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Mike “Scoop” Jackson Honored By Chapel of Four Chaplains

TIPP CITY -- A decorated Air Force pilot and founder of the American Veterans Institute and Operation Welcome Home is the latest recipient of the prestigious Legion of Honor Award of The Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia, PA.

Mike “Scoop” Jackson, Lt. Col. USAF (ret), 61, of Tipp City, Ohio will be presented with the award during the Midwest Operation Welcome Home celebration taking place in Auburn, IN July 2-6, 2008. The Legion of Honor Award, previously presented to individuals such as Dwight Eisenhower, Bob Hope, Ronald Reagan and Harry Truman, publicly recognizes and honors outstanding members of society whose lives model the giving spirit and unconditional service to community, nation, and humanity without regard to race, religion, or creed exemplified so dramatically by the *Four Chaplains*.

Jackson, himself a disabled Vietnam veteran, founded the American Veterans Institute in order to develop programming to benefit his fellow veterans. In that capacity he assists elderly and disabled veterans in receiving VA benefits; he helps communities plan and fundraise for veterans memorials; and he works to organize Operation Welcome Home celebrations for his fellow veterans. He is currently working to establish the American Veterans Hall of Honor and the American Veterans Research Library in Auburn, IN. He and AVI co-founder Tara Dixon-Engel are developing a national education program and book series for young people that spotlights the service and sacrifice of America’s veterans. The series was recently profiled by the Associated Press. In 1997 Jackson was one of the youngest individuals ever inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame, for his volunteer work with unemployed and underemployed veterans. He is Executive Director Emeritus of the National Aviation Hall of Fame and a popular public speaker on the importance of honoring our vets.

“As someone who worked with Mike on active duty – and now on the board of the American Veterans Institute, I can say that he is the ideal recipient of this award,” said Loren Stendahl, retired Air Force officer and Site Manager, Lear Siegler Services, Sheppard AFB, TX. “Mike is passionate when it comes to his fellow veterans. He wants America to understand and appreciate her men and women in uniform; and he wants to make certain that our GIs never again experience the ugliness of the Vietnam era. In the four years since starting the American Veterans Institute, Mike has worked tirelessly to build the organization, and has never accepted a salary so that grants and donations can go directly toward program development. He is a man who savors life, watches out for his fellow veterans, and always looks for ways to leave the world a little better than he found it. I am thrilled that the Chapel of Four Chaplains is recognizing his service to our country and its people.”

The nomination package notes that “despite an outgoing and energetic ‘fighter pilot’ personality, Mike is also a deeply spiritual man who understands the importance of good works. His faith is

quiet, but powerful. He is a tireless advocate for the little guy and consistently converts his words into actions.”

The award is presented in memory of the four Army chaplains who were aboard a military transport ship when it was torpedoed in the North Atlantic during World War II. Noting that there were not enough life vests for all the young soldiers, the four chaplains stripped off their vests and gave them to the next four soldiers waiting in line. Thus, the chaplains had given up their only chance for survival. Those recognized with the Legion of Honor awards must live lives that exemplify the courage and service of the Four Chaplains.

For more information about the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation go to www.fourchaplains.org and to learn about the American Veterans Institute, go to www.AmericanVeteransInstitute.org.