



**BOB FELLER ACT OF VALOR AWARD FOUNDATION
ANNOUNCES 2026 HONOREES
HIGHLIGHTED BY NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME**

**MEMBER WADE BOGGS
LOS ANGELES ANGELS INFIELDER
ZACH NETO AND**

**MITCH HARRIS FORMERLY OF THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS IS THE TOMMY
LASORDA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT**

For Immediate Release

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Washington, D.C. – The Bob Feller Act of Valor Award Foundation proudly announces **Wade Boggs**, formerly of the Boston Red Sox, New York Yankees and Tampa Bay Devil Rays, and **Zach Neto** of the Los Angeles Angels, as this year's baseball honorees for the Bob Feller Act of Valor Awards.

Mr. Boggs and Mr. Neto will be joined by Navy and Marine Corps recipients and honored during the **14th Annual Bob Feller Act of Valor Awards Ceremony** at the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., on **Wednesday, November 18, 2026**.

The awards honor the legacy of National Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Feller, who made the selfless decision to put his career in Major League Baseball on hold to serve our country. The honorees selected possess the values, integrity, and dedication to serving our country that Bob Feller himself displayed.

This year's program recognizes recipients from the military and Major League Baseball in seven categories. In addition, the ceremony will recognize one accomplished volunteer with the **Bob Feller 2026 Volunteer Award**.

2026 BFAOV Award Recipients

- 1. National Baseball Hall of Fame Award**
Wade Boggs, National BBHOF Inductee 2005
- 2. Major League Baseball Award**
Zach Neto, Infielder, Los Angeles Angels
- 3. United States Navy Chief Petty Officer Award**
CPO Shane D. Gubbs, USN
- 4. United States Marine Corps Jerry Coleman Award**
Gunnery Sergeant Brandon W. Unger, USMC



5. **Honorable John H. Dalton Morale, Welfare, Recreation Award**

Guam Aircrew Association

6. **Bob Feller Act of Valor Patriot Award**

Mitch Harris, formerly of the St. Louis Cardinals, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and U.S. Navy Veteran

7. **Bob Feller Volunteer Award** Kate Gironda: for her outstanding work in planning, organizing, and promoting the Foundation's 5K and Golf outing and for her participation and fundraising efforts for raising funds for Veterans Moving Forward that provide therapy and emotional support for Veterans.

National Baseball Hall of Fame Award Honoree – Wade Boggs

Wade Boggs also known as the “Chicken Man” for eating chicken before every single game was also highly respected as one of the best pure contact hitters in MLB history. The majority of his 18 seasons were with the Boston Red Sox. He also played for the New York Yankees, winning a World Series in 1996 and finished his career with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays in 1999.

Born in Omaha, Nebraska he was the youngest of three sons and grew up with a regimented military way of life. Wade's father, Winfield Boggs Jr. and mother Sue Nell Graham met in 1946 at a military base in Georgia. Winfield served as a U.S. Marine in World War II and flew for the Air Force in Korea while Sue piloted mail planes in WWII. Because of his parents' military influence, he considered attending West Point where he had received an appointment and continues to support military causes. His military way of life would also have a significant impact on how Wade managed his baseball career in where he would be known for doing set things at set times every day before a game.

Wade was drafted in the seventh round in the 1976 amateur draft and in 1981 during his time in the minors he got to participate in the longest game in professional baseball history, a 33 inning eight hour and 25-minute game between the Pawtucket Red Sox and Rochester Red Wings where Cal Ripken also played. After playing six years in the minors, he finally made his major league debut on April 10, 1982, and went on to win five batting titles between 1983 to 1988. A 12 time All-Star he was known for his plate discipline and recorded 200 or more hits and walked over 100 straight times in four straight seasons. He recorded his 3,000 hit on August 7, 1999 with the Devil Rays becoming the first player in MLB history to do so. His .328 career batting average is the highest of any living former player. He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2005.

Major League Baseball Award Honoree – Zach Neto

Zach Neto has been a consistent supporter of our nation's military service personnel and their families. Raised in a military family, Neto understands the value and sacrifice that our military service men and women make. His father Joaquin served with the U.S. Navy, and he aspires to help and give back to the military community. Since his debut in April 2023, Neto has been involved in various philanthropies with the Angels Baseball Foundation. His participation includes being a guest instructor at the Angels Play Ball Clinic to teach kids the fundamentals of baseball, and a speaker at the Angels Adopt A School program.



He has visited the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base, where he met with service members, toured the facility, and tried out the Black Hawk Aircrew Trainer flight simulator program. Most recently, during Neto's third visit to LA Fleet Week, he met with Sailors and Marines in San Pedro to learn more about what a life of service looks like and toured the USS Essex. Each year, he makes it a point to visit the USO area at Fleet Week to meet with military personnel, thank them for their service, sign autographs and take photos.

Throughout the 2026 season, Zach will continue to represent the Angels when military members and their families visit Angel Stadium. During this year's Memorial Day recognition at Angel Stadium, Zach met with families through TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) to provide them with moral support.

Zach's determination to assist Veterans, combined with his compassion and excitement for helping others, is an inspiration to everyone who meets him, especially those who serve our country.

Zach is also the Angels 2026 nominee for the prestigious Roberto Clemente Award which recognizes Major League Baseball players for character community involvement, and philanthropy.

Military Award Honorees

U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Award – Chief Petty Officer Shane D. Gubbs, USN

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Chief Petty Officer Shane D. Gubbs is the premier CPO at Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training and Evaluation Unit (EODTEY) TWO and represents the very best of our Navy. Throughout his career, he has consistently placed the needs of others before his own while serving as an inspirational leader, trusted mentor, and role model for Sailors, Chiefs, junior officers, and the communities he serves. His proven combat leadership, unwavering commitment to developing future Naval EOD warfighters, extraordinary service to his community and steadfast devotion to the Navy Core Values embody the legacy of Bob Feller and the ideals upon which this award was founded.

Jerry Coleman Award – Gunnery Sergeant Brandon W. Unger, USMC

Gunnery Sergeant Brandon W. Unger has personified the principal qualities of an elite Marine leader: superb technical expertise, mission-oriented focus, and a profound commitment to leading Marines with humility, dignity and integrity. His unyielding initiative in standardizing the battalion intelligence enterprise, establishing vital allied liaison networks with the Australian Defense Force, and authoring critical SOP's for southwest border operations directly generated success for the entire Command Element. His tireless off-duty devotion to community mentorship contributed over 300 shootings for Beginners and coaching local youth at the Supreme Boxing Club exemplifies the selflessness and civic leadership celebrated by his award.

Honorable John H. Dalton Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Committee Award – Guam Aircrew Association

This unique award honors a group of junior Sailors that have excelled in encouraging others to embody the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. They volunteer to promote the welfare of their shipmates while reducing destructive personal decision-making and behaviors.



The Guam Aircrew Association leads by example, serving Sailors and inspiring them to a purpose greater than themselves. By providing tools for others to succeed, treating people with dignity and respect, and demonstrating the value of integrity in both words and actions, they elevate morale and foster a resilient environment onboard and within their community.

The Tommy Lasorda Patriot Award Honoree- Mitch Harris

The Tommy Lasorda Patriot Award goes to a former MLB player who demonstrates the Foundation's 4 Pillars of Service, Sacrifice, Citizenship and the Legacy of Tommy Lasorda who served in the United States Army from 1945 to 1947, putting his early professional baseball career on hold to serve his country that he loved dearly. He visited combat troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and actively participated in programs supporting disabled Veterans such as Disabled Veteran Business Alliance and PTSD/TBI rehabilitation frameworks with "Tommy's Team." He was also the 2014 recipient of the Foundation's National Hall of Fame Award.

The 2026 Tommy Lasorda Patriot Award recipient is former major leaguer and United States Navy Veteran, Mitch Harris. He became the first Naval Academy graduate to appear in a MLB game since 1921 and the first ever to do so after completing a full military commitment. Mitch received the Tony Conigliaro Award in 2016, given to a MLB player who overcomes adversity and shows spirit, determination and courage.

Mitch follows former MLB player Rick Monday remembered for saving the American flag from burning and AL Bumbry of the Baltimore Orioles, the 1973 Rookie of the year in the American League who was a Bronze Star recipient and served in Vietnam.

Building Future Leaders

This year's ceremony will again recognize The Bob Feller Act of Valor Scholarship Program, created to provide tuition assistance to qualified students of military families, Veterans, service personnel.

The Foundation will award five \$2,000 scholarships based on academic excellence, community service, leadership, and participation in extracurricular activities.

About the Program

Previous **National Baseball Hall of Fame** recipients include Yogi Berra, Tommy Lasorda, George Brett, Rod Carew, Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Randy Johnson, Brooks Robinson, Joe Torre, Trevor Hoffman, Carlton Fisk, Pedro Martinez and Rollie Fingers.

Previous **Major League Baseball** player recipients include Justin Verlander, Nick Swisher, Jonathan Lucroy, Brad Ziegler, Darren O'Day, Sean Doolittle, Ian Kennedy, Craig Stammen, Griffin Jax, Byron Buxton, Jon Gray, Sean Reid-Foley, and Mike Yastrzemski.

Previous **United States Navy Chief Petty Officer** recipients include Senior Chief Petty Officer Garth Sinclair, Master Chief Petty Officer Carl Thompson, Chief Petty Officer Genell Cody, Senior Chief Petty Officer Christopher Beeding, Chief Petty Officer Edmundo Brantes, Chief Petty Officer Shawn M. Wingle, Senior Chief Petty Officer Jairo N. Guity, Chief Petty Officer Lachesha L. Dowdell, and Chief Personnel Specialist (Aviation Warfare) Terrell M. Culler, GMC Roberto P. Landeros III, and GSMC Olie E. Dunlap IV, USN.



Previous **Honorable John H. Dalton Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Committee Award** recipients include **USS DECATUR (DDG 73)**

Previous **United States Marine Corps** honorees included: Staff Sergeant Rene Segura, First Sergeant Marshall Cleveland, Staff Sergeant Adam Plambeck, Gunnery Sergeant Johnathan S. Rose, Gunnery Sergeant Joshua A. MacMillan, Master Sergeant Herman A. Kruppa, and Gunnery Sergeant Terrence B. Showers, Gunnery Sergeant Austin J. Otto, and Gunnery Sergeant Paul A. Luna, USMC.

About the Foundation

Peter Fertig founded **The Bob Feller Act of Valor Award** with the support of the **United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, Major League Baseball, the Cleveland Guardians, the National Baseball Hall of Fame**, the gracious consent of the late **Mrs. Anne Feller**, the **San Diego Padres**, and the family of **Jerry Coleman**.

To learn more about the BFAOV Foundation, visit: www.actofvaloraward.org

