

STICKS FOR SOLDIERS XIII  
THANKSGIVING CHARITY  
LACROSSE TOURNAMENT

FAIRFIELD LUDLOWE  
HIGH SCHOOL LACROSSE

STICKSFORSOLDIERS.ORG



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Two Wounded Servicemen Named Honorees for the 13th Annual Sticks for Soldiers Thanksgiving Charity Lacrosse Tournament on November 24th, Fairfield, CT.**

**Fairfield, Conn., November 17, 2018** – United States Marine Sergeant (Ret) Jared Luce and United States Marine Corporal (Ret) Manuel Jimenez have been named the honorees and beneficiaries for this year's 13th annual **Sticks for Soldiers Thanksgiving Charity Lacrosse Tournament**, hosted by the Fairfield Ludlowe High School boy's lacrosse program on Saturday, November 24th. SGT Luce and Cpl Jimenez both sustained life-changing injuries from combat in February 2005 and August 2010 respectively.

**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 12 years, the tournament, which is held every year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, has raised nearly \$800,000 through team entry fees, silent auction, merchandise, and corporate and private donations. This year, more than 750 boys and girls from 50 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 \$100,000, which will directly benefit these, and other, severely wounded honorees.

### **2017 13th Annual Honorees**

#### **United States Marine Sergeant Jared Luce**

SGT Luce was raised in Tolland, CT and has lived in Coventry, CT since 2003. After graduating from Tolland High School in 1995, Jared joined the Marine Corps on the Delayed Entry Program and went to boot camp in 1996. He was married in 1997 and has 3 kids. At his first duty station, Jared served as a 2nd echelon diesel mechanic with the 2nd Medical Battalion. After his promotion to Sergeant in 2000, he transferred to HQ Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines where he served until November 2003 when he left active duty and joined a USMC Reserve unit in New Haven in May 2004.

On Jan 5, 2005, SGT was called to active duty with the mobilization of the 6th Motor Transport Battalion from New Haven. His unit deployed as part of the advanced party element in Al Asad, Iraq. On February 9, 2005, Jared was wounded in an IED attack. His injuries resulted in the need to amputate both of SGT Luce's legs (left side Knee Disarticulation, right side Below-knee). Two fingers on his left hand were shattered, he lost the tip of a third finger and he lost the side of his palm. SGT Luce also experienced a detached retina. As a result of his injuries, SGT Luce was medically retired from the Marine Corps on April 29, 2007.

Since returning home, Jared has worked as a FedEx driver, a Business Developer for a small business, an independent IT consultant and a knife-maker. Since January 2017, Jared has worked as a forensic analyst with CT State Police as part of the ICAC Task Force. Jared continues to give back to the veteran community by working with the Vets Rock organization.

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**United States Marine Corporal Manuel Jimenez**

Manuel Jimenez was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. on January 1st, 1989. He enlisted into the Marine Corps in 2006 and attended Recruit Training in June 2007 at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC. Following completion of Recruit Training and subsequently the School of Infantry, Camp Geiger, NC, Private First Class Jimenez was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment (2/6 Marines) at Camp Lejeune, NC in December 2007. PFC Jimenez was then promoted to Lance Corporal in June 2008.

LCpl Jimenez was deployed in support of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, during a tour of the Mediterranean region. While on this tour, LCpl. Jimenez was a part of a team that went into Saudi Arabia to train that countries military. LCpl Jimenez was promoted to Corporal in June 2010. Shortly after his promotion, 2/6 Marines was deployed to Marjah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in the summer of 2010. Cpl Jimenez was severely wounded during an IED attack in August 2010. Cpl Jimenez experienced the loss of one of his arms above the elbow, complete hearing loss in his right ear and a mild Traumatic Brain Injury Cpl Jimenez was medically retired from the Marine Corps as a result of his injuries.

After his retirement, Manny continues to give back by joining Heart 9/11 whose mission is to Respond immediately to natural and man-made disasters; Rebuild community centers in hard-hit areas to meet grass roots needs; Recover by building resiliency for individuals, families and communities. Manny helped rebuild homes in Gerritsen Beach, Brooklyn after hurricane Sandy. He graduated magna cum laude from Capital Community College in December 2015 with his Associates degree in Management. Manny went on to graduate magna cum laude from Central Connecticut State University with his Bachelors in Management with a Minor in Management Information Systems (MIS).

Cpl Jimenez's personal decorations include the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, two Good Conduct Medals and numerous other personal awards.

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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 Sal and Vincent 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, Glastonbury, Joel Barlow, Hopkins, Fairfield Prep, and many more. Games will be played at Fairfield Ludlowe High School, Fairfield Prep Barlow Field, 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](http://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](http://www.sticksforsoldiers.org).

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**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 nearly \$800,000 in 12 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](http://www.sticksforsoldiers.org)