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**The Bob Feller Act of Valor Award Foundation Announces
Johnny Bench and Sean Doolittle as the 2018 Baseball Honorees
*Navy and Marine Corps Honorees to Join at Annual Award Ceremony***

The [Bob Feller Act of Valor Award Foundation](#) is excited to announce the winners of the 2018 Bob Feller Act of Valor Award. This award recognizes six recipients – one Baseball Hall of Famer, one current Major League Baseball player, one U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer, two Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Awards (one Afloat Command, one Ashore Command) and the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Jerry Coleman Award. Each honoree possesses the values, integrity, and dedication to serving our country that Bob Feller himself displayed. The winners will be honored at the sixth Annual Awards Ceremony in Washington DC at the US Navy Memorial on Monday, December 3rd.

This year, the honorees are:

Baseball Hall of Famer - Johnny Bench, Cincinnati Reds

Major League Baseball Player - Sean Doolittle, Washington Nationals

U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer – Aviation Ordnanceman Chief Shawn M. Wingle

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring (Afloat) - U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Five in Port Hueneme, CA Peer-to-Peer Mentoring (Ashore) - Training Support Center, Great Lakes

Jerry Coleman Award winner is Gunnery Sergeant Johnathan S. Rose, USMC.

Hall of Fame honoree Johnny Bench is considered to be “Baseball’s Greatest Catcher.” He played for the Cincinnati Reds from 1967 to 1983, is a 14-time All-Star, a 10-time Gold Glove winner, the 1968 National League Rookie of the Year and a two-time National League Most Valuable Player (1970, 1972). He was a key member of the Big Red Machine that won six division titles, four National League pennants, and back-to-back World Series championships. He was the World Series MVP in 1976.

Upon learning he is the 2018 honoree, Johnny Bench said, “There are few people you meet in your life that gain your respect like Bob Feller. His accomplishments as a baseball pitcher compare to the greatest of all time, but I believe he was more proud of his military service. He loved this country and volunteered to serve. He distinguished himself! He would talk about it when asked with great pride. Red White and Blue for Rapid Robert! What a great honor for me to receive this award. He was a Great American.”

In 1966, Bench enlisted in the Army Reserve, serving for six years. Bench, a member of the 478th Engineer Battalion, completed basic training at Fort Knox and combat support training at Fort Dix. Johnny Bench is honored for his support for U.S. military veterans, his efforts with the American Cancer Society and American Lung Association, and his scholarships to students with financial need. He accompanied Bob Hope on entertainment tours in Korea, Vietnam and in the Middle East during the Gulf War. He still contributes his time and efforts to fundraisers that support veterans, such as with the Hope for the Warriors—an organization geared toward enhancing the life of veterans.

Major League Baseball player honoree Sean Doolittle, the son of a retired Air Force navigator and bronze star recipient and the seventh cousin of General James “Jimmy” Doolittle, said about winning the award, “I am incredibly honored to be recognized for this award. My wife (Eireann Dolan) and I are both proud to come from military families and we’ve worked hard to raise awareness and get involved with veterans issues.

We are passionate about making sure our nation's veterans get the care they deserve for serving our country. I am grateful to be recognized and look forward to continuing to work along side our nation's military and veterans."

Beginning with his career with the Oakland As, Sean has been deeply active in veteran's affairs, especially the plight of "bad paper" veterans and their lack of eligibility for VA medical/mental health services. Sean and Eireann also support Operation Finally Home, an organization that builds homes for wounded veterans and their families. They also help Swords to Plowshares, a charity with the mission to end and prevent homelessness among veterans.

After Sean was traded to the Washington Nationals in 2017, he continued his efforts and deep relationships with the military community, from frequent visits to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, to partnering with the Friends of the World War II Memorial paying tribute to the men and women who served, to meeting with military families before games.

While with Oakland (2012-July 2017), Sean worked with many military organizations, including Freedom Alliance, an educational and charitable nonprofit which sponsors program activities aimed at supporting and honoring service members and their families, and purchased A's game tickets so he could spend time with them and for them to view batting practice from the field. Additionally, Sean used his rare off days during the season and visited the Veteran Affairs hospital in Palo Alto, meeting with patients and doctors. He spent the visits encouraging the patients during their rehabilitation workouts, participating in their recreational activities and signed autographs and took photos.

The U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer honoree is AOC (AW/SW/IW) Shawn M. Wingle enlisted in the Navy in September 2005 and has served with distinction ever since. He has served on USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) and is currently stationed on USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) where he has filled various roles over four years including the Leading Chief Petty Officer for the G-1 Division, responsible for the safe movement and handling of all ordnance. He is also the ship's Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor.

Chief Wingle is a passionate leader who is constantly looking to train and develop his peers and subordinates in all facets of their profession. Integrity and dedication to mission have been the hallmarks of his career. When Chief Wingle is not molding and shaping his junior sailors, he volunteers his time to the community resulting in him earning the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. His most recent community service event was "Read Across America" where he led a team of 750 officers, chiefs and Sailors from two aircraft carriers. They visited six cities and over 1700 classrooms impacting over 40,000 children on the importance of reading and education.

The Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Award honors groups of junior Sailors that have excelled in encouraging other Sailors to embody the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment, and have worked together to promote peer-to-peer mentorship and reduce destructive personal decision-making and behaviors. This year's recipients in the Afloat and Ashore categories are U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FIVE (NMCB 5) and Training Support Center Great Lakes.

Gunnery Sergeant Johnathan S. Rose is the recipient of the Jerry Coleman Award, which honors a Marine Noncommissioned Officer possessing outstanding leadership and unyielding support for the Marine Corps and the United States of America. Gunnery Sergeant Rose enlisted in the Marine Corps in June 2002 and has excelled throughout his career.

He has completed two combat tours - one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan - while in Afghanistan he was injured on May 15, 2010 by an IED and was medevac'd to Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, TX. While there he was approved for extended permanent limited duty allowing him to continue his military career. He is currently the Congressional Fellow to Congressman Duncan Hunter (CA-50).

In addition to leading and mentoring Marines, Gunnery Sergeant Rose took what he learned through his own recovery to help other wounded service members. He organized several morale events within his formal recovery program and saw morale across all wounded warriors improve. He always has time to attend trips and frequently speaks to raise awareness about the nation's wounded warriors. He continues to donate significant time to the Hope for the Warriors organization—the same organization supported by Johnny Bench.

The foundation also honors **the "Military Children Award"** for two children whose parents serve proudly in our United States Military. The Award is given as part of the foundation's educational outreach to the younger generation. Children ages 11 to 16 were asked to research and submit an essay explaining how the young person was influenced by one of the 37 Hall of Famers who served in WWII and how they utilized the lessons learned in overcoming their own adversities and challenges as a military child.

This year's winners are Cole Leffler and Alyssa Gerhart. Cole, age 14, attends W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax, Virginia. Cole's favorite team is the Washington Nationals and his favorite player is Kansas City Royal Tarik El-Abour because he is the first autistic player to sign a pro baseball contract. He chose to write about Nestor Chylak and Duke Snider because he wanted something different from others, which was to write about a baseball player and an umpire.

Alyssa, age 15, attends Northpoint High School and is from Waldorf, MD. Alyssa's favorite baseball team is the Baltimore Orioles and her favorite player is Adam Jones. One reason that she chose to write about "Pee Wee" Reese was because after reading his story she was moved to know that in such a time of hatred and discrimination there were still people with the courage to treat people properly in a public forum, as Reese did with Jackie Robinson.

The Awards honor the legacy of Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Feller. While many know Bob Feller as one of the greatest pitchers to ever grace the baseball diamond, few remember that he also served our country when he made the selfless decision to enlist just days after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Feller served the entire length of World War II on missions in both the Pacific and the North Atlantic, and earned the rank of Chief Petty Officer along with six campaign ribbons and eight battle stars. When asked about the most important victory he had won, Feller famously replied without hesitation, "World War II."

Along with Sean Doolittle, other Major League Baseball players named finalists for the Bob Feller Act of Valor Award were: Dustin Pedroia, Boston Red Sox; Corey Kluber, Cleveland Indians; Charlie Morton, Houston Astros; Ian Kennedy, Kansas City Royals; Justin Turner, Los Angeles Dodgers; Brad Ziegler, Miami Marlins; Jimmy Nelson, Milwaukee Brewers; Steven Matz, New York Mets; David Robertson, New York Yankees; Chris Hatcher, Oakland As; Craig Stammen, San Diego Padres and Cole Hamels, Chicago Cubs (nominated by Texas Rangers). Several nominees were honored with on-field ceremonies during the season.

Previous baseball winners of the award include Hall of Famers Yogi Berra, Tommy Lasorda, George Brett, Rod Carew, and Tom Seaver plus MLB players Justin Verlander, Nick Swisher, Jonathan Lucroy, Brad Ziegler, and Darren O'Day. Previous Navy, Peer to Peer, and Marine Corps honorees are Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Garth Sinclair, Senior Chief Petty Officer Carl Thompson, Chief Petty Officer Genell Cody, Senior Chief Petty Officer Christopher Beeding, Chief Petty Officer Edmundo Brantes; and USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70), HOPPER Information Services Center, USS CONSTITUTION, Unmanned Patrol

Squadron ONE NINE (VUP-19); Training Support Center Great Lakes, and Staff Sergeant Rene Segura, USMC First Sergeant Marshall Cleveland, USMC, and Staff Sergeant Adam Plambeck.

Peter Fertig created The Bob Feller Act of Valor Award with the support of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial, the Cleveland Indians, Major League Baseball, the Baseball Hall of Fame, the Major League Baseball Players Alumni Association, and the gracious consent of Mrs. Anne Feller, the San Diego Padres, and the family of Jerry Coleman.

"It is truly inspiring to watch these players within major league baseball honor our U.S. Military and those who serve proudly today," said Fertig. "Bob Feller led his generation onto the field of battle and away from the baseball diamond in a time of great national need. The legacy of Bob Feller and the greatest generation is embodied throughout these players and their respective clubs for honoring those who serve this great country, and for this we are forever grateful."

Continued Fertig, "As a foundation, we look forward to setting a new standard for social responsibility, by helping educate the youngest generation on the foundation's four pillars we believe will help move our country forward. The ideals of Citizenship, Service, Sacrifice and Legacy are the foundation's core value. Through these efforts, we can provide a powerful example that will inspire and excite today's generation, and acknowledge the heroes of past and present generations."

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The Navy Memorial includes both a commemorative public plaza and a Naval Heritage Center. The plaza is a round ceremonial amphitheater paved in granite to form a 100-foot diameter of the world. The Navy Memorial is located at 701 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, DC.