

U.S. Rep. Steil: Announces Franklin native as 2020 Veteran of the Year recipient

Posted on Tuesday, Nov 10, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

FRANKLIN, WISCONSIN—As we approach Veterans Day, today Congressman Bryan Steil announced Mr. Steven Perrigo, United States Army Sergeant (Ret.) from Franklin, as Wisconsin's First Congressional District's 2020 Veteran of the Year recipient.

"I am honored to announce Steven as this year's Veteran of the Year recipient. When duty called, Steven did not hesitate to answer it. Steven's distinguished military career and commitment to fellow veterans, especially homeless veterans and those suffering from mental health challenges, is admirable. Too often our veterans' service, advocacy, and work in Southeast Wisconsin goes unrecognized. I am committed to shining a light on heroes, like Steven, who have dedicated their lives to bettering our country and community," **said Steil.**

"Thank you to Congressman Steil for organizing the Veteran of the Year program and addressing the needs of our veterans community. I'm very pleased to receive this award not only for myself, but for veterans who support fellow veterans in our community. This award recognizes the importance of everyone in our community who help veterans rejoin society. It is a great pleasure to accept this recognition and I look forward to continue working with veteran organizations," **said Steven Perrigo, the 2020 Veteran of the Year Award Recipient.**

Perrigo is the son of a World War II veteran who died in action. Rather than accepting an automatic exemption when drafted into the Vietnam War, Perrigo

answered the call to service to honor the sacrifice of his father. Perrigo served in the U.S. Army in the Korean DMZ for fourteen months, receiving numerous merit awards and campaign ribbons, including the Army Commendation Medal for service for his leadership, performance, and commitment to his duties.

Since living in Wisconsin, Perrigo has been an active member in Southeast Wisconsin's veterans community. Perrigo has worked with the Fisher House on the VA grounds in Milwaukee, Dry Hootch of Wisconsin providing peer-to-peer support for veterans suffering from PTSD, and as a Vice President of the Saint Andrew's Society. The Saint Andrew's Society awarded a donation of more than \$20,000 to the Veterans Tiny Homes Project in Racine which helps homeless veterans with housing, employment, and educational opportunities.

In addition to the Veteran of the Year award, Steil awarded Congressional Recognitions of Service to Michelle Adams of Mukwonago, Daniel Newberry of Franklin, and Joseph Huelskamp of Waterford. All three served in the United States Army.

Michelle Adams served in the United States Army for one year and is currently the Commander of the Mukwonago American Legion Post 375. Adams is also the organizer of the annual Viper Ride for disabled veterans. This ride allows blind, visually impaired or physically limited veterans to enjoy a day of motorcycling and entertainment. Adams coordinates multiple dinners each year for physically and emotionally disabled veterans at the Milwaukee VA hospital.

Daniel Newberry served in the United States Army for eight years. After struggling from his own battles with PTSD and seeking help, Newberry has made it his mission to serve veterans and first responders who also suffer from mental health challenges. Newberry started a non-profit, 22Fitness, that provides free fitness classes for military members, veterans, and first responders to help those cope with depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

Joe Huelskamp is a Korean War Army veteran and currently serves as the Principal of the American Legion Post 20 in Waterford. Huelskamp supports Southeast Wisconsin's veterans by driving local veterans to their medical appointments.

Huelskamp is also a member of the Honor Guard, providing veterans with military honors at services held at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Ceremony in Union Grove.

Veterans were nominated by residents across Southeast Wisconsin. In total, 25 veterans were nominated. The First Congressional District's Veterans Advisory Board reviewed all nominations; evaluated each applicant's commitment to service, spirit of excellence, and dedication to community and fellow veterans; and selected the Veteran of the Year Award recipient based off of the overall evaluation.

The First Congressional District's Veteran Advisory Board evaluated nominees by reviewing the following criteria:

SERVICE: Demonstrate a commitment to service in their community. This could be through advocacy, community projects, an act of heroism, or other actions.

EXCELLENCE: Provide an example of how this veteran exudes a spirit of excellence.

DEDICATION: Have a dedication to supporting their fellow veterans and building bridges between veterans and our greater Southeast Wisconsin community.