



LOCAL CIVILIAN HERO

Wayne Newton

Wayne Newton has epitomized the talent, glamour and energy that is Las Vegas-the entertainment capital of the world-for so long, that he is called “Mr. Las Vegas.” He is also known for his heartfelt patriotism. He has entertained troops in every major confrontation our country has been in since Vietnam, and he was there twice. One of

Wayne’s biggest honors was announced in October 2000 when Bob Hope and the USO passed the torch naming him the “Chairman of the USO Celebrity Circle.” From 2001 through 2004, he had taken 16 USO tours overseas. He was the first performer to entertain troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Wayne describes entertaining for the men and women of the armed forces overseas as one of the highlights of his life. The US Defense Department bestowed upon Wayne its highest civilian award for being the only American entertainer to perform in all of these places.

Wayne is highly visible as a contributor of time, energy and talent to worthwhile causes. He serves on the board of many charitable and philanthropic organizations, including the National Association of Missing and Abused Children, The LA Lupus Foundation and Opportunity Village, just to name a few.

All of this - the wide appeal, the longevity, the patriotism, and the selfless service - has made Wayne Newton a favorite of his many fans. He is one of the most widely acclaimed and honored entertainers in history. Wayne has been the recipient of many prestigious awards, some of which include, “The Secretary of the Navy Public Service Award,” “The Air Force Scroll of Appreciation,” “Medal for Distinguished Public Service,” the “The AMVET’s Silver Helmet Award in the Americanism Category,” “The USO Spirit of Hope Award,” “Founders Award of St. Jude’s Hospital,” the “VFW Hall of Fame Award,” the “Humanitarian Award of the American Cancer Society’s Cancer Research Center,” the “American Legion’s Exceptional Citizen Award,” and many more. Today, Wayne receives U.S.VETS - Las Vegas’ first annual “Local Civilian Hero Award” for his service to veterans and the military and his commitment to the Southern Nevada community.

2011 LOCAL HERO NOMINEES

Nominees are being recognized for their selfless service to members of the military and to veterans in Southern Nevada.



Larry Ashley, U.S. Army Veteran

Since completing a tour of duty in Vietnam, Larry has committed his life to serving individuals affected by substance abuse and mental health challenges, with a passion to help combat veterans overcome post traumatic stress. Currently, he is a Clinical Professor of Internal Medicine and Psychiatry for UNLV and also mentors students in providing effective services to veterans.

SMSgt Bradley Behling, U.S. Air Force Active Duty

Bradley is President of the Nellis Air Force Base “Top Three” enlisted organization. He has provided oversight and facilitation of Veteran Appreciation Events, and Wounded Warrior events which provide much-needed assistance to thousands of veterans. He also established the Nellis Support Council to improve the quality of life on Nellis Air Force Base and Southern Nevada.



John Bright, U.S. Army Veteran

John is the Director of the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System. Under his direction, he has changed the face of health care for veterans living in Southern Nevada and for all members of the armed forces. He was instrumental in the transfer of land from the Bureau of Land Management to the VA to bring the first, full-service hospital to veterans in Las Vegas.

Don Colbert, U.S. Army Veteran

Don has been a volunteer with Nathan Adelson Hospice since 2007 where he trains and mentors new volunteers, and provides individualized patient and family care. He believes that no one should end their life’s journey alone, afraid, or in pain. He has also volunteered with Catholic Charities for 22 years, as well as St. Francis de Sales making food for the homeless.



RJ Dough, U.S. Air Force Veteran

RJ serves on the Las Vegas Veterans Advisory Council. He also produces the “Veterans Talk/Forgotten Promise” radio show weekly, bringing awareness to the community about veteran issues. He also connects veterans and their families to resources to help them meet their needs which has included assistance to wounded warriors, homeless veterans, and veterans in need of healthcare.

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Charles Ellis, U.S. Army Veteran

Charles has helped to establish a system of care for veterans to achieve self-sufficiency through his work with HELP USA. His service to Southern Nevada includes providing food programs for needy families, individual and family mental health services, and psychosocial interventions to assist veterans with re-learning life skills and maintaining housing.

Robert Garlow, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Robert is one of the primary planners for the recent VFW Patriots Run held in late September which helped raise funds for various veterans organizations in Southern Nevada. He has also been instrumental in the homeless veteran outreach event which took place in October. He is committed to assisting veterans receive the services they need.



James "Bo" Gritz, U.S. Army Veteran

Bo is Post Commander of the American Legion Post 432. He participates in various community service events with the Boy Scouts, Santa's Toy Box, as well as special events in honor of Veterans Day and Memorial Day. He also participates in ribbon ceremonies for those who have lost loved ones and pin ceremonies for those who go above and beyond the call of duty to serve their community.

Keri Henderson, U.S. Air Force Active Duty

Keri is the squadron commander for the Civil Air Patrol PCR-NV-802 Jack L. Schofield Cadet Squadron that is based at Jack L. Schofield Middle School in Las Vegas. Through her leadership and example, the cadets and seniors from the 802nd have been serving the community in various roles. She also inspires others through the Civil Air Patrol, an all-volunteer organization.



Bonnie Hill, U.S. Air Force Veteran

As a Correction Officer, he interacts with veterans who are struggling with finding an appropriate balance in their lives after returning from active service, providing counseling and encouragement to help them reintegrate successfully into civilian life. He is also involved in youth ministry services, caring for the elderly, cooking, gardening and joining in prayer groups for those in need.

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Barry Keller, U.S. Army Veteran

Barry volunteers with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. Barry volunteers to perform TAPS for military Honors and funerals and has done so in excess of 300 hours in this past year. In 2003, Barry received the Presidential Call To Service Award, for lifetime achievement in voluntary service. Barry is also a Commissioner with the Boy Scouts of America.



Frank Perna, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Frank was known as a persistent and unrelenting advocate for homeless people, particularly homeless veterans, and for better treatment of veterans in general, especially those returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. He was an advocate for more shelter space, better social services, and housing. Frank was nominated posthumously, as he passed away on January 26th of this year.

Anthony Roebuck, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Anthony is the Employment Coordinator for the Department of Veteran Affairs. His job development duties, including facilitating resume workshops within local partnering agencies, have established productive relationships with employers to assist veterans to rejoin the workforce and gain self-sufficiency. Anthony is known for his enthusiasm to assist a veteran whenever needed.



Merle Sexton, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

Merle is currently the Program Director for The Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Program in Southern Nevada. He is known for the individual attention he provides to clients to help them to make a change in their lives. He is also credited with restoring a women's program and for establishing contract beds for veterans to obtain residential treatment at the Salvation Army.

Charles "Chuck" Woodruff, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

Chuck is active in service with the Boy Scout program. He teaches patriotism, values, morals, skills and character. He also volunteers with community food drives and has contributed countless hours to assist with U.S.VETS' new location, The Radcliff. Chuck has volunteered as a handy man, painter, and mover, has coordinated various projects, and is dedicated to helping all vets living at The Radcliff.

