

Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame

CLASS OF 2019
INDUCTION CEREMONY



December 6, 2019

CONNECTICUT VETERANS HALL OF FAME 2019 INDUCTION CLASS

December 6, 2019

Dear Veterans, families, and friends:



I am honored to join you tonight to recognize the Connecticut residents whose outstanding achievements have inspired us and left a lasting legacy of service for generations to come.

These 2019 Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame inductees served their state and their country honorably in the Armed Forces, and then went on to do the same in cities and towns across the state. They have dedicated themselves to building thriving communities and a stronger Connecticut.

We are grateful to the Class of 2019 and all of the members of the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame for their brave and patriotic service, leadership and commitment to improving the lives of others.

Sincerely,



Susan Bysiewicz
Lieutenant Governor

CONNECTICUT VETERANS HALL OF FAME

History

The Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame was established to increase the awareness of the lifetime contributions of Veterans after completion of honorable military service. The Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame is not a military hall of fame. Those selected for the honor of induction are Veterans who honorably served their country through military service and who continue to serve and inspire their fellow man with their deeds and accomplishments throughout their lifetime.

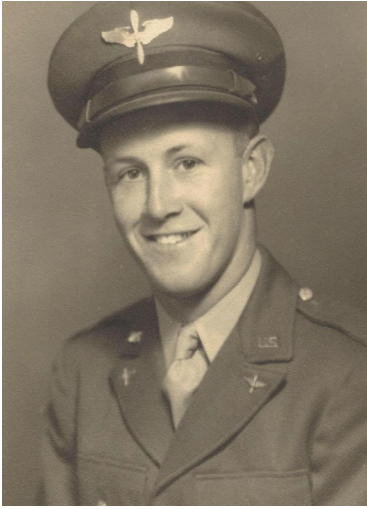
Each year the committee selects inductees from applications received from across the state and nation. These Veterans will be leaders in a variety of areas, such as arts, education, public service, volunteer activities, and community and business leadership to name a few. Most importantly, they will have made significant impacts on the lives of others and their communities.

To be eligible for the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame, the nominee must have served their country honorably in a branch of military service and continued to serve their communities, state and nation after discharge. Because so many of America's Veterans continue to give to their communities, state and nation after honorable military service, the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame seeks to recognize them for their countless contributions to society.

The Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame is administered by the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs and the Connecticut Military Department on behalf of the Office of the Governor.

The first class of the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame was inducted in November 2005 and includes the 41st President of the United States, George Herbert Walker Bush.

In 2015, a plaque was unveiled and placed in the Legislative Office Building with the names of all Inductees of the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame since 2005. Each future class of Inductees will be named on this plaque.



ROBERT T. CAHILL, SR.
New Fairfield
posthumous

U.S. ARMY AIR CORPS

Robert Cahill Sr. enlisted in the U.S. Army in March of 1942 and served as an Aviation Cadet in the U.S Army Air Corps through March 10, 1943. A day later, he began his duties as a Navigator in the Army Air Corps where he served honorably on active duty until October 10, 1945 as a First Lieutenant. Upon his return to civilian life, Lt. Cahill signed up for the Army Reserve where he continued his service until his retirement in May of 1978. Robert has received the Air Medal, two Presidential Units Citation and several others. Upon Robert's death in 1990, his wife, Dorothy, was presented with a Certificate of Gratitude from then President George Bush. During and after his military service, Robert volunteered for a number of causes. He was a member of the VFW for at least 20 years. His involvement with the organization was rather low-key primarily due to his very active participation in a wide variety of community organizations such as the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club and a number of town committees on which he served throughout the years. Robert was always advocating on behalf of Veterans in his various roles. These activities encompassed helping to organize local parades, serving on, or heading up committees for a wide array of civic events in Winsted such as the Laurel Festival, the annual Pet Parade, and the "Frontier Days" celebration which all involved outreach and coordination with local Veterans.



ALFRED H. COMEAU
Waterbury

U.S. ARMY

Alfred Comeau enlisted and served with the U.S. Army from 1964-1967. He volunteered to serve in Vietnam and was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) from Nov. 1965-Dec. 1966 during the “Battle of the Ia Drang Valley”, the first major U.S. Engagement with overwhelming forces of the North Vietnamese Army. For this, his unit was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. Immediately upon completion of military service, Al trained as an apprentice Tool and Die Maker going on to become a journeyman toolmaker, tool designer, product development manager and apprentice coordinator. He was also trained and become a certified EMT and EMT-1, serving in that field for 25 years. Al volunteered as a member of the Waterbury Mayor’s Task Force on Substance Abuse. He also became an officer, commissioned by Governor John Rowland, with the CT National Guard Militia all volunteer Second Company Governor’s Horse Guard. Al was a volunteer for the DAV as a van driver and certified Veteran Service Officer. He was an organizer and volunteer guardian with CT’s first Honor Flight. Al also volunteered as a cook at the St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen serving daily meals to less fortunate community members. He volunteered with Vitas Hospice Healthcare assigned to visit with terminally ill veterans at their residence or in the St. Mary’s Hospital hospice unit.



RICHARD KING GORMAN

Enfield

U.S. NAVY

Two decades of distinguished military service instilled Richard Gorman with the values of service and self-sacrifice. These are the values he would carry forth into his civilian life, shaping his exceptional character and career. With a strong desire to contribute to the well-being of veterans and community members, Richard sought out the opportunity to join the American Legion and volunteer his time as a Veterans Service Officer assisting over 100 Veterans in their quest to receive the disability claims they so justly deserved. Acutely aware of the countless contributions made by WWII Veterans, Richard assists in securing Honor Flight visits to the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. He continues to seek ways to honor our Veterans and was instrumental in developing, promoting and implementing the AL Post 80 annual Marine Corps Breakfast as well as the annual Armed Forces Day Luncheon. Richard has remained committed to ensuring our youth never forget the many contributions our Veterans have made to this great nation and that the freedoms they have today are a direct result of their sacrifice. He has actively participated in Flag Day ceremonies performed in the local schools as well as being a key member of the Enfield Veterans School Essay program which provides scholarship funds to well deserving students. Richard spearheaded a program to ensure each nursing home in the community was visited and makes personal visits to as many Veterans as possible.



JESSE MONROE HARRISON

Rocky Hill

posthumous

U.S. ARMY AIR CORPS

On December 8, 1941, Jesse Harrison volunteered for the Army Air Force as a pilot trainee and was later commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant. Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Jesse received his pilot wings and was assigned to the 77th Troop Carrier Squadron in Missouri. With the invasion of Normandy in 1944, he flew in a twelve C-47 plane formation for a paratroop drop. Two of the planes were hit by ground fire and crashed, his plane was also hit, but managed to proceed to the drop zone releasing paratroopers safely with 67 holes in the plane's fuselage. On Sept. 19, 1944 Jesse towed a glider to Son, Holland where it was hit by ground fire, he remained at the controls until he reached the drop zone and was able to release the glider. It was at that point Jesse was barely able to bail out while the plane was on fire. The crash left Jesse badly burned; paratroopers found him and transported him through enemy lines and he was taken to a hospital in South Hampton, England. As a resident of Rocky Hill, Harrison had 50 years of continuous community service to Rocky Hill. He served on the Finance Board, Town Council, Insurance Committee and Planning and Zoning Commission. Jesse served his community with wisdom, dedication and enthusiasm. He chaired a High School Scholarship Fund. He gave inspirational talks on WWII and the importance of community service. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of people like Jesse, small towns throughout the State of CT are a better place in which to live, work and prosper.



LENELL KITTLITZ
Bloomfield

U.S. COAST GUARD

While serving with the US Coast Guard Group Office in Charleston South Carolina, Lenell participated in “Search and Sea Rescue Missions” as an Independent Duty Corpsman. Her involvement in “Sea Rescues” during severe storms including at one-point Hurricane David (1976) proved to be particularly dangerous and challenging, Her retelling of these remarkable experiences was selected by the US Dept. of Veteran Affairs and highlighted in their National Video Series “Stories of Services”. Lenell served on the Planning Committee and Moderator of “Our Unsung Heroes, A Day to Honor, Remember and Heal” which was a day long program to help families and friends dealing with losses including suicides of military members, Veterans and first responders. During the Government Shutdown in 2018-2019 and Coast Guard Families were not receiving their usual pay allowances, Lenell stepped up to organize support and collect donations from her friends, Asylum Congregational Church and business contacts and delivered much needed food and supplies to assist Coast Guard Families in the New London area. She was appointed by three CT Governors to the State Dept. of Veterans Affairs Board of Trustees (2003-2015). During this time, her professional experiences and education in architecture and construction were invaluable during the development and production of both the John L. Levitow Veteran Health Care Center in Rocky Hill and the State Veterans Memorial in Hartford. Her ability to think out of the box, to engage the environment and the people she works with helped with the idea of creating a space for Veterans to meet each other, study together and share information to the Board of Trustees for those Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan that were feeling out of place and out of step on CT college campuses. From this, the “Veterans’ Oasis Centers” in our state were created in an attempt to put the “Welcome Mat” out for Veterans attending institutions of higher learning.



LEONARD GENE LANZA
Simsbury

U.S. NAVY

Since leaving active duty in the Navy in 1963, Len Lanza has earned three university degrees, including a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Florida State University, where he was also a graduate teaching assistant and the student representative to the university's K-12 Experimental Research School Board of Education. He is currently in his 59th year of involvement with Connecticut's public schools. Along the way, he has served as teacher, vice principal, principal, longtime superintendent of schools and educational consultant. As a resident of Simsbury for fifty-four years, Len has been very active in veterans' affairs, including serving as Commander of both the local Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts. He has been instrumental in planning and participating in Memorial Day parades for Simsbury and Tariffville for more than 20 years, including serving as grand marshal, featured speaker and master of ceremonies on many occasions. Len served as secretary of Simsbury's first Charter Revision Commission from 1976-78, and he was named a Hometown Hero in 2017. His most recent major accomplishment was serving as Chairman of the Simsbury Veterans Memorial Committee for six years for the highly acclaimed memorial which pays tribute to 98 residents of Simsbury who lost their lives in service to their country. Len often states that one of his favorite roles in life was performing as Santa Claus for 22 years for 30-40 University of Connecticut pediatric cancer patients who were taking a "Fantasy Flight to the North Pole". Those estimated 800 different children over the years and their families provided sufficient cause for Len to say "yes" every year.



CONNECTICUT VETERANS HALL OF FAME
CLASS OF 2019 INDUCTION CEREMONY

DECEMBER 6, 2019

ENTRANCE OF THE OFFICIAL PARTY

Master of Ceremonies

USMC Veteran Gil Simmons

Morning Meteorologist WTNH/NEWS8

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Hazel Pufahl

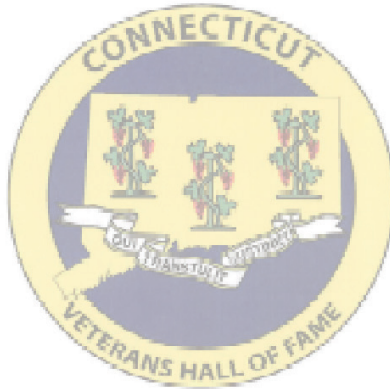
Age 11

Mansfield Middle School

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND
MOMENT OF SILENCE

INVOCATION

Chaplain (Lt. Col) Eric Wismar



REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF THE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Thomas J. Saadi
Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs

REMARKS

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz
Lieutenant Governor

INDUCTION - CLASS OF 2019

Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz
Commissioner Thomas J. Saadi
Major General Francis Evon

BENEDICTION

Chaplain (Lt. Col) Eric Wismar

*VIP Reception for Inductees and their guests
immediately following the program at the
Officer's Club at Gov. William A. O'Neill State Armory*

CONNECTICUT VETERANS HALL OF FAME



PATRICK R. NELLIGAN

Bristol

U.S. ARMY RESERVE

Patrick has continually served his country in both the Army and Army Reserves continuously for over 37 years. He is currently in the position of Command Chief Warrant Officer for the Army Reserve Medical command. He is the walking epitome of selfless service and has committed his life to furthering Veteran's causes and to help increase awareness of Veterans and the issues they encounter. Pat has created events for his hometown such as the Memorial Day Weekend Commemoration that averaged over 10,000 visitors annually over the 7 years he and his team of volunteers held it. The theme of the event was to honor Veterans from the past, present and the future. Pat was presented with an idea from an event that was started in Pennsylvania to honor graduating high school seniors and turned it into the second longest running recognition dinners in the country called "Our Community Salutes". Over 200 high school seniors have been honored. Pat has been an employee of the Veterans Healthcare Administration for 3.5 years and in that relatively short time has been recognized for outstanding customer service and singled out to receive a CT VA Kindness Award for his involvement with a disabled Veteran who was struggling to get his rehabilitation equipment to operate correctly. Pat calmly introduced himself as a fellow Veteran and proceeded to modify the equipment so that it worked exactly the way the Veteran required.



MORTON MELVIN PEAR
Middletown

U.S. AIR FORCE

Morton (Morty) Pear has tirelessly devoted so many of his non-working hours to helping others, Veterans and non-veterans alike, answering the calling from the needs of others, without ever seeking applause. He has taken part in many volunteer functions as part of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Middletown Medical Reserve Corp and Community Emergency Respond Team (CERT). He's assisted in setting up their portable hospital on several occasions, one of which was during the crises as the catastrophic natural gas explosion in Middletown on Feb. 7, 2010 and for 19 days thereafter of rescue work. Morty assists at the monthly Bingo at the Dept. of Veterans Affairs Healthcare Center both with the JWV of Hartford and the DAV Chapter 7 of Middletown. He is also a remedial instructor for National Ski Patrol and enjoys teaching the skills and tricks of the trade to new members. Morty has recruited many medical volunteers over the years for the Special Olympics and he himself has volunteered as medical volunteer at the Unified Program of Basketball run by CIAC and Special Olympics. His leadership as Commander of the Jewish War Veterans Dept. of CT has been firm, dedicated and inspirational, overcoming physical disabilities including hearing impairment. His continuous volunteer work for Veterans, most older than he, and for the community, despite his own disabilities, bespeak a noble, giving heart and a generous, selfless soul.



JOHN A. SARLO
Waterbury

U.S. ARMY

John Sarlo has spent his entire life serving his community, the state of CT and his great nation. He continues to inspire others as well as his family. Growing up during the Great Depression in Waterbury's Italian North End, he worked hard from an early age at whatever job he could, from peddling newspapers to delivering ice and milk. John was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1953 at the age of 19. He served in the Korean War from Dec. 1953 until May 1955. After his return, John continued to serve Veterans and his community. He joined the Italian American War Veterans and became a charter and life member of Favale-Generali-Florio Post 8 in Waterbury where he served as post Commander in 1970, Adjutant, and Quartermaster. He served at the state level becoming the State Adjutant in 1965 and State Commander in 1975. He also served on the national level as the National Adjutant in 1969 and National Commander in 1977. During his years of service on the national level, he traveled extensively throughout the country speaking with and supporting Veterans and their organizations. One of his highlights as National Commander was an invitation to attend a luncheon at the White House to discuss Veterans Affairs with then President Jimmy Carter. John expressed that this was a highlight not because he was able to have lunch with the President, but because he had the ear of someone at such a high level and believed it could make a difference for so many Veterans. John made regular visits to VA hospitals in Rocky Hill and West Haven to visit patients and monitor care. He would take his children along on these trips to model for them what it means to serve others and to teach them the importance of Veterans service and sacrifice for this country. John shared his love of sports with his children and encouraged them to participate in sports, and by volunteering to coach, he helped develop the youth of Waterbury in a positive way. He first started as a game announcer for the Waterbury Knights football program. He volunteered with several summer baseball leagues as coach, role model and mentor for all of the players. His love for his country and unwavering support of Veterans and Veterans affairs extends into Waterbury's public schools where he helps to educate youth on what it means to serve your community with programs like Forever Wave.



JOHN "JACK" SHEA
Waterbury

U.S. ARMY

Jack entered the U.S. Army in March of 1966 and left service in April 1969 as a 1st Lt. and returned to Waterbury. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Waterbury Veterans Memorial Committee and has served with distinction on local and national efforts to honor Waterbury Veterans. Jack has participated in many Veteran's activities in Waterbury such as the Annual Korean War Remembrance Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. He visits Veterans in the hospital and at their homes and also attends services for those Veterans who have passed. He visits local schools to inform students about the importance of remembering Veterans and to instill in them that the freedoms they enjoy are not free, but are paid for by the men and women who serve in the military. Jack also co-chairs the annual Support our Troops Dinner which is held every year in May. He has worked diligently with the Committee to raise over \$72,000.00 to install the CT Gold Star Mother's Memorial in Waterbury City Hall on Nov. 11, 2011. Following that task, Jack worked with the Committee to honor Waterbury's WWII heroic Priest, USN Lt, (Rev.) Thomas Michael Conway, by creating a Memorial which was dedicated on August 2, 2015, on the 70th anniversary of his sacrifice as Chaplain of the USS Indianapolis (CA-35). Jack is part of the 2019 Lt. Thomas M. Conway Memorial Committee which worked with the 2019 CT General Assembly to name July 30th as USS Indianapolis Day in CT. Jack was also a member of the Committee to Honor Waterbury Medal of Honor recipient USN Seaman Richard Ryan. Seaman Ryan was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1876 and was buried in an unmarked grave in Waterbury. The Committee acquired a grave marker and it was installed in June 2014. Jack has been the Chairman for several food drives to feed the hungry, and the annual Tootsie Roll Campaign to aid people with intellectual disabilities.



CT VETERANS HALL OF FAME PAST INDUCTEES

CLASS of 2005

*Nathan George Agostinelli
George Herbert Walker Bush
William Thomas Coffey, Sr.
Dr. Randall Howard Collins
Bruce Hults Ey
Joseph G. Lombardo
Giacomo "Jack" Mordente II
Lt. James Sedalia Peters II
Ernest Virgil Plantz
Norman Warren VanCor*

CLASS of 2006

*Douglas A. Bora
Robert A. Janicki
Franklin E. Johnson, Sr.
William J. Johnston
Evans Edward Kerrigan
Peter Robert Pardo
Anthony Vito Savino
James S. Tierney
Carl Roderick Venditto
Edward Washburn Whitaker*

CLASS of 2007

*Michael J. Daly
Alfred Faticoni
Dr. George G. Gentile
Elwood A.D. Lechause
Anthony Mammola
Alfred A. Meadows
Robert J. Nearine
Col. Robert B. Nett
Tony Paul Pia
Darrell D. Stark*

CLASS of 2008

*Evans H. Daniels, Jr
Valentine David Galasyn
John L. Levitow
Howard Louis Luppi
Barbara Ellen Miller*

*H. Richard Newell, Jr.
William Atchinson O'Neill
Roger Gene Paulmeno
Frederick Gates Reincke
Robert Rudolph Ritz*

CLASS of 2009

*Richard O. Belden
John "Jack" Dougherty
Robert L. Genovese
Dr. Harvey James Grinsell, Jr.
Brig. Gen. John J. King
Rev. William David McGee
Brig. Gen. Daniel J. McHale
Theodore J. Plamondon, Jr.
Alphonse N. Sabetta
Daniel A. Vece, Jr.
Homer L. Wise*

CLASS of 2010

*Edmund J. Burke
Thomas J. Burke
John J. Carcioppolo
Robert C. Hunt, Jr.
Doris Troth Lippman
William J. McGurk
Robert C. Moeller
Abner Oakes III
Edward V. Sabotka
Robert R. Simmons
Stanley F. Zebzda*

CLASS of 2011

*Madelon Baranoski
Samuel K. Beamon, Sr.
George Kenneth Carpenter
Ronald Catania
John Gregory Chiarella
Harold B. Farrington, Jr.
Phillip R. Kraft
Ronald Perry
Richard Rampone
Burke Ross*



CT VETERANS HALL OF FAME PAST INDUCTEES

CLASS of 2012

*Father Thomas E. Berberich
Manuel Michael Cardoza, Jr.
Paul F. Dillon
Peter Galgano, Jr.
William George Godburn
Norman Hanenbaum
Alan Jepson
Charles Richard Morrissey, Sr.
Herbert Thomas Schacht
Thomas Sheridan
James H. Throwe
Carmine Joseph Vaccaro*

CLASS OF 2013

*John H. Bannan (posthumously)
George H. Breuler
John (Jack) G. Casey Jr.
Miguel A. Escalera, Sr.
Charles P. Gallagher
Robin L. Montgomery
James Milford Mosley
Michael Albert Thomas
William F. Vornkahl III
Robert John Young*

CLASS OF 2014

*Edwin Francis Atkins
Samuel Baez
Edmond Clark
Maurice L. Collin
Theodore Robert Cummings
Frank Esposito (posthumously)
David William Gay
Robert T. Getman (posthumously)
Richard A. Herman
Gerald B. Wright*

CLASS OF 2015

*Glenn Arthur
Peter Beckwith
John DeBisschop
Elliott Donn*

*Richard Fuller
Thomas Heath
Allen Lawton
PW Louthain
Dan Riccio, Jr.
Michael Skelps
Greg Smith*

CLASS OF 2016

*Robert Burns
Bradford Davis
Francis Conahan
Archie Elam
Richard Iannuci
Paul Wm. Orstad
Linda S. Schwartz
Salvatore Sena
Kjell Tollefsen
Arthur Ward*

CLASS OF 2017

*Alfred Adinolfi
Robert Bailey
Philip Cacciola
Benjamin Cooper
Dominick Cortese
Lawrence Herrmann
Chester Morgan
Thomas Pandolfi
Thomas Quinn
William Sullivan
John Turk*

CLASS OF 2018

*Frank Alvarado
Kevin Brown "Red Eagle"
Daniel Camilliere
David P. Cole
Robert J. Froelick
Donald R. Maranell
William Charles Mason, Jr.
Lawrence Isiah Riley
Anthony J. Sileo*



CONNECTICUT VETERANS HALL OF FAME

CLASS OF 2019

Robert T. Cahill, Sr. – U.S. Army Air Corps –
posthumous - New Fairfield

Alfred H. Comeau – U.S. Army - Waterbury

Richard King Gorman – U.S. Navy - Enfield

Jesse Monroe Harrison – U.S. Army Air Corps –
posthumous - Rocky Hill

Lenell Kittlitz – U.S. Coast Guard - Bloomfield

Leonard Gene Lanza – U.S. Navy - Simsbury

Patrick R. Nelligan – U.S. Army Reserve - Bristol

Morton Melvin Pear – U.S. Air Force - Middletown

John A. Sarlo – U.S. Army - Waterbury

John “Jack” Shea – U.S. Army - Waterbury



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Faster and Easier



CTVeterans

The Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs Mobile Application allows Connecticut Veterans and residents to access crisis assistance by phone, text, and online chat.

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- Flag Status
- Connecting with DVA on Social Media

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CONNECTICUT VETERANS HALL OF FAME

2019 Executive Committee
Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame

State Representative Dorinda Borer

John “Jack” Casey

Major General Francis Evon

Adele Hodges

State Senator George Logan

State Senator James Maroney

Commissioner Thomas J. Saadi

Michael Thomas

State Representative Kurt Vail

For additional information regarding the
Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame, please contact:

**Office of the Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs**

287 West Street

Rocky Hill, Connecticut 06067

(860) 616-3603

Or visit www.portal.ct.gov/DVA

*Grateful appreciation is extended to all those agencies, organizations
and individuals who help support the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame
throughout the year and who have made today's
induction ceremony possible.*