940. He was a navigator on Crew No. 9 of the Doolittle Raiders and later served in North Africa. His plane was shot down, and he was captured by the Germans in July 1943. After release in April 1945, he returned to civilian life and established his own accounting firm in Cincinnati.

Larry Gwin was commissioned as an infantry lieutenant out of Yale University in 1963. After two years with the 82nd Airborne Division, he served as an advisor to a South Vietnamese army battalion in the Mekong Delta before joining the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in September 1965. Assigned to Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment (A 2/7), he served as their executive officer for almost nine months. During that time, A 2/7 made more than forty-five combat assaults, fought in five major engagements, usually against North Vietnamese regulars, and suffered in excess of 70 percent casualties. In 1996, Gwin was awarded a Silver Star for heroism in the Ia Drang Valley.

Jim Hanson took early retirement from Army Special Forces. He then spent several years as a first sergeant of a Wisconsin Guard Infantry unit. He now writes and produces documentaries for the award-winning military website Blackfive.
Eleventh Annual Conference Speakers

**Captain Pete Hegseth** served in Iraq with the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division for their deployment to Iraq from 2005-2006. Hegseth served as an infantry Platoon Leader in Baghdad during the nationwide elections in October and December 2005, and as a Civil-Military Operations officer in Samarra. Hegseth also served in Guantanamo Bay for a year on a security mission with his National Guard unit and currently serves in the 1-69 Infantry, New York Army National Guard. He holds the Bronze Star for his time in Iraq. Pete is a graduate of Princeton University and plans to pursue a Masters in Public Policy at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton in the fall of 2008. Hegseth originally hails from Minnesota, but now lives in New York City with his wife. He is currently executive director of Vets for Freedom, a pro-mission advocacy organization.

**Monte Irvin** joined the Army in 1944. He was assigned to an all-black outfit the 1313 General Service Engineers. He served in England, France and Germany. He landed on Omaha Beach in August 1945. He received his discharge in August 1945. Before the war, he was a star for the Negro League Newark Eagles. Following the war, Irvin became a New York Giant, playing in two World Series.

**Captain Robert L. Hite** enlisted as an aviation cadet in September 1940. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in May 1941. He was a co-pilot for Crew #16 of the Doolittle Raiders. After successfully bombing oil storage tanks and an aircraft factory, they headed for China. Due to low fuel, the crew bailed out and all five members of the plane were captured. Hite spent the next 40 months as a prisoner of war. He was liberated by American troops on August 20, 1945. Hite also served during the Korean War. His decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart with one Oak Leaf Cluster.

**Master Sergeant Edwin W. Horton, Jr.** was born in North Eastham, MA and enlisted in the Field Artillery in 1935. He served in Hawaii for three years and re-enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He completed gun turret maintenance and aircraft mechanic schools and volunteered as an engineer-gunner on Crew No. 10 of the Doolittle Raiders. He remained in the CBI until July 1943 and served in various Stateside and overseas assignments in Panama and Libya. After retirement in 1960, he was employed at Eglin Air Force Base, FL for 20 years as a test engineer in the Air Force’s Cold Weather Laboratory.

**Captain Thomas J. Hudner, Jr.** graduated from the Naval Academy in 1946. After attending flight school, he was designated a Naval Aviator in August of 1949. On December 4, 1950, while serving with VF-32 during the Korean War, he crash-landed his own plane near the Chosin Reservoir in an effort to rescue Ensign Jesse L. Brown, another pilot whose plane had been shot down. For his heroism on that occasion, then-Lt. (Junior Grade) Hudner was awarded the Medal of Honor—the first Navy Medal of Honor to be awarded during the Korean War.

**Special Warfare Operator First Class Corry Hull** is from Buffalo, NY and graduated from Canisius College in 1999. He enlisted in the Navy and reported to Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes for Basic Training. He graduated from Intelligence Specialist “A” school at Dam Neck in Virginia Beach, VA in March 2000. Upon completion, he reported to the Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, CA for Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training. He graduated with BUD/S class 232 in January 2001. After graduation he attended and successfully completed the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning, GA and SEAL Qualification Training at Coronado graduating in June 2001. After receiving his Trident, He reported for duty at SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team 1 in Pearl Harbor, HI. From November 2001 to November 2006 he went on three Central Command deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Horn of Africa while attached to SDVT-1. After returning from Iraq this month, he is serving at Support Activity One.
Colonel Charles Krohn enlisted in the Army in 1961. He fought in the Tet Offensive while serving two tours of duty in Vietnam. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1980. As a civilian, he served as the Pentagon’s deputy chief of public affairs from 2001 to 2004, including three months in Iraq as an adviser to the director of the Infrastructure Reconstruction Program. Recently, he was a visiting professor of journalism at the University of Michigan. A resident of Burke, Virginia, he now works for the American Battle Monuments Commission. His decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, and Bronze Star with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Dr. H. George Mandel was attending college for chemistry at Yale when Pearl Harbor was bombed. He continued his studies in science. When he got his bachelors degree, he was drafted. He took basic training and then because he spoke German, he was sent to Ohio State University for the ASTP program to learn about German history and language. After a short time at Camp Ritchie, he was sent to PO Box 1142 at Fort Hunt, VA. Here he interrogated German scientists about their expertises: atomic energy, the proximity fuse (brings down airplanes without hitting them directly) jet engines and air planes, and the German rocketry program. He continued to conduct interviews after the European war was over. After the war, he was discharged from the Army. Mandel went back to graduate school for chemistry at Yale. He then took a position at George Washington Medical School studying radioactive drugs used as tracers.

Ralph Kiner spent two and a half years in the Pirate’s minor leagues before joining the Navy. For two and a half years, he piloted planes in the Naval Air Corps in the Pacific on missions to locate Japanese submarines during World War II before being discharged as an officer. He returned to baseball in 1946 becoming a Hall of Fame slugger for the Pirates.

Major Nicole Malachowski received her commission from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1996. She has served as a mission ready pilot in three operational F15E fighter squadrons, holding positions as a Flight Commander and Instructor pilot. She has flown homeland defense missions as part of Operations Noble Eagle, and Iraqi Freedom. She served alongside the U.S. Army 2nd Infantry Division as an Air Liaison Officer at Camp Red Cloud, Republic of Korea. She was assigned as a demonstration pilot, Thunderbird #3/Right Wing, with the U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron. As the first female pilot on any U.S. jet demonstration team, she performed before millions of spectators in 140 air shows across the U.S. and seven foreign countries. She is currently serving as a White House Fellow.

Major General David M. Jones, a native Oregonian, graduated from the University of Arizona in 1936 and was commissioned in the Cavalry. He served for one year and then requested pilot training in June 1937. Rated as a pilot in June 1938, he served with the 17th Bomb Group and was the pilot on Crew No. 5 of the Doolittle Raiders. Afterward, he was flying in North Africa with the 12th Air Force when he was shot down in December 1942 and spent 2½ years as a POW. He served in a variety of postwar commands culminating in assignment as manager for Manned Space Flight Support Operations and retired in 1973.

Captain W. Bryan Jackson graduated and received his commission from the United States Military Academy in May 2005. He was assigned to 2-3 FA “GUNNERS” in Giessen, Germany in December 2005. Jackson met his Infantry unit in Kuwait, en route to Iraq and served as the fire support officer for A/1-36 IN “SPARTANS” in January 2006. Jackson was injured by machine gun fire on September 27, 2006, when his unit was ambushed by an armed insurgent force. During recovery, he underwent over a dozen surgeries at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Jackson currently serves as Battalion Adjutant for 1st Battalion, 38th Field Artillery. His decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, the Purple Heart, and the Army Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster.

Ralph Kiner spent two and a half years in the Pirate’s minor leagues before joining the Navy. For two and a half years, he piloted planes in the Naval Air Corps in the Pacific on missions to locate Japanese submarines during World War II before being discharged as an officer. He returned to baseball in 1946 becoming a Hall of Fame slugger for the Pirates.
Colonel Walter Joseph Marm joined the Army from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and by November 14, 1965, was serving as a second lieutenant in Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). On that day, during the Battle of Ia Drang, he single-handedly attacked an enemy machine gun bunker behind a large termite hill with a rocket, grenade, and small arms fire, suffering severe wounds in the neck and jaw. On December 19, 1966, for his heroism in Vietnam, then-Lt. Marm was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Miguel “Mike” Marquez hails from El Paso, TX. Both Mike and his brother Armando started training with the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Camp Toccoa, GA although his brother was not a member of the Filthy 13. Mike jumped on D-Day. Many of the paratrooper drops were scattered all over the countryside. Mike was one of the fortunate ones to find some men of his stick almost immediately. Mike met up with Jack Agnew once on the ground and a short time later with Jake McNiece. He fought along side them in securing their objective at the Douve Canal and in attacking Carenton on D-Day +7. In Operation Market Garden, he completed his second combat jump along with his brother. In Holland, they fought just a city block apart. Mike also fought with distinction in Bastogne and later in Germany. Mike enjoyed drawing and some of his wartime illustrations were printed in the Currahee Scrapbook and The Epic of the 101st Airborne, the latter being described as “A Pictorial Record of a Great Fighting Team.”

Donald Mates served in the 3rd Marine Division and fought in the battle of Iwo Jima, landing on February 24, 1945. After midnight on February 27, Mates’ eight-man patrol came under heavy assault from Japanese forces. During fierce hand-to-hand combat, Mates watched as his friend and fellow Marine, Jimmy Trimble, was killed in front of his eyes. Mates was severely wounded and underwent repeated operations for shrapnel removal for over 30 years. In recent years, he has helped the World War II Veterans Committee begin the “James Trimble III Scholarship”, in honor of his fallen friend. Mates will also be the recipient of the Pentagon’s 2009 Military Hero Award.

Jake “McNasty” McNiece was born in rural Oklahoma. As the unofficial leader of the Filthy 13, he not only embodied the attitude and spirit of the group but to all accounts, he originated it. He fostered a strong camaraderie among his men and a fierce competitive mentality that honed his unit into exactly what the government wanted “Lean, Mean, Fighting Machines.” So unorthodox were his methods and most times in direct conflict with Army regulations that throughout training and the war he would never rise above the rank of PFC. Only upon discharge from the Army did he obtain the rank of Sergeant. The haircuts and face paint for his group on D-Day was all Jake’s idea. Jake was one of the few paratroopers in the 101st Airborne who completed four combat jumps during the World War II. The first two were as a Demolition/Saboteur and the last two as a Pathfinder. He jumped on D-Day, during Operation Market Garden, and in Bastogne and Prume, Germany.

Lieutenant General Harold G. “Hal” Moore, Jr. graduated from West Point in 1945 and attended graduated studies at George Washington and Harvard universities, obtaining a Masters degree in international relations. On November 14, 1965, then Lt. Col. Moore led the men of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division to Landing Zone X-Ray, in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The ensuing combat—known as the Battle of Ia Drang—was among the first major battles between the United States and North Vietnamese. The battle was chronicled in General Moore’s acclaimed book, We Were Soldiers Once..., and Young, co-authored with Joseph Galloway and made into the feature 2002 film starring Mel Gibson as Moore. For his actions during the Battle of Ia Drang, Hal Moore was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Colonel Ramon “Tony” Nadal graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1958, and is the son of Ramon A. Nadal, a West Point grad from the class of 1928. By 1965, he had already served in Vietnam with the Special Forces, and when he heard that the 1st Cavalry Division was headed over, he drove to Ft. Benning to ask for a job. Then Lt. Col. Hal Moore made Nadal his intelligence officer, and he served as commander of Company A, 1/7 Cavalry at LZ X-Ray during the epic Battle of Ia Drang.
Eleventh Annual Conference Speakers

Kate Norley joined the Army following September 11, 2001. She graduated from schooling for combat medic at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas and was assigned to the legendary First Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas. Deploying to Iraq in December 2003, Norley endured 16 grueling months of combat in hostile cities such as Ramadi, Sadr City, Fallujah and Baghdad. She served as the lone female combat stress specialist to over 20,000 troops. After returning to the States, she served the remainder of her time in the Army at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. Norley has spoken across the country about women in the military and the rights of women in Iraq and Afghanistan. Recently she returned as an embedded journalist to the area in Iraq where she served. Norley currently is a member and full-time employee of Vets For Freedom. She is the recipient of the Combat Medics Badge.

Brigadier General R. Steve Ritchie is the only Air Force “ace” pilot of the air war in Vietnam. A veteran of more than 800 combat hours in the F-4 Phantom during 339 missions over Southeast Asia, Ritchie is the only American pilot to down five MiG-21s, the most sophisticated fighters in the North Vietnamese fleet. By the time he left active duty in 1974, Ritchie had been awarded the Air Force Cross, four Silver Stars, 10 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 25 Air Medals. He would rise to the rank of brigadier general in the Air Force Reserve and served in the Reagan administration.

Colonel Gordon Roberts was born on June 14, 1950. He enlisted in the Army, as an infantryman, at the age of 17, three days after graduating from high school. He remained in the service until 1971, completing tours in Germany and Vietnam. He received a Direct Commission in the Ohio Army National Guard in 1988 and was assigned to the 112th Medical Brigade. He then came on active duty in 1991. His past assignments include: eight years of company and field grade command assignments in Korea, Fort Bragg, Haiti, Fort Gordon and Iraq, as well as staff assignments at Hunter Army Airfield, Fort Benning and Kuwait. His decorations include the Medal of Honor, two Silver Stars, the Bronze Star, two Army Commendation Medals and three Air Medals. He is currently the youngest living recipient of the Medal of Honor.

Captain Rudy G. Salcido enlisted in the Marine Corps in October 1992. Upon graduation from School of Infantry, he checked into 1st Battalion, 7th Marines and served as a member of the battalion’s Surveillance Target Acquisition Platoon. Upon leaving active duty in 1996, he joined the Platoon Leader’s Class commissioning program. He graduated from the University of Arizona with a bachelors in accounting in December 2000 and commissioned the same day. He then attended The Basic School and Infantry Officer’s Course. In January 2002, he was assigned to Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines. He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I and II. In February 2005 he was assigned to Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Company, Europe. He participated in JTF Lebanon in August 2006, and supported the U.S. Secret Service during the President of the United States’ visit to Tanzania, Africa in February 2008. In June 2008 he proceeded to Quantico, VA where he is currently attending Expeditionary Warfare School.


Colonel Dave E. Severance served with the Colorado National Guard from 1934 to 1937. He enlisted in the Marine Corps on October 1, 1938. He first saw combat as a platoon leader in the South Pacific in December 1943. In February 1944, he was promoted to captain and assumed command of Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines. His company participated in the landings on Iwo Jima and was on the front lines for 33 days of the 36-day campaign. His company raised the flag atop Mt. Suribachi on the morning of February 23, 1945. The photo of this flag raising was the inspiration for the Marine Corps War Memorial. Severance attended flight school after World War II and flew 69 combat missions in the Korean War. His honors include the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and four Air Medals.
Dr. Lewis Sorley graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1956. His Army service included leadership of tank and armored cavalry units in Germany, Vietnam and the U.S. In Vietnam he was the Executive Officer, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor, 25th Infantry Division. He retired from the military a lieutenant colonel. Dr. Sorley is the author of several books including Arms Transfers under Nixon, Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times and A Better War: the Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America’s Last Years in Vietnam, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

David J. Thatcher was born July 31, 1921. He enlisted on December 3, 1940, and served as flight engineer/gunner on Crew No. 7 of the Doolittle Raiders. Thatcher was the only crew member to avoid serious injury when “The Ruptured Duck” crash-landed just off the China coast, enabling him to help the rest of the crew evade capture. Thatcher later served in England and Africa. He was discharged from active duty in July 1945. Thatcher reached the rank of staff sergeant. His decorations include the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught served in the Air Force for over 28 years, retiring in 1985 as one of the most highly decorated women in U.S. history. She was one of the few women in the Vietnam War who was not a nurse. She was promoted to brigadier general in 1980. Vaught was the first woman to command a unit receiving the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, 1985, and to deploy with a Strategic Air Command bombardment wing on an operational deployment, 1966-67. Vaught is president of the Board of Directors of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation. Her decorations include both the Defense and Air Force Distinguished Service Medals, Air Force Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, and Air Force Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster.

James A. White joined the Marine Corps in 1943 and fought in the battle of Iwo Jima as part of the Third Marine Division from February 24th to March 26th, 1945. He joined Donald Mates and Jimmy Trimble in their eight-man patrol on the fateful night of February 27. After Trimble was killed and Mates severely wounded, White ran to Mates’ aid and almost single-handedly beat back the Japanese attack. His experience of hand-to-hand combat on the island was featured in an article by Leatherneck Magazine and he is the subject of a book about the battle of Iwo Jima. He married in 1950 and has eight children.

Jack “Hawkeye” Womer joined the Army as member of the 175th Infantry known as the “Dandy 5th” and became a member of the 29th Army Division. Volunteering to be a Ranger, he then joined the 101st Airborne and the Filthy 13 in the months leading up to D-Day. To qualify for his paratrooper wings he made all five training jumps in a day, something not heard of then, much less now. Jumping 16th in the stick on D-Day he landed in a swamp near St. Come du Mont. Fighting his way out of the swamp with 40 other paratroopers in the first hour on the ground, he was the only one to survive. Separated from Jake and the others, he instinctively rounded up men and fought alongside the 501st PIR at Hells Corner. He continued to support the 501st for nearly two weeks. He later met up with the Filthy 13 and fought with them and the rest of the 506th until the end of the campaign. In Bastogne, he was trucked in with the rest of the 101st and fought all the way to Germany and the end of the war.

Sergeant Jeremiah Workman was born on August 26, 1983 in Marion, OH. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2000, and in 2004, was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines where he served in Weapons Company as a team leader and later squad leader. In September 2004, he deployed to Iraq and participated in Operation Phantom Fury—the second Battle of Fallujah. His actions in leading the rescue of Marines trapped in a house by enemy fire led to his being awarded the Navy Cross—second only to the Medal of Honor. He would go on to become a Drill Instructor and is currently assigned to Training and Education Center Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, MCB, Quantico, VA.

Major Chuck Ziegenfuss (TC Override) is an Army brat and native of Pennsylvania. He enlisted as a Cavalry Scout in the Regular Army in 1991. Attending college after completing his enlistment, he graduated from the Indiana University of PA in 1997 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant of Armor. His service includes positions as an armor platoon leader, scout platoon leader, assistant operations officer, battalion maintenance officer, adjutant, and company commander in OIF III. He started his blog (“From My Position… On the Way!”) in Iraq as a way to share his experiences with friends and family. Seriously wounded in Iraq on June 21, 2005, he also helped create Project Valour-IT with Soldiers Angels to help service members with severe hand and eye trauma use voice-activated laptops. His decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal and Army Commendation Medal. Chuck has deployed to Kuwait (Desert Thunder—1997), Kosovo (2001), and Operation Iraqi Freedom.
The American Veterans Center
Eleventh Annual
Awards Banquet Program

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
Gene Pell, former Director, Voice of America
President, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty

WELCOME
James Roberts, President
The American Veterans Center

PRESENTATION OF COLORS
U.S. Army Color Guard, Military District of Washington

NATIONAL ANTHEM
Performed by Nadine Salonites

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE BLESSING
The Reverend Arnold G. Taylor
World War II Veteran, 99th Infantry Division

A MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE IS OBSERVED IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY

RETIRING OF THE COLORS

Dinner is Served
Caesar Salad with Herbed Croutons and Parmesan Cheese
Fresh Baked Basket of French Rolls with Butter
Table Wine Service
Duo of
Beef Tenderloin in Gorgonzola Demi-Glace
and
Medallion of Salmon with Pinot Grigio Sauce
Dried Fruit Salsa
Roasted Pine Nut Polenta
Medley of Seasonal Vegetables
Lemon Chiffon Fresh Fruit Tarts
Coffee/Tea Service

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
By
THE BRETHREN

INTRODUCTION OF HONORED GUESTS
Announcement and Presentation of Awards
PRESENTATION OF STUDENT ESSAY AWARDS

HUNTER SCOTT YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Misty Dudley

JAMES TRIMBLE III SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
Bryan San Jose and Marie Morrow

LILLIAN K. KEIL AWARD
Major Nicole Malachowski, USAF

SINGING OF THE MILITARY SERVICE SONGS
Performed by Erin Gannt

AUDIE MURPHY AWARD - WWII
Major League Baseball Veterans of World War II
Represented by Joe Anders, Lou Brissie, Jerry Coleman, Bob Feller,
Monte Irvin, Ralph Kiner, and Mickey Vernon

RAYMOND G. DAVIS AWARD - KOREA
Lieutenant General Julius W. Becton Jr., USA-Ret.
Silver Star

JOE RONNIE HOOPER AWARD - VIETNAM
Colonel Walter Joseph Marm, USA-Ret.
Medal of Honor

“You Raise Me Up”
Performed by Erin Gannt

PAUL RAY SMITH AWARD - OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM &
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM
Senior Airman Jason Cunningham, USAF
Air Force Cross
Operation Enduring Freedom
Accepted by Staff Sergeant Jared Marquis, USAF

Captain W. Bryan Jackson, USA
Distinguished Service Cross
Operation Iraqi Freedom

EDWARD J. HERLIHY CITIZENSHIP AWARD
Colonel Cyril “Rick” Rescorla
Silver Star
Accepted by Susan Rescorla

A THANK YOU TO OUR VETERANS

“GOD BLESS AMERICA”
Performed by Nadine Salonites
Audie Murphy Award

For distinguished service in the United States military during World War II

The most decorated soldier of World War II, Audie Leon Murphy was born to Texas sharecroppers in 1924. He joined the army as a private in 1942, shortly after his 18th birthday. Throughout his three years of active service, Murphy fought with the 3rd Infantry Division in nine major campaigns in the European theatre. He received every medal the Army had to offer including two Silver Stars and three Purple Hearts. He received the Medal of Honor for his valor repelling six German tanks and their supporting infantry near Holtzwirh, France. Murphy also received five medals from France and Belgium. While rising to the rank of Second Lieutenant, Murphy killed over 240 Germans and single-handedly eliminated a tank. He was deactivated on September 21, 1945. After the war, he became nationally known for both his wartime heroism and his leading role in films. Audie L. Murphy is and will remain one of America's most heroic sons.


Major League Baseball Veterans of World War II

Represented by:

Joe Anders Lou Brissie Jerry Coleman Bob Feller Monte Irvin Ralph Kiner Mickey Vernon

December 7, 1941 - 7:48 AM. Naval Air Forces of the Empire of Japan commence their attack on the U.S. bases at Pearl Harbor, leaving in its wake over a dozen ships sunk or damaged and 2,400 people killed. Americans awoke that day to find their nation at war, in a struggle that would test the resolve of every man and woman across the country.

Major League Baseball was in a golden era in 1941 – Joltin’ Joe Dimaggio had his record 56-game hitting streak, while Ted Williams became the last man to bat .400. Bob Feller won 25 games, and the Yankees beat the “Bums” from Brooklyn to win the World Series. Following Pearl Harbor, Bob Feller enlisted in the Navy. Before long, DiMaggio, Williams, and many other stars from the game followed Feller’s lead and entered into the military.

Many of baseball’s then and future stars found themselves involved in some of the pivotal episodes of World War II. Yogi Berra served in the Navy at D-Day, Warren Spahn was a combat engineer who survived the collapse of the bridge at Remagen, while Bob Feller saw action aboard the USS Alabama in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters.

Monte Irvin joined the Army engineers, serving in France and Germany. New York Yankee Jerry Coleman was a pilot in the Marine Corps, flying 57 combat missions in the Pacific Theater and earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. Future Hall of Famer Ralph Kiner joined the Naval Air Corps in the Pacific, while Joe Anders, who was taught to play baseball by “Shoeless” Joe Jackson, joined the Army. Mickey Vernon, the beloved first baseman for the Washington Senators for much of a career that spanned 20 years, joined the Navy.

Following the Allies’ victory in World War II, many players were able to return to baseball, resuming careers put on hold. Many of baseball’s stars came back better than ever. For some, the return to the game was not as easy. Lou Brissie, a bright young prospect before the war, was severely wounded while serving with the 88th Infantry Division in Italy. Twenty-three operations, three years, and countless hours of rehabilitation later, Brissie made his debut with the Philadelphia Athletics, realizing his dream and making an improbable comeback.

While Lou Brissie realized his dreams, others were much less fortunate. Star shortstop Cecil Travis’ feet were frozen in the siege of Bastogne, never allowing him to return to form. Elmer Gedeon was killed in France in 1944, while Harry O’Neill was killed on Iwo Jima in March 1945. Also killed on Iwo Jima was Jimmy Trimble, an outstanding pitching prospect, who like thousands of other young Americans would never have the opportunity to make his dreams come true.

The Major League Baseball players who put their careers and lives on hold to fight in World War II are emblematic of a generation of Americans who put duty and service to their country above all else. All Americans—from sports heroes like Bob Feller and Hollywood actors like Jimmy Stewart to every day men and women across the country—felt an obligation to do their part in combating the twin evils of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan.

For their devotion to duty and sacrifice and their willingness to put country first despite their potential for fame and glory on the field, the American Veterans Center is proud to present the Major League Baseball veterans of World War II with the 2008 Audie Murphy Award.
Raymond G. Davis Award
For distinguished service in the United States military during the Korean War

Raymond G. Davis was appointed a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1938, following his college graduation and ROTC training. Throughout his military career, Davis fought in three wars and fourteen different campaigns. He rose to the rank of general, while earning 18 American and seven foreign awards. Among these included the Navy Cross, earned for actions at Peleliu during World War II and the Distinguished Service Medal during Vietnam. However, it was in December of 1950, near the Chosin Reservoir in Korea, that Davis would earn the acclaim that has made him legendary. While carrying his wounded along, he led his battalion over icy ridges to rescue a stranded rifle company. During this mission alone he was credited with saving over 1,000 Marines from certain death and 6,000 additional Marines from possible destruction. For this, he was awarded the Medal of Honor, and remains one of the great heroes in Marine Corps history.

Previous Recipients: 2007 - Captain Thomas J. Hudner, Jr.; 2006 - Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura

Lieutenant General Julius W. Becton Jr., USA (Ret)

Early on the rain-soaked morning of June 25, 1950, North Korean forces launched an artillery and mortar barrage on South Korean positions south of the 38th Parallel. At 11:00 AM, North Korea issued a formal declaration of war against the south, beginning what would forever be known as the Korean War.

The first days of the war went poorly for the South and its allies. The North, well-armed with Soviet materiel, quickly took the South Korean capital of Seoul, with the South’s military in full retreat.

North Korean hopes of a swift victory were dashed, however, when the United States and other foreign powers decided to intervene in the war, following United Nations approval. Still, the North had the momentum, and by August, South Korean and U.S. forces had been pushed to the far south of the Korean peninsula to a small area around the port city of Pusan. There, they would either make a desperate stand or be driven into the sea.

Meanwhile, reinforcements from the United States were beginning to arrive en masse. Among them was a young Army Lieutenant by the name of Julius W. Becton, Jr. Becton had joined the Army in 1944, graduating from OCS in 1945 and serving in the Pacific just prior to the end of World War II.

In 1950, black officers were rare in the Army. While President Truman’s Executive Order 9981 had officially desegregated the military, in practice it was slow to take effect. Upon arrival in Korea, Becton’s all-black battalion was at first relegated to guard-duty at Yonil Airfield by officers skeptical of their abilities. In the desperate defense of Pusan, however, every man was needed. After rejoining the rest of the regiment, Becton’s battalion began to prepare for battle. On the morning of September 17th, Lt. Becton was ordered to lead his platoon in an attack against enemy positions near the Naktong River on Hill 201.

Under intense mortar, automatic weapons, and small arms fire, Becton led his men in a spirited charge up the hill. Despite being hit by enemy fire, Lt. Becton ignored the pain and encouraged his men onward. His platoon plowed ahead, killing and wounding many enemy troops, and forcing them to withdraw.

The other platoons from Company L assigned to back up Lt. Becton’s charge had been pinned down by heavy fire coming from a nearby ridge, and were unable to move forward. Despite being cut off from the remainder of his company, Becton urged his men forward, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Upon reaching a position with favorable terrain, he stopped and skillfully deployed his troops to form a defensive perimeter.

For the next ten hours, Becton and his men defended their position, repelling several enemy attempts to overrun their small force. Becton was wounded three additional times during the fight, but refused to give in and stubbornly held his ground. That night, under the cover of darkness, Becton was able to lead his men back to the main elements of his battalion.

Though the U.N. forces were unable to break out from the Pusan Perimeter that day, Becton’s initiative and skillful leadership prevented the North Koreans from making a counterattack, allowing the 3rd Battalion to occupy an advantageous position from which they would later drive the enemy from the entire area.

Julius Becton would receive the Silver Star for his heroism on that day and after a short time in the hospital recovering from his wounds, he rejoined his regiment, becoming Executive Officer for Company I. Through the years he would continue to be promoted, and in August of 1972 he became only the sixth African American to attain the rank of Brigadier General in the United States Army.

General Becton would hold several distinguished commands, and in civilian life has served as Director of FEMA, President of Prairie View A&M University, and Superintendent of Washington DC public schools. He was a pioneer whose service helped prove that in the United States military, it is a man’s character and ability that count. Sixty years after Truman’s Executive Order 9981, we all owe him, and his comrades, a debt of gratitude. For his outstanding service in the Korean War and the decades since, the American Veterans Center is proud to award Lt. General Julius W. Becton Jr. the Raymond G. Davis Award.
The most decorated soldier in international combat in American history, Joe Ronnie Hooper, a native South Carolinian, joined the military when he was 19 years old. He was deployed with the 501st Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, popularly known as the Delta Raiders in 1966. During his two tours of duty in Vietnam, Hooper killed at least 115 Vietnamese. Surpassing both Sergeant Alvin York and Second Lieutenant Audie Murphy, Hooper earned 37 medals, including two Silver Stars, six Bronze Stars and eight Purple Hearts. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage on February 21, 1968 in the battle of Hue during the Tet Offensive. Among his many acts of valor that day, he is credited with single-handedly destroying three enemy bunkers, eliminating the enemy in four more with grenades and killing additional Vietnamese with his rifle and bayonet. He accomplished these feats while he was wounded, refusing medical help until his line was restored. Hooper retired as a captain in 1972 at the age of 34, one of America’s great heroes of Vietnam.


Colonel Walter Joseph Marm, USA (Ret)

12:15 PM, November 14, 1965. Men of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry are patrolling the jungle near a dry creek bed in the Ia Drang Valley of South Vietnam. They know the enemy is near, as just a short time earlier a North Vietnamese soldier was captured, revealing to the 1/7th’s commander, Lt. Col. Hal Moore, that there were up to 1600 enemy soldiers on nearby Chu Pong Mountain, all very much wanting to kill Americans.

Shots rang out. 1st and 2nd Platoons of Bravo Company engaged the enemy, advancing abreast of one another. The bloody battle of Ia Drang had begun, the first major encounter between Americans and North Vietnamese troops. Pursuing the North Vietnamese on its right flank, 2nd Platoon came under intense fire in a clearing in the jungle. They initially held off the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties while suffering none of their own.

Then, however, the situation quickly disintegrated. The North Vietnamese attack persisted and intensified, and the men of 2nd Platoon soon began suffering serious losses, including their commander, Lt. Henry Herrick, who despite his mortal wounds, passed vital commands to his men and called in artillery support. Cut off from the rest of their forces, 2nd Platoon desperately held out from a defensive position, waiting for help to arrive. As the rest of the battalion fought to maintain a perimeter, men of Alpha Company under Captain Tony Nadal were ordered to relieve the isolated troops.

Leading the second attempt to relieve the isolated troops was 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company commander Lt. Walter Joseph Marm, Jr. A native of Washington, Pennsylvania, Marm graduated college in 1964 with a business degree. He enlisted in the Army, graduated Officer Candidate School, and attended Ranger School. However, the Army needed junior officers for a new unit being formed – the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), and he was reassigned to the division’s 7th Cavalry – George Armstrong Custer’s old unit – and by September, 1965, he was in Vietnam.

Marm’s men came under intense fire from the well-disciplined North Vietnamese forces and were forced to take cover in the thick underbrush. Seeing four enemy soldiers attempting to outflank his unit, he moved toward them through a hail of bullets, killing all of them. Then, seeing his men pinned down by a well-concealed machine gun, he intentionally exposed himself to its fire to determine its position, which turned out to be behind a large ant-hill-shaped berm. Lt. Marm then took a bazooka, aimed at the position, and fired.

Despite inflicting casualties on the enemy, his shot failed to knock out the gun. Marm then charged over open ground through the fire, hurling grenades into the enemy position, taking out eight of the enemy before eliminating the remainder with his M-16 rifle. As he turned to motion his men to move forward to relieve their trapped comrades, he was shot through the jaw. Two of his men rushed forward to treat him. He was escorted to the command post at LZ X-Ray, and medevaced out of the battle zone.

The men of the Lost Platoon held out through the night of the 14th, and were eventually rescued and evacuated the next day. And by the morning of November 16, the reinforced Americans held the advantage, having inflicted thousands of casualties on the enemy, which was no longer capable of putting up a fight. Still, the battle at LZ X-Ray, and the ensuing ambush of the Americans at LZ Albany proved that the North Vietnamese were an enemy to be taken seriously.

Even more evident was that in combat, the generation of American servicemen serving in Vietnam was as brave, and noble, as any that has come before or since. Lt. Marm and his comrades proved that to be true.

Walter Joseph Marm was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Ia Drang. In 1969, he asked to return to Vietnam for a second tour of duty. He was allowed to return only after signing a waiver that putting himself back in harm’s way was entirely his own choice.

Marm retired from the Army a colonel, a member of the elite fraternity of men who have received America’s highest military award. Those men are a testament to the American soldier’s courage under fire and nobility in all situations, both on and off the battlefield. For his gallantry in Vietnam and dedication to service since, the American Veterans Center is proud to present Col. Walter Joseph Marm, Jr. the 2008 Joe Ronnie Hooper Award.
Paul Ray Smith was born in Texas in 1969. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1989 and was deployed with Bravo Company of the 3rd Infantry Division to Kosovo in 2001, rising to the rank of sergeant first class the spring of 2002. In January of 2003, he was deployed to Kuwait in preparation for what would become Operation Iraqi Freedom. On April 4, 2003, two weeks after the invasion, Smith’s unit found itself engaged in heavy combat against superior numbers of enemy forces near Baghdad International Airport. In the heat of the battle, Smith ran under heavy fire to a nearby mounted machine gun. While maintaining this exposed position, he killed nearly 50 enemy fighters before he was mortally wounded. His selfless actions saved the lives of more than 100 soldiers and repelled the enemy attack. For his valor, he posthumously was awarded the Medal of Honor—the first American service member to receive the military’s highest honor for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Senior Airman Jason Cunningham, USAF

Operation Enduring Freedom

Following the fall of the Taliban and the routing of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in late-2001, many of the remaining fighters fled to the Shati-Kot Valley in Pakthia Province, Afghanistan, where they attempted to regroup. To counter this, the United States military, along with coalition and Afghan forces, launched Operation Anaconda, an attempt to crush al-Qaeda and Taliban resistance in what was the first operation in Afghanistan to employ large numbers of conventional troops.

On March 4, 2002, a United States Chinook helicopter operating in the snowy mountains of Afghanistan took fire from enemy forces as it attempted to drop Navy SEALs on a mission to observe a series of caves where al-Qaeda fighters were concentrated. Though the helicopter was able to make it to safety, in the chaos of the attack one of the SEALs, Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts, was thrown from the helicopter. The injured Chinook was unable to return to rescue Roberts, but his fellow SEALs immediately requested they be allowed to return to the field, and upon loading into a new Chinook, headed back to the area where Roberts had fallen. Once again they were met with enemy fire, but this time were able to offload the men.

Meanwhile, a quick reaction force was launched from Bagram Air Base. On board one of the two MH-47s was Senior Airman Jason D. Cunningham, a 26-year-old pararescue jumper on his first combat mission. While Cunningham had originally joined the Navy and passed the fitness test to become a SEAL, he instead decided to train to become an Air Force pararescueman so he could help save others’ lives. On the mountain where Roberts had fallen, the situation was desperate. Roberts had been captured and killed, and the men on the ground were fighting for their lives. The sun was rising as Cunningham’s craft neared the mountain. They had experienced communication difficulties en route, and were attempting to land on the mountain’s peak—near the enemy.

The Chinook began to take heavy fire from the mountainside, its pilot hit by multiple rounds. It went down hard, still taking heavy fire from enemy fighters well concealed about 100 to 200 meters up the slope. As the Rangers on board sprinted out, Cunningham remained and went to work, treating wounds in the back of the helicopter, which the men used as a casualty collection point.

However, the Chinook made an excellent target for the enemy and soon caught fire. About four hours after the landing, Cunningham and the four other medical personnel were forced to move their patients to a safer location outside the craft. While moving them to safety, mortar rounds began landing within 50 feet of their position. Cunningham crossed the line of fire seven times while moving his patients to safety. He continued to work on his patients until the second collection point became too dangerous, and he was forced to move his patients to a third location. During this movement, one of the other medics was shot twice in the abdomen. Shortly after noon, Cunningham was hit just below his body armor. His liver was shattered, and he was bleeding internally. Despite the pain, he continued to direct patient movement and transferred care to another medic.

Cunningham had brought two blood packs with him. One saved the life of a badly wounded Ranger. The other was used to try to save Cunningham’s life as he slowly bled to death on the mountaintop. Until nightfall the landing zone was too hot for helicopters to come and rescue them. About 8 p.m., Cunningham became the first pararescue jumper to die in combat since the Vietnam War. Two hours later, helicopters arrived to evacuate the remaining men.

Senior Airman Jason Cunningham’s selfless actions saved the lives of ten gravely wounded Americans but cost his own. For his heroism, he was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross, the only the second such award presented since Vietnam. It was his example that inspired his brother-in-law, Jared Marquis, to join the Air Force in Jason’s honor. For his devotion to the pararescueman’s motto “That Others Might Live,” and for his inspirational example to not merely SSgt. Marquis, but all who have served, the American Veterans Center is proud to name Senior Airman Jason Cunningham as the posthumous recipient of the 2008 Paul Ray Smith Award.
Then-2nd Lt. Walter Bryan Jackson and his unit were attempting to recover a disabled vehicle along the road in what was then the deadliest province in the country. Jackson was the Fire Support Officer for Company A, Task Force 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment. Formerly serving in Germany, he had met with his unit en route to Iraq in January of the same year.

As his unit worked on the disabled vehicle, they came under severe machine gun fire from insurgent forces. The firing was centered on the middle of the road, which lay between Jackson and the commander. The commander and first sergeant were hit almost immediately. Seeing this, Jackson quickly crossed the road to the first sergeant’s side and applied a pressure bandage to the wound. Within a minute of reaching the sergeant’s side, Jackson himself was hit in the thigh and hand. He slumped over, losing consciousness for about a minute.

When he came to, Jackson began laying down suppressive fire in the general direction of the enemy. He then continued to administer first aid on the sergeant. After a few minutes, Jackson tried to reload the magazine of his rifle; but due to his injuries he was losing strength and was unable to load the weapon. So he turned his attention back to first aid, trying his best to keep the sergeant’s bleeding from becoming worse.

Meanwhile a few soldiers ran across the road to bring the injured commander to one of the Bradleys. A sniper hit another one of the soldiers as he bent down to pick up the commander’s weapon. The soldiers returned to help Jackson carry the sergeant to the Bradley, unaware that Jackson himself was seriously wounded. Despite the severe pain, Jackson stood up and helped carry the sergeant to the Bradley. On the way, Jackson was hit again in the leg. He and his comrades climbed into the Bradley and were evacuated.

A medic immediately started working on the sergeant. Meanwhile, Jackson could no longer feel his leg. Unsure of what to do, he grabbed the sergeant’s hand in an attempt to comfort him, despite the severity of his wounds, which required immediate surgical care. It was not until his comrade was treated that Jackson was attended to. When he was visited later that day at the aid station by the Task Force commander, Lt. Col. Thomas C. Graves, Jackson’s first words were of concern for his fellow soldier. Jackson’s selfless actions were essential in saving the other soldier’s life.

Jackson spent a year recovering in Walter Reed Army Medical Center. During his recovery, he spent his time volunteering as an intern at the Office of the Judge Advocate General, and has more recently returned to duty in Korea. For his heroism and selfless courage, Jackson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor. Upon being presented the award by Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Jackson humbly said, “I believe I just had to do what I had to do in that situation… I think many soldiers would have done the same thing.”

The valor, honor, and integrity shared among Jackson’s fellow West Point graduates and soldiers is emblematic of those serving in the United States Military Today. It is for this, and for his willingness to sacrifice for his friends, that the American Veterans Center presents Captain Walter Bryan Jackson with the 2008 Paul Ray Smith Award.
Colonel Cyril “Rick” Rescorla, USA (Ret)

September 11, 2001. A day Americans will never forget. The destruction of the World Trade Center at the hands of bloodthirsty terrorists is an image forever burned into our minds.

Yet despite the horror, the nation found a newfound resolve. Inside the buildings, selfless acts of heroism were displayed that were so profound, had they been witnessed on a field of battle they would have merited all the glory given to those who have received the Medal of Honor.

Among the heroes, one man’s story stands out. He was a hero before, in the jungles of Vietnam, under a legendary commander in one of the toughest fights in U.S. history.

Ia Drang Valley, Central Highlands of South Vietnam. November 14, 1965. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry touch down in a clearing dubbed Landing Zone X-Ray. Their mission: to find and kill the enemy forces suspected to be in the area. They would not have far to look, as three battalions of North Vietnamese sat waiting on the nearby Chu Pong Mountain, eager to get a shot at taking on the Americans.

Fighting quickly erupted, as then-Lt. Col. Hal Moore built a defensive perimeter around the edge of the landing zone. The next morning, shortly after 9:00 AM, men from the 2nd Battalion 7th Cavalry arrived at X-Ray to reinforce the soldiers under Lt. Col. Moore. Among them was one of the few soldiers on the battlefield to have combat experience, a platoon leader in Bravo Company by the name of Rick Rescorla.

A native of Cornwall, England, Rick Rescorla grew up idolizing the men of the U.S. 29th Infantry Division stationed near his hometown. He would join the British Army, fighting the Communist insurgency in Cyprus, and later served with the Northern Rhodesia Police. He eventually moved to the United States, where he joined the Army and was made a platoon leader in the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

At LZ X-Ray, the situation was dire. The vastly outnumbered Americans were nearly surrounded by well-trained and motivated North Vietnamese soldiers. Yet Rescorla’s confidence never wavered. He walked among his men’s foxholes, singing Cornish songs, including a version of the famed old military march, Men of Harlech, and leading cheers to raise morale.

A fellow soldier, Larry Gwin, said, “I saw Rick Rescorla come swaggering into our lines with a smile on his face, an M-79 on his shoulder, his M-16 in one hand, saying ‘Good, good, good! I hope they hit us with everything they’ve got tonight—we’ll wipe them up!’ His spirit was catching. The enemy must have thought an entire battalion was coming to help us, because of all our screaming and yelling.”

The men of the 1st Cav held out at X-Ray, eventually beating back the tremendous North Vietnamese onslaught, due in no small part to the leadership of Rick Rescorla. He was a rock on the battlefield, steady and strong, and would be awarded the Silver and Bronze Stars along with the Purple Heart. Hal Moore called him “The best platoon leader I ever saw,” and it was Rick Rescorla’s photo that adorned the cover of General Moore and Joseph Galloway’s classic account of Ia Drang, We Were Soldiers Once…and Young.

Rick Rescorla returned to the States and retired into civilian life. Several years later he took charge of security for Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, located in the South Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. In 1992, Rescorla warned the Port Authority, the owners of the World Trade Center, of the danger of a potential terrorist attack which might bring the buildings down by planting a truck laden with explosives next to one of the load-bearing columns in the basement. Yet he was ignored, and in 1993, Islamic terrorists detonated such a bomb. While it failed to bring the towers down, the attack killed six and injured over 1,000. It also proved Rescorla’s fears true that the twin towers were already a major terrorist target. He was there that day, and was instrumental in the evacuation, being the last man to leave.

Recognizing that this would not be the last attempt to bring down the buildings, Rescorla urged his company to move. He believed they were too ripe a target for such truck bombings or even cargo planes loaded with explosives or chemical weapons en route from the Middle East. However, Morgan Stanley’s lease did not end until 2005, so he was told such a move would not be possible.

Under the circumstances, he did what he could. He installed generators and lighting in the stairwells, and drilled the employees twice a year, encouraging his terrified co-workers down the stairs to safety. “Be proud to be an American – everybody will be talking about you tomorrow,” he told them over a bullhorn. And as in Vietnam over 35 years earlier, he began to sing: God Bless America and defiant Cornish songs, once again including his adaptation of Men of Harlech.

8:46 AM on September 11, 2001. American Airlines Flight 11 crashes into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Over the intercom in the South Tower, authorities told everyone to stay put – they were safe where they were. Rescorla would have none of it, and immediately started evacuating Morgan Stanley employees.

Rick Rescorla was everywhere that morning – reported to have been seen in the stairwell from the 10th to the 72nd floors, calmly and confidently encouraging his terrified co-workers down the stairs to safety. “Be proud to be an American – everybody will be talking about you tomorrow,” he told them over a bullhorn. And as in Vietnam over 35 years earlier, he began to sing: God Bless America and defiant Cornish songs, once again including his adaptation of Men of Harlech.

9:03 AM. United Airlines Flight 175 smashes into the South Tower. Undeterred, Rescorla continued the evacuation. He called his wife, Susan, telling her he was getting his people out. His last words to her before hanging up were, “You made my life.”
By the time the second plane had hit the South Tower, Rescorla had evacuated most of Morgan Stanley’s 2700 employees. Yet, despite this, he rushed back inside along with three of his deputies. When told that he had to leave, he replied, “As soon as I make sure everyone else is out.”

9:59 AM. The South Tower collapses. Twenty-nine minutes later, the North Tower fell. Over 2,700 people were killed in the disaster. It should have been more. If not for the planning and leadership of Rick Rescorla, it is certain that many of Morgan Stanley’s 2,700 employees would have died when the South Tower collapsed. Instead, only six were killed — including Rick Rescorla and his deputies. He was last seen rushing up the 10th floor stairwell of the South Tower, determined to once again be the last man out.

Rick Rescorla’s story of valor and sacrifice in our nation’s darkest hour is one that every American should know. Many have worked to make this the case. In his memory, Susan Rescorla created the Richard C. Rescorla Memorial Foundation, and his story was told by James Stewart in the best-selling book Heart of A Soldier. And to date, nearly 31,000 individuals have signed a petition for Rick to receive our nation’s highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

For his heroism, honor, and nobility, and for being responsible for saving the lives of nearly 3,000 people, the American Veterans Center is proud to help share Rick Rescorla’s story and to salute him as the recipient of the 2008 Edward J. Herlihy Citizenship Award.

**Lillian K. Keil Award**  
Awarded to a female veteran or active duty service member who has done significant work to promote the contribution of women to the United States Armed Forces.

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Also, many videos can be viewed on our website at www.americanveteranscenter.org
The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war... shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.

- George Washington

We are pleased to have an opportunity to participate in the important work of the World War II Veterans Committee and we salute the courageous men and women of our Armed Forces.
AND A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR MANY INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS WHO HELPED MAKE POSSIBLE THE 11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AWARDS BANQUET

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