



For Immediate Release  
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## Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2016 to be Inducted Nov. 3 in Columbus

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame will induct the Class of 2016 in a ceremony at 11 a.m. November 3 at the Lincoln Theater in Columbus. The Ohio veterans' community and the public are cordially invited to attend and honor the 19 Ohioans in this year's class as they join the 498 others who are enshrined in the Hall.

The Hall is dedicated to recognizing Ohio veterans who, after their military service, put their skills and abilities to work in their local communities. They are veterans who have continued to serve others, and by their continued service and positive accomplishments, inspired their fellow citizens.

The Lincoln Theater is located at 769 E. Long St., Columbus, OH 43203. To watch a live-stream broadcast of the induction ceremony, go to <https://www.ohiochannel.org/live/special-events?19>.

A brief biography of each of the inductees of the Class of 2016 is included in this release.

It's not too early to nominate deserving veterans for the Class of 2017. The deadline for submission is June 30, 2017. Information and a nomination form can be found at: [http://dvs.ohio.gov/VETERANS\\_HALL\\_OF\\_FAME](http://dvs.ohio.gov/VETERANS_HALL_OF_FAME)

This year's inductees are:

**Robert H. Bertschy**, 89, of East Liverpool, Columbiana County, is a veteran of the U.S. Navy who served in World War II and the Korean War. Bob joined the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) in April 1947 and has been an active member for 69 years. He has held all offices in his local DAV chapter, the John W. Covert Chapter 47 in East Liverpool. He twice served two-year terms as Department of Ohio 7th District commander. Bob was elected to the Department of Ohio Executive Committee and was elected as DAV Department State Commander for 2007-2008. In 2015, Bob was elected to a two-year term to serve on the DAV National Executive Committee representing District 11 (Ohio). In January 2016, he was appointed DAV VA voluntary services deputy representative for the Cleveland VA Medical Center. As a DAV volunteer driver, Bob has logged over 200,000 miles for the DAV Transportation Network Program and has over 10,000 VA accredited hours devoted to VA Voluntary Services. In 2007, Bob was honored when he received the "Presidential Volunteer

Lifetime Achievement Award.” Bob was active in the Boy Scouts of America for 25 years and received the Order of the Arrow Vigil Honor and the Silver Beaver.

**Robert L. Brewster**, 79, of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. Bob volunteers at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center and recently received a “Certificate of Appreciation” for 15 years and 2,020 hours of voluntary service to veterans. He also serves as the deputy representative with the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) for the Catholic War Veterans (CWV) and as a member of VAVS’s Veterans Holiday Activity and Welfare Committee, which provides gifts to patients on national holidays. He served as president of the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of the Air Force Association for 13 years and received the Air Force Association Medal of Merit and the prestigious Exceptional Service Award for his work with the chapter. Bob is active in American Legion Post 530 where he serves on the Honor Guard, providing military honors for veterans’ funerals and patriotic observances throughout the tri-state area. In April 2016, he was named “Legionnaire of the Year” for Hamilton County for his service to the community and to veterans. He recently was elected commander of AMVETS Post 1963 located on the campus of the University of Cincinnati, a post dedicated to ensuring student-veterans are supported in their transition to education and employment.

**Thomas R. Burke**, 70, of New Philadelphia, Tuscarawas County, is a U.S. Navy veteran who served in the Vietnam War. A force to be reckoned with, Tom is a veteran’s advocate whose work with the Vietnam Veterans of America has been substantial. He has worked with education leaders to provide programs and outreach to veterans. He labored diligently with Justice Evelyn Stratton to support Ohio veterans through the establishment of Veterans Courts in Ohio. Tom recently spearheaded the development of national PSAs showcasing the needs of veterans, a project so well-received that Comcast gave \$3 million of free air time to help promote awareness. He has exhibited selfless leadership with the Vietnam Veterans of America as the Buckeye State Council president for eight years, collecting no salary while dedicating countless hours and personal dollars to their causes. A leader on the national scene, Tom currently serves on VVA’s National Board of Directors. Tom currently serves as national chairman of VVA’s Veterans Benefits Committee and recently chaired the National Public Affairs Committee. He also served as president of Delta Nu Alpha Transportation, a group of 60,000 transportation professionals organized for the purpose of getting colleges to teach and offer degrees to individuals in transportation/logistics.

**Albert C. Edmondson**, 48, of Columbus, Franklin County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army who served in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Al currently serves as president of the historic Mount Vernon District Improvement Association (MVDIA), is founder and CEO of “Making a Difference” and owner of “A Cut Above the Rest” barber shop. Al has been awarded locally and nationally for his community service work. His dedication to the Columbus near east side has led to initiatives that encourage neighborhood revitalization, business redevelopment and programs focused on health and wellness. In addition, Edmondson is an ambassador for the American Heart

Association, American Cancer Society and Life Line of Ohio. In 2013, Edmondson established the first King/Lincoln Memorial parade and events honoring and remembering African Americans for their service in the U.S. Armed Forces. For Al's outstanding community service, Congresswoman Joyce Beatty invited him to the White House for the 2014 announcement of the "My Brother's Keeper" program with President Obama. Most recently, he was awarded the 2016 Jefferson Award for central Ohio.

**William J. Frost**, 73, of Canal Winchester, Franklin County, is a U.S. Air Force veteran. He is a retired educator from the Logan Elm School District in Pickaway County. His tenure included: teacher, coach, athletic director and high school guidance counselor. He has been inducted into the Mid-State League Coaches Hall of Fame, the Logan Elm Athletic Hall of Fame and the Football Hall of Fame at Southern High School in Oakland, Md. He became a certified hunter safety instructor and has conducted private and public courses since 1980. He is a member of the Pickaway County Chapter of the National Council on Youth Leadership. In 2010, he launched the first disabled veteran's hunt in Pickaway County. The event started with 10 disabled hunters and has since grown to 31 participants. He is dedicated to providing veterans with relaxation, means to forget about their disabilities and inspiration to participate in the activities they enjoy. The State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation honored him with the Volunteer of the Year Award in 2011 and the State's Outstanding "Wheelin' Sportsmen" event award in 2015. Bill is a member of American Legion Post 134. He has served as post adjutant, chairman of the Buckeye Boys State Committee, Americanism and Government test coordinator and 7th District assistant sergeant-at-arms.

**Susan K. Green**, 53, a native of Guernsey County and longtime resident of Pickerington in Fairfield County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army. A West Point graduate, she volunteers for the Academy as a candidate advisor, assisting young adults interested in military service and serving annually on a Congressional Academy Nominating Committee. In 2011, Susan began welcoming recovering veterans to her cabin and farm for a free three-day hunting excursion providing meals, lodging and camaraderie for the veterans. Last year, Susan founded the Guernsey County Military Homecoming Celebration to honor all veterans during Military Day at the county fair. With the support of the Fair Board, WWII era veterans were specially honored in 2015 followed by Korean War era veterans in 2016. She coordinated numerous details to make the day special for the veterans and family members. Susan is trained in disaster services by the American Red Cross and volunteers as a disaster assistance team leader. She volunteers in support of the Ohio Army National Guard, where two of her sons serve.

**Kelly K. Knox** of Springfield Township, Hamilton County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army and Air Force who served in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the Bosnian War. Kelly is a nationally recognized expert in effective treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and is active in educating the public and disseminating evidence-based treatment to mental health professionals throughout the country. She served as

commander of the Greater Cincinnati Women's Post 644 of the American Legion from 2009-11. Kelly has been on the advisory boards of the Joseph House for Homeless Veterans and Volunteers of America. She is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Military Officers Association of America. She has continued to use her emergency response skills as a mission pilot with the Civil Air Patrol. As a disabled veteran, she is very active in promoting adaptive sports and represents the national Paralyzed Veterans Racing Team in para-cycling events. She is an active volunteer with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, which named her as their Bike MS Ambassador in 2010, and she has personally raised over \$10,000 for MS research and direct services.

**Robert B. "Rock" Lantz**, 70, of Westerville, Delaware County, is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force who served in the Vietnam War. A longtime coach of youth baseball and softball, Rock joined the Rotary Club of Westerville in 1992, serving as board of director for two three-year terms, and as the club's president from 2011-12. The Rotary Club of Westerville honored him with the 2001-02 Rotarian of the Year Award and recently the Monroe Courtright Community Service Award. Rock is a leader of Westerville Honor Flight operations, where he helped the committee raise more than \$450,000 to fund flights for more than 650 veterans. He served as guardian for 28 veterans on 16 different flights to see their memorials in Washington, D.C. He also serves as a trustee and past president of the Rotary Club Harris-Askins House, a HUD-based 60-unit senior resident housing program, and is an Otterbein University Rotaract Club's advisor. One of the projects involved assembling and distributing more than 400 bicycles for Columbus inner-city youth. Another endeavor involved collecting food for Westerville Area Resource Ministries for families in need in the Westerville and northern Columbus communities.

**John S. Mattox**, 81, of Flushing, Belmont County, is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. John continued his service with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7342 and American Legion Post 366 in Flushing. He serves in numerous civic organizations, both locally and nationally. He travels to cities and schools across a wide region, where he delights in teaching children and others about American history. In 2008, Ohio University awarded him an Honorary Doctorate of Public Service for his work in establishing The Underground Railroad Museum in Flushing. The museum showcases Ohio's role in and contributions to the fight against slavery. Dr. Mattox serves on the Campus Coordinating Council at Ohio University – Eastern, a council that seeks to provide opportunities for greater communication and understanding between community residents and the university. He served as the local president of A Special Wish Foundation and chairman of the organization's national board. John attended the Ohio Peace Officers Basic Training Course and volunteers as a special deputy sheriff.

**John C. McCoy**, 86, of Reynoldsburg, Franklin County, is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and Ohio Air National Guard. John is a life member of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and past president of both the MOAA Ohio Council of Chapters and the MOAA Central Ohio Chapter. He currently serves as state legislative director for both organizations, advocating for veterans at both the national and state

level. John is a founding member of the MOAA Heritage Society which oversees programs and services in five critical focus areas: veteran career transition, disability assistance, military family reintegration, military spouse programs and financial education outreach. These programs have benefited thousands of uniformed service members, veterans, survivors and their families. John served as a council member with the Armed Forces Community Relations Council for 34 years until it was dissolved in 2014. He was appointed in 2012 by the MOAA president of the Ohio Council to serve on the Ohio Department of Veterans Services Advisory Committee. John was also a board member of the Central and Southern Ohio USO for more than 10 years serving as the chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

**William J. Miller**, 94, of Fairlawn, Summit County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army who served in World War II. After he returned from the war, he enrolled at Case Western Reserve University and received his Juris Doctor. Bill's greatest civilian contribution is his lifelong involvement with the Boy Scouts of America through which he has changed the lives of countless young men. In Scouting, Bill earned the Wood Badge training award, the District Award of Merit and the Silver Beaver. The Silver Beaver is an award given to those who implement the Scouting program and perform community service through hard work, self-sacrifice and dedication. Bill was the founding member and past president of the Fairlawn Chamber of Commerce. He is also a past president of the Fairlawn Optimist Club, and has served several terms on his church board. He is a member of American Legion Post 19 in Akron and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 349 in Fairlawn. Bill served as the featured speaker at the Governor's 36th Annual Holocaust Commemoration on May 25, 2016, where he recounted his experience leading a small unit to liberate a concentration camp in the Buchenwald prison system.

**John E. Moore**, Sr., 93, of Dayton, Montgomery County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army who served in World War II. John is a longtime community volunteer and a leading advocate for positive change in Greater Dayton. He helped find work for the unemployed and addressed self-sufficiency issues by leading efforts to establish the Montgomery County Job Center in the 1990s. John worked to make education attainable for local students in need by helping to launch the Out-of-School Youth effort, the Montgomery County Scholarship Program and the Montgomery County Mentoring Collaborative. He has pushed tirelessly for diversity and inclusion for all citizens of his region through his work at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base; the Commission on Minority Inclusion; the Minority Economic Development Council; Parity, Inc.; the African-American Community Fund of The Dayton Foundation; and the Montgomery County Human Services Levy. He has spent considerable time supporting and implementing missions projects in the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. John is a voice for the voiceless, helping remove barriers and working diligently to ensure that everyone in Greater Dayton is offered an equal opportunity to become successful, contributing members of society.

**Larry D. Moore**, 66, of Mansfield, Richland County, is a veteran of the U.S. Navy who served in the Vietnam War. Larry is an articulate advocate and leader for veterans' and civic causes. He serves as chairman of the Legislative Committee and as the awards chairman on the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners. Larry has been a member of American Legion Post 16 for 33 years. He is a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3494 and served as past commander. He currently serves as post adjutant/service officer and state legislative chairman. Larry was the 2008 recipient of the Mansfield Memorial & Patriotic Association Plaque for Outstanding Service. He was member and past president of the Richland County Homeless Coalition, which formed to bring awareness regarding homelessness to the community. Larry served as trustee and vice president of the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging. He currently serves as the secretary for Project Summit, a charity created by local Vietnam veterans to raise funds to bring the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball team to Akron. The team has toured the country inspiring veterans to overcome their disabilities.

**Ronald J. Pusateri**, 70, of Westerville, Delaware County is a retired Colonel who served 28 years in the U.S. Army in Vietnam and Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. His military affiliations include membership in VFW Post 2398, the Military Officers Association of Central Ohio and the Reserve Officers Association. He served on the board of directors in the Westerville and Whitehall area Chamber of Commerce and served as chair for the United Way Campaign at Riverside Methodist Hospital. Since 2011, he's been an active member of the Westerville Honor Flight committee which raises money to fly veterans to Washington, D.C. to see their memorials. He was recently a guardian on the first central Ohio all-women flight. He served as co-chair during 2015 and 2016 for the Westerville Sunrise Rotary Field of Heroes Memorial Day weekend. The event provided the central Ohio community the opportunity to honor personal heroes as part of a display of 3,000 American flags. Ronald provided leadership and vision during these events which paid tribute to women veterans and veterans of Middle East wars. His exceptional devotion to duty and outstanding service to country and community is in keeping with the "service above self" motto of the Army Medical Department and Westerville Sunrise Rotary.

**Francis J. Russo**, (posthumous) of Mansfield, Richland County, served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. Frank created the "Needy Family Program" to provide 300 needy Richland County families with food and other necessities year-round, but especially during the holidays. Mr. Russo served on the Msgr. Dunn Foundation for Education, parish council and Catholic Charities. He was the vice president of the Richland County Veterans Service Commission. Frank was past president of the Korean War Veterans Association, Chapter 51. He was past commander of American Legion Post 16. He served on the following boards: Rehab Center, Harmony House, Mansfield Cancer Foundation, Mansfield Health Department, Richland County Mental Health and United Way. In 2003, Frank was awarded the Hero with Heart award by

Richland Newhope for making a significant difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and contributing to positive public awareness. In 2014, Frank was honored by the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging with an Outstanding Senior Citizen Award.

**Joseph J. Rygielski**, 74, of Loudonville, Ashland County, is a retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. He earned a BA from Washburn University and an MBA from Oklahoma City University. He completed three one-year Air Force schools: Air Command and Staff College, Air War College and Education-With-Industry. He is a 10k runner and supporter of the annual Air Force Marathon at WPAFB. Joe was the business manager for the Mohican Area Community Fund, which raised approximately \$65,000 per year for 15 local organizations including national Scout organizations, The American Red Cross and The Salvation Army. His responsibilities at Saint Peter's Church included the following: finance committee; Gabriel Project, which provides assistance to pregnant girls, needy mothers and children; volunteering at monthly community meals; and Eucharistic Minister, which includes visiting 14-20 parishioners in nursing homes or who are homebound. He delivered meals for the Meals on Wheels Program and is a member of the Ohio Tree Farm Program, which promotes preserving wood, water, wildlife and recreation for community use. A former Ashland County Precinct voting judge, Joe often is seen around town volunteering at events including the Loudonville Fair, fundraisers and additional service organizations.

**John F. Sazpansky**, 86, of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army. John volunteers at the Louis Stokes Veterans Administration Medical Center in Cleveland, where he received the Volunteer Service Award from the Department of Veterans Affairs for his 50 years of volunteer service. He received The President's Call to Service Award for his many years of dedicated volunteer service. John worked with the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Office to obtain missing military decorations and service medals to create shadow boxes commemorating veterans service. He then presented the shadow boxes to family members. John is an active member of American Legion Post 469, and has served in several leadership positions within the organization including as commander. He served as a past president of the Ohio Society of Military History, Inc. in Massillon.

**Deborah L. Wallace**, 64, of Beavercreek, Greene County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army. Deborah worked to serve others through government, first with the Office of Management & Budget, then with the Civil Service Board for the City of Dayton. She volunteered in Montgomery County for 24 years on the Senior Citizens Center Board, Dayton Visual Arts Board and YMCA Camp Kern Board. After relocating to Beavercreek in 2001, she was appointed by City Council to the Zoning Appeals Board and to the Planning Commission. Following the urges of community leaders, Deborah ran for City Council. She was elected in 2009 and again in 2013, and served as the city's Vice Mayor for two years. In her elected roles, Deborah has advocated for more service and consideration for disabled citizens and veterans. She was pivotal in increasing handicap parking spaces on new developments by more than 30% above ADA standards. Deborah serves as president of Beavercreek Women's League and is

on the Board of Miami Valley Military Affairs and the Beaver Creek Chamber of Commerce. She is also chair for the Veteran's Advisory Committee and a life member of the Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars and served as chaplain for VFW Post 2800. In 2015, Deborah's insurance business received the Outstanding Women-Owned Business of the Year award from the Beaver Creek Chamber.

**Jerrold W. Wilson**, 66, of Harrison, Hamilton County, is a veteran of the U.S. Army. Jerry was the key person in establishing the Amber Garrett fund after the untimely murder of a young girl in Harrison, Ohio. The fund, for 21 years, provided financial support for more than 80 Head Start students, providing clothing, shoes, coats and gloves during the holiday season. He coordinated shopping trips where the students were paired with community leaders. Once purchased, clothing articles were wrapped along with a toy and presented to each child at a gathering at the American Legion. Over the life of the program, more than \$175,000 was raised through a wide variety of fundraising activities overseen by Mr. Wilson. Jerry also led the American Legion to provide scholarships for outstanding and needy students at Harrison High School. Through his leadership with the Legion, he was able to attain sponsorship for students to attend Buckeye Boys State programs. Jerry was appointed by the mayor of Harrison to serve on the Mayor's Fund Executive Board and through his guidance, planning and leadership, he dramatically increased the amount of money raised to help needy families and individuals in the community.

Additional information on past inductees are available at:

[http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans\\_hall\\_of\\_fame.aspx](http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans_hall_of_fame.aspx)

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame was established in 1992 by former Gov. George Voinovich to recognize the post-military achievements of outstanding veterans. Charter members of the Hall's Class of 1993 included the six Ohio military veterans who were elected President of the United States and all Medal of Honor recipients from Ohio. Honorees of the past 24 years include astronauts, government officials, police officers, community leaders, and veterans' advocates.

The Hall of Fame Executive Committee, comprised entirely of veterans, serves as advisors for the Hall of Fame and selects no more than 20 inductees annually from nominations provided by all citizens of Ohio. Men and women chosen for induction into the Hall come from all eras, all branches of service and all walks of life. The members of the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame are honored in a permanent display on the second floor of the Riffe Center in downtown.

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For more information or photos of honorees please contact - Eileen Corson at 614-728-0235, [Eileen.Corson@dvs.ohio.gov](mailto:Eileen.Corson@dvs.ohio.gov) or Jeff Rapp at 614-466-7637, [Jeffrey.Rapp@dvs.ohio.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Rapp@dvs.ohio.gov).