

U.S. Rep. Steil: Announces Burlington resident as 2021 Veteran of the Year

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BURLINGTON, WI – Today, Congressman Bryan Steil (WI-01) announced Mr. Robert (Bob) G.E. Boulden, United States Marine Corps Sergeant (Ret.) from Burlington, as Wisconsin's First Congressional District 2021 Veteran of the Year.

"I am honored to announce Bob as this year's Veteran of the Year. Bob's commitment to service, excellence, and dedication was clear in our nomination process," **said Rep. Steil.** "His distinguished career in the military and commitment to service in our veterans community is a shining example of leadership for all Americans. We cannot thank each of our veterans in Wisconsin enough for their service and sacrifice to our country. I remain committed to shining a light on heroes in our community working day in and day out to support our veterans. Thank you to everyone who submitted a nomination to our annual award."

"I was overwhelmed to receive this award. I just like to do what I can for our veterans. It was great to have my family there. Thank you Congressman Steil for this award," **said Bob Boulden, 2021 Veteran of the Year Award Recipient.**

Bob joined the United States Marine Corps (USMC) when he was 18 years old in 1948. He traveled with a small box camera and documented his experience in Hell Fire Alley and the trek out of North Korea. He fought valiantly in The Battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War and was wounded in action. In addition to his military service, for over 50 years he has volunteered his time in various veterans organizations including the Marine Corps League, VFW, and Korean War Veterans Association

He is a lifetime member of the American Legion Post 79 in Burlington, Chosen Few, Rifle Squad for Military Funerals, Lifetime Member of Veterans of Foreign Wars, Marine Corps League, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, Anderson Murphy Post 2823.

Bob was included in a 2016 Netflix documentary about The Battle of Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War. In the documentary, he said, *"I wanted to let people know what really happened. In 18 days, we lost 900 Marines and 2000 Army brothers. It was so cold that your eye-lids would freeze shut if you didn't keep blinking."* Temperatures plunged to estimates as low as -36 F. Bob had just turned 21 when he was sent to Hagaru-ri.

In addition to the Veteran of the Year award, Steil awarded Iraq War Veteran James Fialkowski, United States Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant (Ret.) from Greendale, WI and Vietnam War Veteran John Margowski, United States Air Force Navigator (Ret.) from Muskego with Congressional Recognitions of Service.

James Fialkowski served 20 years in the USMC. He joined the Marines at the age of 17 after his father, a USMC Korean War Veteran, passed away. He is currently the Service Officer of The American Legion in Milwaukee, WI where he has been serving for 15 years. After retiring from the Marines in 2005, James has worked to help veterans who are struggling or looking to receive wartime health related benefits as well as retirement benefits, that many were unaware that they were entitled to receive.

John Margowski is a Vietnam War Veteran. He served as the Assistant Waukesha County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) starting in 1977 and then became the CVSO of Waukesha County in 1986 and served in that position for 32 years. He is a long-time member of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and has served as State Director and Region Director coordinating and overseeing activities in five states. He has served and is currently serving on the National Board for over 15 years. He served as Chairman and member of their Veterans Benefits Committee for many years. John has assisted countless veterans and their dependents.

Veterans were nominated by residents across Southeast Wisconsin. In total, 16 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 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.

For additional photos from the event, click [HERE](#).