



26TH ANNUAL BANQUET & INDUCTION CEREMONY

1 NOVEMBER 2025

EMBASSY SUITES NORMAN
2501 CONFERENCE DRIVE
NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

REGISTRATION STARTS 5 PM
RECEPTION/CASH BAR 5:30 PM
SEATING BEGINS 6 PM
WELCOME 6:30 PM

DRESS CODE:

Sunday Best, Business Suit, Service Uniform or Mess Uniform for military personnel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

OKLAHOMA MILITARY HERITAGE FOUNDATION

P. O. Box 30658
Edmond, OK 73003

info@okmhf.org

OKMHF.ORG



ENTERTAINMENT BY
MAGGIE & DENNIS



145TH ARMY BAND

1999 - 2025



LIVESTREAM - ALTERNATE ATTENDANCE OPTION

A livestream of the evening will be available for \$35. See OKMHF.org website for link to sign up and payment. Professionally prepared DVDs with interviews of living inductees will be available approximately four months after the event for \$25 each, plus shipping. We will also have an 86-page hardback Memory Book of photos from the event for \$65, plus shipping.

2025

OKLAHOMA MILITARY
HALL OF FAME



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Our Missions: Honoring the men and women of Oklahoma who served in the Uniformed Services of the United States, demonstrating extraordinary acts of courage, heroism or gallantry, and who continue to serve our country and communities today, as well as educating the public, especially the State's youth, about military service to our Nation.

MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

PVT OSCAR J. UPHAM U.S. MARINE CORPS, 1871 - 1949

Private Oscar J. Upham, U.S. Marine Corps, was born in 1871 in Toledo, Ohio, to Irish immigrant parents who participated in the Oklahoma Land Run in 1889 and settled in Guthrie, OK. During his deployment to China's 1899 - 1901 Boxer Rebellion, Upham received the Medal of Honor for heroic action erecting barricades under enemy fire. He also served in the Spanish–American War and is recognized as having fired the first shot from the USS Oregon in that conflict. After being discharged, Upham returned to Guthrie and worked as a mail carrier for 34 years.

COL PHILIP R. ADAIR U.S. AIR FORCE, 1920 - 2017

Colonel Philip R. Adair, U.S. Air Force, was born in 1920 in Tuttle, Oklahoma, and graduated from Walters High School. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in January 1942, training as a pilot, then assigned to the 89th Fighter Squadron, 80th Fighter Group, 10th Air Force, in the China-Burma-India theater. Adair flew P-40s and P-47s on 139 combat missions between June 1943 and November 1944. On December 13, 1943, he bravely attacked a large enemy bomber formation, earning the Silver Star. Adair completed almost 30 years of distinguished military service and retired in 1971. He died in 2017.

SP4 GLEN E. BLOOD U.S. ARMY

Specialist Four Glen E. Blood, U.S. Army, born in 1947 in Canton, Oklahoma, served bravely as a combat infantryman in the Vietnam War. On June 12, 1968, while attached to Company C, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, his squad came under intense enemy fire. Despite sustaining wounds to both legs, his arm, and additional shrapnel injuries, he continued to direct a fierce counterattack and led his squad, carrying wounded soldiers to safety. Laying down tracer fire, he guided air support under extreme danger. For his outstanding valor and selflessness, SP4 Blood was awarded the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts.

LTC VERNON W. GILLESPIE, JR. U.S. ARMY, 1933 - 2017

Lieutenant Colonel Vernon W. Gillespie, Jr., U.S. Army, was born in 1933 in Los Angeles and moved to Oklahoma, graduating from Classen High School in Oklahoma City. After enlisting in the Army in 1953, he completed three tours in Vietnam, commanded two Special Forces units, and led the 2nd Battalion, 19th Field Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division. Gillespie was awarded the Silver Star for heroism in Vietnam, as well as the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, and Air Medal. He was recalled for the Gulf War, retiring in 1991 after 33 years of service. Gillespie is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



CPL BYRON C. GORDON U.S. MARINE CORPS, 1919 - 2017

Corporal Byron C. Gordon, U.S. Marine Corps, born in 1919 in Conway, Missouri, moved to Minco, Oklahoma, and was orphaned at age three. After working for the Civilian Conservation Corps, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and was deployed to China, then the Philippines, including Bataan and Corregidor. Captured during World War II, he endured 3.5 years as a prisoner of war, surviving harsh labor in prison camps and mines. After the Bataan surrender, he famously swam miles in shark-infested waters to Corregidor, aided by a dolphin. For his courage and sacrifice, Cpl Gordon was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and POW Medal.

RADM ALBERT L. KELLN U.S. NAVY, 1929 - 2022

Rear Admiral Albert L. Kelln, U.S. Navy, born in 1929 in Shattuck, Oklahoma, graduated with honors from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1952. He served on the **USS Blue** and **USS Ronquill** during the Korean conflict before being selected by Admiral Rickover for the Navy's Nuclear Propulsion School. Kelln became one of the first officers qualified to operate a nuclear reactor. He served on the historic **USS Skate**, which broke through the Arctic ice at the North Pole, and was Chief Engineer on **USS Enterprise (CVN-65)**. Renowned for his achievements in the nuclear navy, Kelln became one of the youngest Rear Admirals in U.S. Navy history.

SSG VIRGIL MALONE U.S. ARMY, 1921 - 2004

Staff Sergeant Virgil Malone, U.S. Army, was born in 1921 in Comanche, Oklahoma. Drafted in December 1942, he served as a rifleman with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 335th Infantry Regiment, 84th Infantry Division. During the Battle of the Bulge in Gouvy, Belgium, his platoon was pinned down by intense enemy fire. Without regard for his own safety, Malone exposed himself to enemy fire to draw attention away from his fellow soldiers, enabling them to eliminate a hostile machine gun position. Seriously wounded by a gunshot to the head, he was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for extraordinary valor.

SGT GARY L. OPELA U.S. ARMY

Sergeant Gary L. Opela, U.S. Army, was born in 1949 in Prague, Oklahoma, and graduated from Prague High School in 1969. He enlisted that same year, completing basic training at Fort Polk and the NCO Academy at Fort Benning, rising to the rank of Sergeant. Deployed to Vietnam from June 1970 to April 1971, Opela distinguished himself in combat, twice earning the Silver Star. On July 24, 1970, he led a night defense, coordinated supporting fire, and ensured the evacuation of the wounded under heavy enemy attack. Opela returned to Prague, Oklahoma, where he continues to serve his community.

1LT MICHAEL WADDLE U.S. ARMY

First Lieutenant Michael Waddle, U.S. Army, was born in 1946 in Phoenix, Arizona, and is a citizen of the Comanche Nation. He served from 1966 to 1969, including a tour in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 as a platoon leader with Company B, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division. For gallantry in action on August 26, 1969, 1LT Waddle was awarded the Silver Star, and received two Bronze Stars for additional acts of merit. After his military service, he continued supporting veterans as a certified DAV Service Officer and public speaker on veterans' affairs.

SGT HAROLD E. WADLEY U.S. MARINE CORPS

Sergeant Harold E. Wadley, U.S. Marine Corps, was born in 1934 and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He volunteered with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines during the Korean War, where he earned his first Purple Heart after being wounded at the Vegas Hill battle. Reenlisting for Vietnam, he again served with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines. Wadley received the Bronze Star with "V" for valor for rescuing wounded Marines under heavy fire. During Operation Swift, he led his platoon through intense combat, engaging the enemy to evacuate the wounded, and was again wounded. He received a second Purple Heart and the Silver Star.

MAJOR GENERAL DOUGLAS O. DOLLAR DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

CAPT JOHN P. KEILTY U.S. NAVY

Captain John "Irish" Keilty, U.S. Navy, born in 1953 in Fort Worth, Texas, graduated from the University of Utah's NROTC program and served as a Naval Aviator, squadron commander, Test Pilot, and Commodore of Strategic Communications Wing One at Tinker AFB. After retiring in 2001, he became a devoted educator and mentor at Mount St. Mary High School, Rose State College, and Del City High School's Junior NROTC. Keilty has supported emergency responders, led community projects such as the Robert Kalsu statue dedication, and inspired youth and veterans alike through leadership, public service, and motivational speeches honoring local military heroes.

MRS. PAMELA K. KLOIBER

Pamela K. Kloiber has lived in Oklahoma City since 1953. She spent over thirty years working with the local community and supporting Airmen and Sailors at Tinker AFB. Thirteen years ago, Mrs. Kloiber co-founded "Team Tinker Home Away From Home," a program designed to support first term service members throughout the year. Prior to this, Tinker AFB experienced suicides among new Airmen. Following implementation of the program, of the 1,500 participants so far, no suicides reported. Mrs. Kloiber has received recognition, including the Air Force's Angel Award, the Air Force Commander's Public Service Award, and the Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian award, twice.

GROUP

KIOWA CODE TALKERS

The Kiowa Code Talkers—PFC Leonard "Red Wolf" Cozad Sr, USA; PFC James Paddlety Jr, USA; and PVT John Tsatoke, USA—served with the 689th Field Artillery, XX Corps in WWII's European Theater. Using their native Kiowa language, they transmitted and translated critical military messages, forming an unbreakable code that saved countless Allied lives. Operating under enemy fire, they helped ensure battlefield communications remained secure from German interception. In recognition, the Code Talker Recognition Act of 2008 posthumously awarded them the Congressional Gold Medal. On November 20, 2013, the Kiowa Tribe received this honor, symbolizing the patriotism and warrior spirit of these heroes.