



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

THIS SUNDAY, NOV. 4's "CONNECTICUT VETERANS DAY PARADE" TO BE LARGEST EVER
Special Features from Start to Finish – Close to 4,000 Marchers,
UConn Marching Band, Gov. Rell, Lt. Gov. Fedele, "Gold Star Finish" & More!

HARTFORD, CONN., November 1, 2007 – Close to 4,000 state residents will march in **this Sunday, November 4's "Connecticut Veterans Day Parade"**, making it the largest in all of New England!

The eighth annual event will **step off at 1 p.m.** near the State Capitol Building in Downtown Hartford.

Veterans marching or riding in the procession will include those of **past conflicts, as well as those who recently have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan.** Connecticut residents who are active, retired or honorably discharged members 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 – will march.

For the first time, the parade will kick off with the **University of Connecticut Marching Band, making its first parade appearance for the first time in several years.** The procession will conclude with a special **"Gold Star Finish"**, a unit hosted by Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs to honor Gold Star Families who lost relatives in combat. **Conn. Gov. M. Jodi Rell** and **Lt. Gov. Michael Fedele** will both march. Special features will include **fly-overs by A-10 Thunderbolt IIs, and Blackhawk and Chinook helicopters,** and the **New England Air Museum** will present a float featuring a Bell-47 M*A*S*H Korean War helicopter. There will be 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.

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 Hartford's Bushnell Park, featuring a Color Guard and the Connecticut Valley Field Music fife & drum band. The Bushnell Park Carousel will open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Many Downtown Hartford parking garages and surface lots will offer discounted parking.

Special commemorative pins to benefit parade operations will be on sale next to the Reviewing Stand on Main Street, across the street from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Pins cost \$3 a piece or two for \$5.

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.

-More-

The two Parade Grand Marshals and five Honorary Grand Marshals are the most diverse group in the parade's history (see page 3).

Both Parade Grand Marshals recently returned from service in Afghanistan. They are:

- **Lt. Col Steven Gilbert**, Commander of the 1st Battalion, 102d Infantry Regiment of the Connecticut Army National Guard. The Manchester High School (Conn.) graduate still lives in Manchester; and
- **Command Sgt. Maj. David Warner**, 1st 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;
- **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 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*, the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force, the 65th anniversary of World War II's Battle of Midway, 55th anniversary of the end of the Korean War, and 25th anniversary of the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial, this parade will be 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.

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; Colt Defense LLC; Greater Hartford Arts Council; ING; Kaman Corporation; Prudential Financial; and Travelers. **The parade is produced in cooperation with:** Albert Brothers, Inc.; 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 welcome.

People who want to volunteer to help at the Sunday, November 4 "Connecticut Veterans Day Parade" should visit www.ctveteransdayparade.org or call (860) 724-2649 ext. 23. **Gold Star Families** should contact Cathy Cook at (860) 721-5826.

-More-

2007 Parade Grand Marshals:

► **Lt. Col Steven Gilbert, Commander of the 1st Battalion, 102d Infantry Regiment of the Connecticut Army National Guard.** The Manchester resident graduated from Manchester High School; *and*
► **Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Warner, 1st 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 102nd 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 38th 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 in North Carolina at the Marine Corps Air Station where she trained as an Air Traffic Controller. The **East Hartford** resident is the longtime Choir Director for Hopewell Baptist Church. Its Gospel Quartet will sing the National Anthem during the parade, following a Moment of Silence. She also is Director of the Men's Music Ministry and the Church Choir at the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Bloomfield, and was the 2007 Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Choir, which was formed for a performance with the Hartford Symphony.

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 Vacalebri 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 has traveled with that organization to many U.S. military bases to evaluate and honor the "best of the best" of Air Force operations with the historic Hennessy Award.

-End-