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**ATLANTA FALCONS WIDE RECEIVER ANDRE ROBERTS,**  
**CAROLINA PANTHERS HEAD COACH RON RIVERA AND**  
**FORMER TENNESSEE TITANS HEAD COACH MIKE MULARKEY**  
**NAMED SALUTE TO SERVICE AWARD FINALISTS**

*Award Recipient to be Recognized at NFL Honors Night Before Super Bowl LII*

The NFL and USAA, the NFL's Official Military Appreciation Sponsor, announced Atlanta Falcons wide receiver **ANDRE ROBERTS**, Carolina Panthers head coach **RON RIVERA** and former Tennessee Titans head coach **MIKE MULARKEY** as the three finalists for the seventh annual **Salute to Service Award presented by USAA**.

Roberts, Rivera and Mularkey were selected for their exceptional efforts to honor and support members of the military community. The *Salute to Service Award* recipient will be recognized at *NFL Honors*, a two-hour primetime awards special to air nationally on Feb. 3, the eve of Super Bowl LII, at 9 PM (ET and PT) on NBC. *NFL Honors* will be taped earlier that evening at Northrop at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

USAA, a leading provider of insurance and other services to U.S. military members, veterans and their families, will contribute \$25,000 in the award recipient's honor to the official aid societies representing all five military branches. The award recipient will receive a specially designed military challenge coin, recognizing their commitment to the military. In what has become a long-standing tradition, challenge coins are presented to members of the military community to encourage excellence, boost morale or to recognize a fellow brother- or sister-in-arms.

"Each having grown up in a military family, all three finalists for the 'Salute to Service Award presented by USAA' share a common understanding of the sacrifices that our service members and their families face in their daily lives," said Vice Admiral (Ret.) **JOHN BIRD**, USAA Senior Vice President of Military Affairs. "We thank and salute Andre and Coaches Rivera and Mularkey for their continued strong commitment to America's military community."

In October 2017, 32 NFL clubs nominated coaches, active and retired players, and team executives and personnel, who best demonstrated support for the military community. These nominees were publicly announced in November and the submissions were evaluated by a panel of judges, including last year's award recipient, Atlanta Falcons head coach **DAN QUINN**. Nominees' credentials are evaluated based on the positive effect of the individual's efforts on the military community, the type of service conducted, the thoroughness of the program and level of commitment.

The panel of judges, consisting of representatives from the U.S. military, the NFL and USAA, includes:

- **VICE ADMIRAL JOHN BIRD (Ret.)**, U.S. Navy veteran, USAA Senior Vice President of Military Affairs
- **ROCKY BLEIER**, U.S. Army veteran, four-time Super Bowl champion

- **CHAD HENNINGS**, Air Force Academy graduate, three-time Super Bowl champion
- **DAN QUINN**, Atlanta Falcons head coach and 2016 Salute to Service Award recipient
- **TOD LEIWEKE**, NFL Chief Operating Officer
- **JIM MORA, SR.**, Marine Corps veteran, former NFL head coach
- **ROGER STAUBACH**, Naval Academy graduate, NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback and Super Bowl MVP

Below is the list of previous *Salute to Service Award* winners. The award is part of the NFL and USAA's year-round commitment to recognize and honor the military community.

YEAR	WINNER	TEAM
2016	Dan Quinn (Head Coach)	Atlanta Falcons
2015	Vincent Jackson	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
2014	Jared Allen	Chicago Bears
2013	John Harbaugh (Head Coach)	Baltimore Ravens
2012	Charles Tillman	Chicago Bears
2011	K.S. "Bud" Adams Jr. (Late Owner)	Tennessee Titans

Below is an overview on the three finalists. To learn more about all 32 team nominees, please visit [www.nfl.com/salute](http://www.nfl.com/salute).

### **ANDRE ROBERTS (Atlanta Falcons)**

Andre Roberts is in his eighth season in the NFL. He is also a vet at giving back to the military. His passion for the military stems from his childhood, growing up with parents serving in the U.S. Army. Throughout his time in the NFL, Andre has participated in numerous military appreciation activities with his respective teams. In his short time with the Atlanta Falcons, Andre has expressed extreme gratitude to the military with multiple visits to local VA hospitals, spending a day fishing with veterans at 'Fishing with the Falcons' and selecting the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) as his organization for My Cause, My Cleats.

His reach goes beyond team-based military community service and well into a deeply diversified off-season travel schedule to military bases across the nation. Andre volunteers his time to camps offered to youth in grades 1-8 that take place in two three-hour sessions on consecutive days. The camp consists of different stations that include instructional learning and competitive-based games. This past summer, Andre hosted a camp at Little Rock Air Force Base. "It's always awesome to come to military bases and spend some time with the kids. If they have questions about what's going on, how they're feeling or anything at all, I can tell them 'I've been there'," Roberts said.

Andre has also hosted previous camps at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, Luke Air Force base in Arizona, Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Fort Lee II in Richmond, Fort Bragg in North Carolina, Joint Base in South Carolina, Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, Yankee Stadium in New York, Fort Jackson in South Carolina, Fort Benning in Georgia and Fort Campbell in Kentucky. "Giving back to the military is very important to me because of the freedoms and liberties they allow us to have. I'm proud to be a part of an organization, in the Atlanta Falcons, that goes above and beyond to support our military. It's pretty special to my family and other military families, that the Falcons and the NFL set a stage to express gratitude to our veterans and active duty military members," said Roberts.

### **RON RIVERA (Carolina Panthers)**

Coach Ron Rivera has worked with many military nonprofit organizations through the years and below are personal testimonies of organizations he has personally worked with.

From USO of North Carolina President and retired Lieutenant Colonel John Falkenbury: "While the Carolina Panthers are the "Gold Standard" for supporting our military and their families, it is Coach Rivera who sets the

tone and leads by an example that permeates through the entire team and management. Throughout the year, Coach Rivera dedicates personal and team time to honor our military by inviting and meeting with them at training camp, Military Furlough Weekends during the season, or traveling to area military bases on his own time to quietly meet with our Warriors and their families.”

“Team Rivera – Ron and Stephanie – personally donate funds to support USO of NC's critical mission and help get participants involved in area events, such as the "Fore the Troops" golf event. When a Special Forces Soldier was tragically killed in action, leaving a wife and several children behind, Coach Rivera personally donated to help the family buy a car that the fallen Warrior had planned to do upon his return. Coach Rivera, the son of an Army Warrant Officer, knows first-hand the challenges our military men and women face, as well as their families on a daily basis. His commitment to them is unswerving, passionate and uplifting.”

From Blake Bourne, retired Army Captain and Executive Director for Veteran Bridge Home: “Coach Rivera was the keynote speaker for the 'Lunch and Lead with Coach Rivera' luncheon on May 9th, 2017 hosted by Veterans Bridge Home (VBH) (formerly known as Charlotte Bridge Home). Coach Rivera is a strong advocate for supporting Veterans. Coach Rivera spoke about how growing up in a military family helped shape his leadership style as a coach. He also spoke about the ways that he encourages his players to support the military and our Veterans, on and off the field. Thanks to Coach Rivera's support, the luncheon raised more than \$57,000 to support Veterans transitioning from military to civilian life. In addition to this event, VBH hosted quarterly Veteran networking coffees at the Panthers stadium in 2016 and early 2017. Coach Rivera came to every one and participated in Q&A's. VBH is just one of many active military and Veteran nonprofits that Coach Rivera supports. Coach Rivera is always going above and beyond the call of duty to support VBH in whatever way he can. VBH and our Veterans are grateful for Coach Rivera's support for our mission and our communities Veterans.”

### **MIKE MULARKEY (Tennessee Titans)**

The annual Salute to Service game holds special meaning to former Tennessee Titans head coach Mike Mularkey, though it's hardly the only day he thinks about the soldiers who have served in the military and the sacrifices they've made for our country.

Growing up in a military family, Mularkey understands the sacrifices servicemen and women make all too well. His father, Jack, was in the Army and served in World War II. His brother, Terry, served 20-plus years in the Army. Mularkey's nephew, Jack, is in the Army Special Forces unit, a Green Beret captain who leads a 12-man team. There was always a strong military presence around his team since Mularkey took the helm in 2016. Mularkey often invited military personnel to speak to the team during training camp or before a game. Marcus Luttrell, the U.S. Navy SEAL known for being portrayed as "The Lone Survivor," was among the training camp speakers. Luttrell received the Navy Cross and Purple Heart for his actions in June 2005 against Taliban fighters during Operation Red Wings. On another night, Major General Andrew P. Poppas, Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division at nearby Fort Campbell, spoke to the team. John W. Rosa, a retired United States Air Force Lieutenant General, addressed the players as well. During the preseason, Mularkey donated 500 tickets to the 101st Airborne Division. Last season, the Titans held a walkthrough at the Marines training facility in San Diego while on the road to play the Chargers. In April, under Mularkey's direction, the Titans welcomed members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team "Bastogne" 101st Airborne Division to Saint Thomas Sports Park, where strength and conditioning Coach Steve Watterson put company commanders through a strenuous workout. In May, Mularkey arranged for that favor to be returned, traveling his players and coaches to Fort Campbell for what proved to be an interesting day.

It started with an obstacle course that left them sweaty, muddy and fatigued, and ended a few hours later with simulated battles on vehicles, helicopters and rappelling by members of the coaching staff. While players completed the Army training exercises, Mularkey and General Manager Jon Robinson spent time with U.S. Army leaders. In August, Mularkey and his wife, Betsy, arranged that same experience for females in the organization. Betsy Mularkey was one of 41 women – full-time female staff as well as significant others of players and coaches – who took part in G.I. Jane Day at Fort Campbell. The group spent roughly four hours at

the base, completing multiple obstacle courses, practicing rappelling techniques and even riding in the Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. The courses – and competition – were designed to promote team-building. Something Mularkey has witnessed to be one of the greatest assets of our military, and one of the many reasons he will continue to expose players to the men and women who serve our country. "I've been around it my whole life," Mularkey said. "I know the training the soldiers go through. And what we do is minute, playing football. It is minuscule to what they do for us. I have so much appreciation for what they do for us and our country, and the sacrifices they make every day."

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#### **About USAA**

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