

STICKS FOR SOLDIERS XII
THANKSGIVING CHARITY
LACROSSE TOURNAMENT

FAIRFIELD LUDLOWE
HIGH SCHOOL LACROSSE

STICKSFORSOLDIERS.ORG



STICKSFORSOLDIERS

CONTACT:
JEFF CASUCCI
TOURNAMENT CHAIRMAN
T: 203-292-7511
JMCASUCCI@YAHOO.COM
STICKS FOR SOLDIERS, INC.
PO BOX 475
FAIRFIELD, CT 06824

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9:00 AM, NOVEMBER 22, 2017

Sticks for Soldiers is proud to recognize Specialist Russell J. Edgett as a Distinguished Veteran in honor of his service to our country and his work within the community.

Fairfield, Conn., November 22, 2017 – United States Army Specialist (Ret) **Russell J. Edgett** has been named Distinguished Veteran for this year's 12th annual **Sticks for Soldiers Thanksgiving Charity Lacrosse Tournament**, hosted by the Fairfield Ludlowe High School boy's lacrosse program on Saturday, November 25th. SPC Edgett sustained life-changing injuries from 12 years of active duty service.

Sticks for Soldiers is a non-profit charity with its mission to raise money to support future needs of severely-wounded soldiers, and promote youth awareness of military service through this state-wide event. In 11 years, the tournament, which is held every year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, has raised over \$675,000 through team entry fees, silent auction, merchandise, and corporate and private donations. This year, more than 900 boys and girls from 60 Connecticut high school teams are expected to participate and play 100 games during the one-day event. Game officials from around the state of Connecticut will donate their time as well as many volunteers from Fairfield Ludlowe High School and the surrounding communities. This is the players' opportunity to give thanks, provide support and raise awareness of our service members. The goal this year is to raise \$120,000, which will directly benefit these, and other, severely wounded honorees.

2017 12th Annual Distinguished Veteran

United States Army Specialist Russell J. Edgett

SPC Russell lives in Fairfield, CT with his wife, Sabine. He completed two tours in Afghanistan during his 12 years of active duty service. During his first tour, SPC Edgett was wounded when the vehicle in which he was travelling ran over an improvised explosive device (IED). The explosion caused injuries to his left side that resulting in weakness, limited mobility, nerve damage, and traumatic brain injury (TBI). SPC Edgett remained on active duty and deployed to Afghanistan once again. As a result of his injuries and the PTSD he developed as a result of his experiences, SPC Edgett left military service after this second tour.

Since returning home, SPC Edgett has continued to grapple with his injuries that have kept him from working. After struggling for over two and a half years to find housing, SPC Edgett decided to pay it forward by starting an organization to help fellow veterans in his situation. He started the "Freedom Isn't Free" ride in 2016 with just a few bikers. Since then, the number of participants has tripled. SPC Edgett is working to secure 501(c)(3) status for the Freedom Isn't Free Ride Foundation. All funds raised by the foundation will be given to homeless veterans and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA).

SPC Edgett is active in his church as a member of the Knights of Columbus and coordinator of the St. Pius X military veterans' group. He is a member of Port 5 and works with the Homes for the Brave to provide necessities to the veterans housed there. We are pleased to honor SPC Edgett as part of this year's Sticks for Soldiers Tournament.

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Sticks For Soldiers Leadership

Jeff Casucci, President of Sticks for Soldiers and tournament chairman said of this year's event, "We are proud to have such heroes as William and Calvin as our honorees this year. We cannot thank them enough for the sacrifices they have made on behalf of our community, our country and the freedoms we all enjoy. They serve as shining examples of the selfless dedication our service men and women exhibit every day across the world. We are honored by their presence at the Sticks for Soldiers event and hope to raise awareness of the sacrifices they have made. There is no better time than Thanksgiving weekend to thank our military personnel for their service."

Tournament Details

Team sign-in begins at 8:00am with first games at 9:00am. At Ludlowe's Taft Stadium, there will be a mid-day ceremony complete with a military honor guard to introduce and recognize the honorees. Participating high schools include: Fairfield Ludlowe, Fairfield Warde, Staples, Darien, Greenwich, Ridgefield, Glastonbury, Joel Barlow, Hopkins, Fairfield Prep, and many more. Games will be played at Fairfield Ludlowe High School, Roger Ludlowe Middle School, Tomlinson Middle School, and Sturges Park fields.

All are welcome to attend and admission is free. Corporate and private donations are greatly appreciated. Donations will be accepted on site at the event and can also be made through the Click&Pledge section of our homepage (found at www.sticksforsoldiers.org) or mailed to "**Sticks for Soldiers, Inc.**," PO Box 475, Fairfield, Conn. 06824. Additionally, there will also be various great items will be available for Silent Auction, and commemorative T-shirts will be on sale. For more information, honoree profiles, tournament schedules, location and history, please see www.sticksforsoldiers.org.

About Sticks for Soldiers

Sticks for Soldiers is a non-profit high school charity which hosts a lacrosse tournament held in Fairfield, Connecticut to raise money for severely-wounded military personnel. Held on Thanksgiving Saturday, it is sponsored by the Fairfield Ludlowe High School lacrosse team. The mission of the tournament is to provide support and give thanks to the service men and women who put their lives on the line and sacrificed for our country, while raising awareness among high school athletes to the sacrifices being made by people just a few years older than they are. Through their play and fund-raising participation, the athletes demonstrate their tangible thanks and support. Originating in 2006, the idea came from long-time lacrosse advocate Mike Voucas along with support from current Fairfield Ludlowe Head Coach Chris Parisi and a number of dedicated volunteers. The tournament and related fund-raising efforts has now raised over \$675,000 in 11 years.

Sticks for Soldiers, Inc. is recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 non-profit charity. FEIN 46-0962202. For more information go to www.sticksforsoldiers.org