Navy Memorial hosts 24th annual Lone Sailor Awards Dinner

Story and photo by MC3 (SW) Mikelle D. Smith, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON – The Navy Memorial honored six military veterans during the 2011 Lone Sailor awards dinner held at the National Building Museum in Washington, Sept. 22.

The notable veterans included Lloyd "Beau" Bridges III, Jeff Bridges, Lloyd Bridges, Brian Lamb, Jerry Coleman and Bob Feller. Beau Bridges, Lamb and Coleman were in attendance and were presented with the Lone Sailor award before military members and distinguished guests at the dinner.

Beau Bridges, an actor, producer and director, was recognized for his accomplishments as a civilian after serving both active and Reserve duty in the U.S. Coast Guard.

Lamb was recognized for his service as a naval officer and, later, founder of C-SPAN.

Coleman, said to be the only Major League Baseball player to see combat in two wars, was recognized for 120 missions he flew as an aviator and his devotion to the Marine Corps.

The Lone Sailor award is presented to veterans who have excelled in their respective civilian careers while continuing to exemplify military values.

"This event allows the Navy Memorial Foundation, and the entire Navy, the opportunity to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the maritime services and our nation," said Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mark Ferguson.

Beau Bridges, following in the footsteps of his father Lloyd, enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard in 1959 and served eight years as a reservist, after active duty.

"I enlisted when I was 17 after Kennedy threw up the blockade in Cuba," said Bridges. "My father, thinking that there would be a draft, suggested that I try to choose my service beforehand. My father had been made an honorary commodore in the Coast Guard and I knew a lot of the personnel, so I chose to enlist in the Coast Guard."

Retired Rear Adm. Edward Walker Jr., president and executive officer of the Navy Memorial, delivers remarks during the 2011 Lone Sailor Awards dinner at the National Building Museum in Washington D.C. Sept. 22. The image of the Lone Sailor, that of a seagoing veteran standing ready for service in a faraway port, personifies the sacrifices, courage and commitment of Navy personnel past, present and future.

Bridges accepted his Lone Sailor Award on behalf of his deceased father, Lloyd, and younger brother Jeff who could not attend the event.

"My motto in the Coast Guard was Semper Paratus, which means "always ready." That is something that I have carried with me my whole life," said Bridges. "I also learned how important respect is; respecting yourself, respecting your mates, respecting the authorities that are training you and getting you ready ... these are all qualities that I have tried to pass on to my children and carry on for myself and my life."

Lamb, who enlisted in the Navy after graduating from Purdue University, served in many different media elements during his time in the military. He was an aide in the Johnson administration and also a Pentagon public affairs officer during the Vietnam War.

"When I got into the Navy there was structure," said Lamb. "I found people that were dedicated and committed ... I got a sense that people wanted me to learn and all of that fed into the beginning of my life; these foundation experiences will always be paramount in my life."

Lamb stated he didn't think he would have done what he did without serving in the Navy.

After receiving an honorable discharge from the Navy in 1967, Lamb began working as a freelance reporter and spent the next 12 years honing his skills as a political media journalist. In 1977, he won the support of key cable industry executives and began developing a station using satellite uplinks, known today as C-SPAN.

"The advice I would give to young Sailors today would be to look around and take advantage of every opportunity available to you," said Lamb. "Always ask questions. Get down to the bottom of why someone wants you to do what they are asking. If you pay attention, it will help you and it can work for you."

Coleman joined the Marine Corps in 1942 as a naval aviation cadet. After receiving his wings in 1944, he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant, and went on to see combat during World War II and the Korean War.

"When I found out I was getting the Lone Sailor award, I was thrilled to death," said Coleman. "The proudest moment of my life was the day that I got my second lieutenant bars and my aviator wings ... that still, to this day, remains the highlight of my life."

Coleman returned to professional baseball in 1953 and finished up his career in 1957. He went on to become a sports broadcaster for CBS television and has been recognized by the Marine Corps, as well as being inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 2007 for his work in broadcasting.

"As a professional baseball player and broadcaster I think the one thing that stayed with me since my time in the service has been trying to do my best," said Coleman. "When called upon, the United States military are the best qualified [people] in the world."

Prior to the awards ceremony dinner, Bridges, Lamb and Coleman received a tour of the Navy Memorial, which houses the Lone Sailor statue. The Lone Sailor statue is a composite of the U.S. Navy bluejacket, past, present and future, and was designed in 1987.

The Lone Sailor award has been presented to 73 Navy and Marine Corps veterans, and the Navy Memorial continues to provide Navy veterans and personnel currently serving with a place to celebrate their service.

Navy convenes Phase II of Enlisted Retention Board

By Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – The second phase of the Navy's Enlisted Retention Board convened at Navy Personnel Command (NPC) in Millington Tenn. Sept. 26.

ERB Phase II will review the records of 7, 792 Sailors in pay grades E-6 thru E-8 who meet eligibility requirements outlined in Navy Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 129/11.

The quota and performance based board is charged with identifying the most fully qualified Sailors for retention

Combined, the first and second phase ERB will review approximately 16,000 records for about 13,000 available retention quotas.

The primary criterion for retention is sustained superior performance.

ERB was announced earlier this year as the Navy faces record-high retention and low attrition among active-duty Sailors.

The purpose of the board is to reduce over manning in 31 ratings and to help the Navy meet congressionally mandated end-strength.

The ERB was divided into two four-week phases in order to reduce the amount of time selection board members would be required to be away from their commands.

The first phase of the ERB convened Aug. 22 to review the records of ERB-eligible Sailors in pay grades E-4 and E-5.

That board adjourned Sept. 16 and forwarded its recommendations to NPC.

Community managers from the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) are currently reviewing the Phase I board's recommendations for conversion opportunities outlined in NAVADMIN 180/11 before forwarding the board's recommendations to the Chief of Naval Personnel for approval.

Phase II results will also be reviewed by BUPERS for conversion opportunities after the board adjourns.

The Navy expects to release Phase I results in October and Phase II results in November.

Sailors who are not selected for retention on active-duty are encouraged to consider reserve affiliation and will have access to the Navy's transition assistance management program and other benefits for members who are involuntary separated.

To learn more about the Enlisted Retention Board, visit www. http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/ERB/Pages/default2.aspx.