

Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame
2013 Inductees (18 Total)



Johnny Curtis Calhoun - VALOR

United States Army Sergeant First Class Johnny Curtis Calhoun from Newnan is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his heroism and selfless act of bravery. In Laos in March 1968, then Staff Sergeant Calhoun was a Team Leader for a Special Forces (Green Beret) SOG (Studies and Observation Group) deep reconnaissance team. When his six man team was discovered and was being overrun by a large enemy force, Sergeant First Class Calhoun provided covering fire for the rest of the patrol while ordering the other five members to withdraw. He was hit three times in the chest and stomach and was last observed pulling the pin from a hand grenade and clutching it under his body so that it would explode when his body was moved by the enemy. For his actions he was awarded our nation's second highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross. His remains have never been recovered.



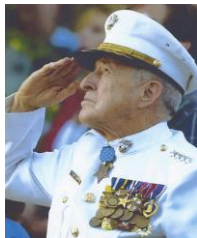
Johnny Thomas "Tommy" Clack - SERVICE

United States Army Captain Johnny Thomas "Tommy" Clack from Decatur is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his outstanding leadership and selfless service to his fellow Americans. In Vietnam in May 1969, he sacrificed three of his limbs in combat and was later medically retired from the Army. Since that extreme life altering event, he has continued to serve in many and various capacities especially assisting Veterans for over forty years. His inspirational leadership and motivational support to all our citizens, especially our nation's youth, is continually demonstrated as he travels throughout our land highlighting faith, devotion to country, flag, and honor to our military service members and Veterans.



William Arthur Connelly - ACHIEVEMENT

United States Army Sergeant Major of the Army William Arthur Connelly from Monticello is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his outstanding leadership and service to Soldiers and their families during his over thirty-three year military career. He was the sixth of only fourteen to date to ever achieve the rank, title, and position of Sergeant Major of the Army, the highest rank an Army enlisted person may achieve. He was awarded both the Bronze Star and the Air Medal for Valor in Vietnam. Among his many other awards while on active duty and in retirement is the Doughboy Award which is presented annually to recognize an individual for their outstanding contribution's to the United States Army Infantry. Since 1954, Sergeant Major of the Army Connelly has faithfully and selflessly served our nation, our military service members, and our Veterans.



Raymond Gilbert Davis - VALOR (MOH)

United States Marine Corps General Raymond Gilbert "Ray" Davis from Fitzgerald is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. In Korea in December 1950, then Lieutenant Colonel Davis personally led his battalion to victory in hand to hand combat against a strongly entrenched and numerically superior hostile force. For his valorous actions he was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Rodney Maxwell Davis - VALOR (MOH)

United States Marine Corps Sergeant Rodney Maxwell Davis from Macon is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. In Vietnam in September 1967 while his platoon was pinned down by a numerically superior force, he personally led his men in repulsing an onrushing enemy. With disregard for his on life, he saved many of his men by throwing himself on an exploding enemy grenade. He gallantly gave his life for his country and was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Henry Talmage Elrod - VALOR (MOH)

United States Marine Corps Major Henry Talmage Elrod from Ashburn is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. On Wake Island in December 1941, as a fighter pilot, he personally destroyed an enemy warship and shot down two enemy airplanes before assuming command of a ground unit and inspirationally led his men against an attacking superior enemy force until he was killed in action. He gallantly gave his life for his country and was awarded the Medal of Honor.



David Lawrence Grange - VALOR

United States Army Major General David Lawrence Grange received his commission through North Georgia College in Dahlonega and is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his heroism, his outstanding leadership, and service to Soldiers and their families during his military career. In Vietnam, he was awarded three Silver Stars and two Purple Hearts. For over thirty years of active duty he inspirationally led infantry and special operations units from platoon to division level throughout the world and continues today to constantly and selflessly serve and honor our military service members and our Veterans.



Allan Brown Imes - SERVICE

United States Army Lieutenant Colonel Allan Brown Imes from Griffin is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his outstanding leadership, valor, and exemplary life of unyielding selfless service to our nation, his community, and his fellow Americans. He served for over twenty years on active duty including three tours in Vietnam in Ranger, Special Forces (Green Beret), and SOG (Studies and Observation Group) units. For his wartime action, he was awarded the Bronze Star, Air Medal for Valor, and the Soldiers Medal. After his Army career, he served for the next seventeen years as the director of the Griffin High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC). There he was directly instrumental in the transformation of hundreds of students into mature and patriotic adults while growing this JROTC unit into the largest in the nation.



Joe Madison Jackson - VALOR (MOH)

United States Air Force Colonel Joe Madison Jackson from Newnan is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. In Vietnam in May 1968, then Lieutenant Colonel Jackson disregarding the extreme danger, successfully landed his cargo airplane under intense enemy fire and where eight US aircraft had already been shot down, and rescued three US Airmen that were stranded and under heavy attack. For this valorous action he was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Wendall Leon Jones - VALOR

United States Navy Seaman First Class Wendall Leon Jones from Tifton is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his selfless acts of bravery during World War II in France. In 1942, at the age of 16, he enlisted in the Navy. At age 17 the landing craft that he was aboard was sunk by a German U-Boat killing all but 89 of the 641 aboard. He was severely burned on the face and hands while rescuing Sailor and Soldiers. During the D-Day Landing, he was among the 51 survivors of a 600 man demolition unit, once again sustaining injuries to his hands during small arms fire fights. One month later at age 18, he was wounded again by shell fragments in the right ear, right ankle, and face during a demolition mission behind enemy lines. After recovering, he was headed to Japan when the war ended and he was soon discharged having just reached the age of 19. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for Valor and 3 Purple Hearts. He died at age 36 from injuries to his brain caused by wounds.



George W. Leland - VALOR (MOH)

United States Navy Gunner's Mate George W. Leland from Savannah is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. In Charleston Harbor in November 1863, while under direct and intense fire from the enemy, he led a team of Sailors in a desperate but ultimately successful attempt in freeing the USS Lehigh, an ironclad monitor that had run aground. For this valorous action he was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Vincent Melillo - VALOR

United States Army Master Sergeant Vincent Melillo from Columbus is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his selfless acts of bravery during World War II. He was an original member of the famed Merrill's Marauders who fought over 1,000 miles deep behind enemy lines in Burma. He was awarded two Bronze Stars for his World War II service. During three combat tours during the Korean War, he was wounded on several occasions and was awarded two Purple Hearts. He retired after twenty-one years of active duty service followed by another eighteen years as a civil servant at Fort Benning. For the past thirty years he has been a devoted supporter of active duty Soldiers and Veterans and provides invaluable inspiration to the active duty Rangers stationed at Fort Benning. Master Sergeant Vincent Melillo has also been inducted into the United States Army Ranger Hall of Fame.



Stephen Wesley Pless - VALOR (MOH)

United States Marine Corps Major Stephen Wesley Pless from Newnan is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. In Vietnam in August 1967, then Captain Pless while serving as a helicopter pilot, rescued four wounded US Soldiers that were being attacked by approximately fifty enemy combatants by first attacking the enemy with the helicopter's armament and then landing his aircraft between the Soldiers and the enemy until they could be loaded and flown to safety. For this valorous action he was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Ralph Puckett, Jr. - VALOR

United States Army Colonel Ralph Puckett, Jr. from Tifton is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his selfless acts of bravery during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. In Korea in November 1950, as a Lieutenant commanding a Ranger Company, he earned the Distinguished Service Cross, our nation's second highest award, for his bravery and leadership during six intense and relentless human wave assaults by the enemy. He was wounded three times during this action. In Vietnam he earned a second Distinguished Service Cross. In addition he also earned two Silver Stars, the Bronze Star, ten Air Medals, and five Purple Hearts during these two wars. Colonel Puckett retired after twenty-two years of active duty service while always leading from the front and taking care of Soldiers and their families. Colonel Puckett has also been inducted into the United States Army Ranger Hall of Fame.



Benjamin Harrison Purcell - VALOR

United States Army Colonel Benjamin "Ben" Harrison Purcell from Clarkesville is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his extremely selfless acts of bravery, undaunted courage, and enduring fortitude during the Korean War and especially the Vietnam War. In Vietnam in 1968, he was captured by the enemy when the helicopter that he was in was shot down. For the next five years and two months he was a Prisoner of War. He spent over four years and eight months in solitary confinement. As the senior US Army Soldier to be held as a POW his exemplary leadership was a lifesaving example for his fellow POWs. On two separate occasions he managed to escape only to be recaptured however his undaunted spirit and unbending personal code of determination and faith provided much needed hope and inspiration to his fellow American comrades. For his actions he was awarded two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, and the Purple Heart. Colonel Purcell faithfully served our nation and defended our freedom for over thirty years.



Peter Wheeler - SERVICE

United States Army Brigadier General and Commissioner Peter "Pete" Wheeler from Albany is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his outstanding leadership and his exemplary life of unyielding selfless service to our nation, his fellow Americans, and most especially Georgia Veterans. He is a World War II Veteran with over thirty-one years of combined military service on active duty and in the Georgia Army National Guard. For over sixty-four years he has been a champion for all Veterans as the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Veterans Services. Because of his tireless and selfless efforts and determination to honor the thousands of Georgians that have paid the ultimate price for our freedom, he conceived, spearheaded the design, watched over the construction, and insured the inspirational dedication of the Georgia War Veterans Memorial Complex. This complex is appropriately located across from the Georgia State Capital and it pays silent tribute and justly honors the over eleven thousand Georgians that have been killed in action since the First World War. This memorial is but one example of the tireless effort and decades of devotion to our Veterans that Commissioner Pete Wheeler has dedicated his life.



Hilliard Almond Wilbanks - VALOR (MOH)

United States Air Force Captain Hilliard Almond Wilbanks from Cornelia is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. In Vietnam in February 1967, while flying an unarmed small airplane and firing his personal weapon on a large enemy force in order to divert them from over running a much smaller force of US Army Rangers and Vietnamese soldiers he was mortally wounded and his aircraft was shot down. He gallantly gave his life for his country and was awarded the Medal of Honor.



John Phillip Yates - SERVICE

United States Army Captain and State Representative John Phillip Yates from Griffin is inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his valor, outstanding leadership, and his exemplary life of selfless service to our nation, his fellow Americans, and most especially Georgia Veterans. He entered World War II as a Private but was soon commissioned, rising to the rank of Captain and trained as a Liaison Pilot. He fought in the historic Battle of the Bulge and flew in excess of two hundred missions over enemy lines while adjusting artillery fire. For his bravery and skill, he was awarded six Air Medals and four Battle Stars. He has served for twenty-two years in the Georgia House of Representatives and is the current Chairman of the Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee. In this highly important position, he has continued to be a strong voice for Georgia Veterans insuring that they and their families are rightfully recognized, compensated, and honored.
