

Governor Strickland Announces 2008 Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Inductees

Columbus, OH – Ohio Governor Ted Strickland today announced the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2008. The 20 inductees include representatives of armed conflicts from the World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

“We honor all Ohio veterans for their selfless service to our communities and to our nation,” Strickland said. “The men and women of the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2008 are true examples of dedication to country through a lifetime service.”

Honorees for the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame are nominated on a year-round basis, and include men and women from Ohio from any branch of the military and all eras of military conflict. After nominations are submitted, a 13-member executive committee of veterans’ representatives recommends the names to the governor for induction into the Hall of Fame.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame was established in 1992 to recognize Ohio veterans with honorable military service who have gone on to make significant contributions to their community, profession, state, and nation. In May 2005, the Ohio General Assembly established the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame in statute through SB 277, allowing for the Governor’s Office of Veterans Affairs to serve as the administrative agent.

The induction ceremony for the Class of 2008 will be held on November 7, 2008, at 3:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Franklin County Veterans Memorial in Columbus. The ceremony is open to the public and will be preceded by a public reception beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Below is a list of the 20 Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Inductees for the Class of 2008.

Class of 2008

SAMUEL ARNOLD

Butler County - United States Army Veteran – Vietnam War

Arnold is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4369’s board of trustees and provides dentistry to veterans who reside at Joseph House at little to no cost.

PAUL E. BALDRIDGE, JR.

Franklin County - United States Navy Veteran

Baldrige has served in a number of veteran’s organizations including the Navy League of the United States where he has held positions as State President, National Director and Vice President.

OSCAR C. DECKER, JR.

Union County - United States Army Veteran/Army National Guard and Army Reserve - World War II and Vietnam War

Decker organized the Union County Military Family Support Group in 2003 and was awarded the Legion of Honor Award from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, and the American Legion of Merit.

REBECCA P. EDEN, RN, BSN

Cuyahoga County - United States Army Nurse Corps Veteran – World War II

Eden is a lifetime member of Gold Star Wives and AMVETS. She was presented with the Veterans Affairs Commendation given by the Ohio Veterans Commission for helping veterans pursue educational goals in 1982.

EUGENE F. FITZTHUM

Erie County - United States Army Veteran – World War II

Fitzthum was presented the John L. Smith “AMVET of the Year” Award for all of his volunteer work for AMVETS Post 17 in 2008 and “Volunteer of the Year” from the Ohio Veterans Home in 2006.

NADA R. FLEMING, RN

Cuyahoga County - United States Navy Veteran - Desert Shield/Desert Storm

Fleming is a Past Commander of Seven Hills VFW Post 7609 and was appointed as “National VFW Nurse of the Year” for 2006-2007.

ROBERT D. HAAS

Stark County - United States Army Veteran - Korean War

Haas has served as the Volunteer Liaison Officer for the United States Military Academy, West Point for the past 29 years and is a founding member and past Chapter President of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association #69.

DALE M. HUFFMAN

Montgomery County - United States Army Veteran

Huffman’s public broadcasting skills have helped to energize veteran advocacy and he was inducted into Dayton’s Walk of Fame on September 25, 2008.

CHARLES IANNI (deceased)

Cuyahoga County - United States Army Veteran - World War II

Ianni was named “Veteran of the Year” by Cuyahoga County and was charter member of the John Towle Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, Special Forces Chapter.

JAMES A. JOHNSON

Franklin County - United States Air Force Veteran

Johnson was awarded the A.F.C.R.C. Certificate of Recognition for his contribution, support, and distinguished service to his community, especially in the area of veteran’s affairs in 2007.

JACK M. KENNEDY

Franklin County - United States Navy Veteran - Vietnam War

Kennedy has served in the Navy League of the United States where he held various positions, including Navy League Council President. He is a lifetime member of the Military Officers Association of America.

MARGARET I. KRUCKEMEYER, RN, MSN

Greene County - United States Army Veteran – Vietnam Era

Kruckemeyer is the President of the American Veterans Heritage Commission and is a past National Board Member on the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs Foundation.

SAMUEL E. LANZA

Trumbull County - United States Marine Corps Veteran - World War II

Lanza was appointed to the Trumbull County Veterans Service Commission in 1997 and is a Past State Commander for the Disabled American Veterans.

STANLEY C. PACE

Cuyahoga County - United States Air Force Veteran - World War II

Pace has been active in the Boy Scouts of America since 1958 and was awarded the Silver Beaver and the Silver Antelope for his services. He is also active in the United Way of Cleveland and served as Chairman of the Annual United Way Fund Drive.

ELVA M. POUNDERS

Summit County - United States Marine Corps Veteran – Vietnam Era

Pounders is the vice chairperson for the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and was awarded the 500 Hour Award for her volunteer efforts at Brecksville VA Medical Center in 2006.

TONY J. SUSTARSIC

Cuyahoga County - United States Army Veteran - World War II

Sustarsic is the founder, past president and lifetime member of Euclid Veterans Club. He is also a fundraiser for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1056 and American Legion Post 343.

WILLIAM H. WILLOUGHBY, Jr.

Lake County - United States Army Veteran - Vietnam War

Willoughby is a United States Military Academy admissions coordinator and serves on the Veteran Issues Committee.

HERMAN ZERGER

Monroe County- United States Army Veteran - World War II Service and a Prisoner of War

Zerger was one of the founding charter members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #5303 where he served as Trustee for 40 years. He is an active participant in Ohio Chapter #1 American Ex-Prisoner of War.