



**MEDIA CONTACT:** Laura Soll (860) 688-4499, cell (860) 833-4466

## **CONNECTICUT VETERANS DAY PARADE ANNOUNCES DETAILS AND GRAND MARSHALS New England's Largest Veterans Day Parade!**

HARTFORD, CONN., October 8, 2007 – The “**Connecticut Veterans Day Parade**” is gearing up for what promises the biggest in its history! The eighth annual event will be held in Hartford, Conn. on **Sunday, November 4**. The procession will start at 1 p.m. and last approximately two hours. Veterans can sign up now to march or ride in the procession.

For the first time, the parade will kick off with the entire University of Connecticut Marching Band. The procession will conclude with a special “Gold Star Finish”, a float to be hosted by Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs that will carry Gold Star Families who lost relatives in combat. Special features will include fly-overs by military aircraft, and a tolling of church bells and Moment of Silence when the parade will pause in observance of veterans who died while serving their country, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by the Gospel Quartet from Hopewell Baptist Church in Windsor. Members of the current class of the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame will march in their own unit.

The Connecticut Veterans Day Parade is organized by a collaboration of veterans’ groups, corporations, local municipalities, businesses and civic organizations, and is administered by the Greater Hartford Arts Council. The Connecticut National Guard manages all parade logistics, and the City of Hartford hosts the event. Last year, close to 3,500 veterans from all over Connecticut took part in the parade, with tens of thousands of spectators cheering them on.

Any Connecticut resident who is an active, retired or honorably discharged member of the U.S. Armed Forces including commissioned officers, warrant officers and enlisted personnel of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Reserves is welcome to march. Parade organizers also seek veterans groups, patriotic commissions, local municipalities, and middle, high school, college and university marching bands and drill teams from throughout the state.

**The two Parade Grand Marshals** both recently returned from service in Afghanistan. They are:

- **Lt. Col Steven Gilbert**, Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102d Infantry Regiment of the Connecticut Army National Guard. He lives in Manchester, Conn.; and
- **Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Warner**, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102d Infantry Regiment of the Connecticut Army National Guard. A graduate of Somers High School, he now is a resident of Cornwall on the Hudson, NY.

**The five Honorary Grand Marshals are:**

- **Juan M. Fuentes-Vizcarrondo** of Hartford;
- **Walter “Doc” Hurley, Sr.** of Hartford;

**-More-**

## CONNECTICUT VETERANS DAY PARADE ANNOUNCES DETAILS & 2007 GRAND MARSHALS...Page 2

- **Phyllis A. McMeans** of East Hartford;
- **Anthony V. (Tony) Savino** of Bristol; and
- **Carmen Anthony Vacalebri** of Waterbury.

“The Connecticut Veterans Day Parade offers everyone an opportunity to honor the dedication and sacrifice of our brave servicemen and women from all U.S. conflicts, and to say, ‘Thank you’,” explains Lt. Col. John Whitford, Director of Communications for the State of Connecticut National Guard. “This year, with hundreds of Connecticut-based troops returning home from *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. Air Force, the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War II’s Battle of Midway, the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Korean War, and the 25th anniversary of the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial, this parade promises to be extremely poignant and memorable.”

The 1.26-mile parade will begin near the Connecticut State Capitol at the intersection of Buckingham St. and Washington St., travel north down Trinity Street and through the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch, go right onto Asylum Street, and make a right onto Main Street where it will pass a reviewing stand across from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and finally make a right onto Capitol Avenue where it will end.

The parade will be preceded at 12noon by a **Wreath-Laying Ceremony** to remember veterans at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch at Jewell St. and Trinity St. in Bushnell Park, featuring a Color Guard and music. Many Downtown Hartford parking garages and surface lots will offer discounted parking on parade day.

This parade is made possible by funding from **Title Sponsors who include:** Aetna; Connecticut Light & Power; the Connecticut National Guard; The Hartford Courant; Hartford Steam Boiler; United Technologies; and WDRC Radio. **Associate Sponsors of the parade include:** Bank of America; Greater Hartford Arts Council; and Kaman Corporation; Prudential Financial; and Travelers. **The parade is produced in cooperation with:** Albert Bros; Fritz Blasius; Bob’s Discount Furniture; Carmen Anthony Restaurant Group; City of Hartford; Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs; Eljen Corp; Cary Gagnon; Bob Garthwait; Jonsar, LLC; Pratt & Whitney; Shaker’s; Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; the State of Connecticut; and The Exchange Club of Rockville. **In Kind Sponsors include:** American Medical Response; Monaco Ford; Mr. Trophy; and R2 Graphics. Additional sponsors are being sought to help pay for the event.

*All veterans groups and individual veterans; patriotic commissions; municipalities; and middle, high school, college and university marching bands and drill teams that want to march in the Sunday, November 4*

*“Connecticut Veterans Day Parade” should visit [www.ctveteransdayparade.org](http://www.ctveteransdayparade.org) or call the Parade Information Line at (860) 724-2649 ext. 23. People who want to volunteer to help at the event can register there as well.*

*Gold Star Families who want to participate in the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs’ Gold Star Finish should contact Cathy Cook at (860) 721-5826.*

**-Bios of all of the 2007 Grand Marshals on Next Page-**

### 2007 Parade Grand Marshals:

► **Lt. Col Steven Gilbert, Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102d Infantry Regiment of the Connecticut Army National Guard.** The Manchester resident graduated from Manchester High School; and  
► **Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Warner, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102d Infantry Regiment of the Connecticut Army National Guard.** The Somers High School graduate now lives in Cornwall on the Hudson, NY.

Designated as the *Task Force Iron Grays* while stationed in Afghanistan, their unit conducted a full spectrum of operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Task Force Iron Grays enabled the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan by working with Afghan National Security forces and Multi-National forces in order to establish security, and deter the re-emergence of terrorism to enhance the sovereignty of Afghanistan. They had two specific mission focuses during the tour: 1) to provide security to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs); and 2) to conduct full spectrum counter-insurgency operations in the provinces of Ghazni and Laghman. The 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry conducted more than 1,450 combat patrols in 20 named combat operations.

Their Security Force (SECFOR) platoons were instrumental in providing the necessary security to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams as they enabled the government and population of Afghanistan to rebuild after a 25-year period of war. The focus of the SECFOR platoons was to establish a buffer between the PRTs and the insurgents in order to develop the much needed political and infrastructure for the government of Afghanistan to thrive.

### 2007 Honorary Grand Marshals:

**Juan M. Fuentes-Vizcarrondo** was drafted in 1953 during the Korean War and served 11 years in the U.S. Army, nine of them in the Reserves. He did amphibious training in his native Puerto Rico and then worked with radar in California. After his discharge, he moved to New York City, and later to **Hartford**. A longtime area photographer and newsman, he is co-founder of the Puerto Rican Association of Connecticut, Inc. and is well-known for his work at *El Observador*, and for the former *Hartford Times*, and as a freelancer for the *Northend Agent* and *The Hartford News*.

**Walter "Doc" Hurley, Sr.** enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1941 the very next day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. During WWII, he was assigned to the 38<sup>th</sup> Marine Depot. After the war ended, Hurley served 13 months in China, with Japanese prisoners captured during the war. The Hartford resident and former high school principal, teacher and coach created the Doc Hurley Scholarship Basketball Classic to encourage Hartford's young men and women to stay in school and then go on to college with the help of modest but essential scholarships. Today, Doc serves as the President of the "Doc" Hurley Scholarship Foundation, Inc. which has awarded over \$490,000 to 478 deserving high school seniors in the Greater Hartford area.

**Phyllis A. McMeans** served in the Marine Corps from June 1971 to January 1974. She was trained in Personnel Administration in South Carolina and then transferred to California. She was then stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station where she trained as an Air Traffic Controller. The **East Hartford** resident is the longtime, esteemed Choir Director for Hopewell Church Choir.

**Anthony V. (Tony) Savino** served on active duty with the U.S. Army and Connecticut Army National Guard for 40 years, serving as the State Command Sergeant Major of the Connecticut National Guard for his last 16 years. During his military service and since his retirement, the **Bristol** resident has been an active volunteer on numerous community boards, commissions, and veterans committees, including service on the Bristol City Council. Mr. Savino was inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame in 2006 by Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

**Carmen Anthony Vacalebre** has been a vital force in securing community contributions for the Connecticut Veterans Day Parade, ensuring that it can continue to honor U.S. servicemen and servicewomen. Last year, when parade organizers needed new funds to produce the event, the Owner/CEO of Carmen Anthony Restaurant Group and **Waterbury** resident not only stepped forward with his own generous donation, he solicited sizable support from his friends and business associates as well. A Director of the National Restaurant Association, he is active in many Connecticut civic and business organizations. **-End-**