

## PRESS RELEASE

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### UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS VETERANS' MEMORIAL TO BE DEDICATED NOV. 16

The University of Illinois will finally fulfill a promise made 56 years ago when it formally dedicates a memorial to its Armed Forces veterans on Saturday, Nov. 16, 2002, during the pre-game ceremonies at the Illinois vs. Ohio State football game.

At a 1946 Memorial Day ceremony remembering the 828 Illinois graduates, faculty and staff who were killed and the 20,680 who served in the Armed Forces, University President Arthur C. Willard said, "Some day there will be a suitable memorial on campus to those who gave their lives in World War II." No permanent memorial was ever built, nor was any recognition ever made of Illini who served in Korea, Vietnam or more recent military campaigns.

Memorial Stadium was dedicated in 1924 to the memory of the 189 Illini who were killed in action in World War I. The dedication will be extended to honor all alumni, students, faculty and staff who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and, especially, those who died in our nation's wars and conflicts since the establishment of the University in 1867. Names of those killed in the line of duty will be engraved on four limestone tablets and placed at the entrances to Memorial Stadium's east and west colonnades alongside the names of their World War I comrades.

The idea for the Veterans' Memorial originated last fall on Veterans Day when a group of University of Illinois alumni and retired faculty formed a steering committee to work with Urbana-Champaign campus administrators to seek an appropriate means to recognize University of Illinois veterans.

Urbana native **Archie R. Clemins** '66 ENG, MS '72 ENG a retired Navy four-star admiral, chaired the 19-member committee that included individuals who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and other military campaigns. Assisting Adm. Clemins were College of Business alumni William D. Forsyth Jr., BS Finance '58; John R. Phipps, BS Economics '41; Samuel K.

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Skinner, BS Accountancy '60; Patrick E. Rea, BS Economics '63; and Wilma L. Vaught, BS Commerce Law '52.

The University of Illinois Alumni Association recently completed a year-long research project to identify University of Illinois alumni, students, faculty and staff who died in all wars and conflicts for which a military campaign ribbon or battle streamer was authorized by Congress. Staff members combed University and Association archives for obituaries and solicited input from readers of Illinois Alumni magazine. Currently, there are 1,119 who are known to have died in the various conflicts:

- Prior to World War I – None
- World War I – 189
- Second Nicaraguan Campaign (1926-1933) – 1
- World War II – 851
- Korean War – 21
- Vietnam War – 55
- Lebanon (1983-1987) – 1
- Liberation and Defense of Kuwait (Operation Desert Storm, 1991) – 1

In the process, the Alumni Association received numerous letters, e-mail messages and calls from grateful family members, friends and former classmates with information and touching personal reminiscences of heroism, sacrifice and personal loss. It identified one heretofore-unrecognized Illini Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and another hero of the Battle of Midway for whom the Navy named a destroyer escort. All of the information and correspondence related to this project will be provided to University of Illinois Archives at the conclusion of the project.

The Veterans' Memorial will be officially dedicated during the pre-game performance at the Nov. 16, 2002, Illinois vs. Ohio State football game. The Marching Illini will perform a patriotic opening that will include a joint color guard and a 50-state flag detail by cadets, midshipmen and officer candidates from the three campus ROTC programs. The unveiling will

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be shown on Memorial Stadium's new video scoreboard, followed by a moment of silence and "Taps" played by the Marching Illini's 60-member trumpet section. The pre-game will conclude with the National Anthem and an F-16 "missing man" flyover by the Illinois Air National Guard.

The Veterans' Memorial is estimated to cost \$90,000 and is being funded entirely by private contributions.