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The Old Guard Association
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The Department of the Army and COL James Tuite, Commander, 3D United States Infantry – The Old Guard have announced that Sergeant Major (retired) Gavin L. McIlvenna has been selected as a Distinguished Member of the Regiment.

SGM McIlvenna was nominated for this prestigious and rare award by The Old Guard Association (TOGA) an alumni group of men and women who have previously served in the Regiment. The rigorous review process was conducted by a Board of Officers of the Regiment chaired by COL Tuite. Review Board representative MAJ Danielle Cork, Regimental S1, stated that SGM McIlvenna's nomination identified him "as an exemplary role model who embodies our adherence to the tenants of honor, commitment and excellence in all things.

Philip H. Godfrey, President of TOGA said, "The Old Guard Association could not be more proud to have nominated SGM McIlvenna for this honor. His love for his Regiment and his ongoing commitment in support of its very special mission have positively affected both the unit and hundreds of veterans who served there. On behalf of all the members of TOGA, I offer my most sincere congratulations."

SGM McIlvenna retired from the Army in 2012 after 20 years of service. He was deployed overseas twice. Among his many awards and citations are The Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, two Meritorious Service Medals, seven Army Commendation Medals, ten Army Achievement Medals, the Air Force Achievement Medal, and three Army Reserve Component Achievement Medals. A decorated combat veteran, he is the recipient of both the Combat and Expert Infantryman badges. He was awarded the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier identification badge number 457.

His Old Guard service began in 1997 in Company E – Honor Guard as a Squad Leader of a marching platoon. After 3 months he went to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier where he served until January of 1999, initially as the First Relief Commander and later as the Assistant Sergeant of the Guard. He finished his Old Guard Duty in October of 1999 as a Squad Leader in the Continental Color Guard.



Importantly, recognizing the significance of the Tomb, and the brotherhood of all who have served as Tomb Guards, SGM McIlvenna teamed with another former Tomb Guard to locate and reunite for the first time all those who served as Tomb Guards. His dedication to that task was instrumental in the capture of the all but lost knowledge and history of both the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the names and locations of those who served as Tomb Guards.

He, along with three other former Tomb Guards, formed the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (the Society). The Society is dedicated to preserving and proclaiming the principles and higher purpose of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, reminding Americans of their sacred duty to never forget those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of our nation. Throughout the remainder of SGM McIlvenna's military career and subsequent civilian career, he has continued to serve the Society, his fellow Tomb Guards, and the nation in various leadership capacities. Today he is the President of the Society.