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### **Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz, Recently Nominated for Federal Post, to Join Festivities Honoring Connecticut Veterans**

#### *Ceremonies for Golden Kielbasa Veterans Open Taking Shape; Openings Remain*

**New Britain, Conn., September 9, 2013** – Connecticut Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Spooner Schwartz, recently nominated by President Barack Obama to take on the post of Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, will take part in ceremonies honoring Tuskegee Airman Connie Nappier, Jr., and all Connecticut veterans at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual [Golden Kielbasa Veterans Open](http://www.goldenkielbasa.org) on September 27.

The event, presented by Farmington Bank and hosted by the Disabled American Veterans, Hardware City Chapter 8 (DAV), is Central Connecticut's largest and most renowned veterans charity golf tournament. In addition to the DAV, beneficiaries will include House of Heroes Connecticut and Friends of Fisher House Connecticut. Additional major sponsors include AT&T Connecticut, Stanley Black & Decker, the Hospital of Central Connecticut, Okay Industries and the Tomasso Group.

Space remains available for golfers of all ability levels wishing to play and support veterans. The tournament takes place at Stanley Golf Course in New Britain, with a post-golf barbeque at the Polish Falcons Nest #88 Picnic and Pavilion Grounds at 722 Farmington Avenue, New Britain. Entry fee is \$125. Visit [www.goldenkielbasa.org](http://www.goldenkielbasa.org) for more information or call (860) 558-0514.

Commissioner Schwartz, a former U.S. Air Force nurse who is awaiting scheduling of her U.S. Senate confirmation hearing, has been the state's veterans commissioner since 2003. She is a long-time advocate and activist for veterans who devoted her nursing practice to healing the wounds of war and improving the lives of America's 24 million veterans. Her perspectives as a nurse and veteran have earned her the respect and trust of veterans, Congressional leaders and government officials alike.

Commissioner Schwartz served as a reservist and on active duty for 20 years. She retired in 1986 after sustaining injuries in an aircraft accident while serving as a USAF Flight Nurse and holds the rank of Colonel on the Governor's Military Staff. She holds a Masters in Nursing from Yale University and a Doctorate in Public Health from the Yale School of Medicine,

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Commissioner Schwartz

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Also scheduled to taking part in the ceremonies honoring Nappier are New Britain Mayor Tim O'Brien and DAV Chapter 8 Commander Ron Pelletier. Richard Wearne, USMC (ret.) and Marine Corps League Hardware City Detachment 781, will perform taps. Members of the New Britain High School Junior ROTC, under the direction of Col. Mark Durfee, will present colors.

Nappier, 89, who completed training at both Tuskegee Airfield (Alabama) and Midland, Texas as a bombardier navigator during World War II, was a flight officer with the segregated 477<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. He and his comrades faced enormous obstacles and were subjected to severe racial discrimination. Following his training, Nappier was sent to Freeman Field in Indiana, where he and 100 fellow officers from the 477<sup>th</sup> were unjustly arrested for disobeying Jim Crow laws of the day and sent to a stockade in Kentucky. The injustice was corrected when President Truman ordered Nappier and others released.

Nappier and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen were honored with Congressional Gold Medals in 2007, the nation's highest civilian honor.

For more information on the Golden Kielbasa Veterans Open, please contact Tournament Director Dennis Buden at [dennis@goldenkielbasa.org](mailto:dennis@goldenkielbasa.org) or 860-558-0514, or visit [www.goldenkielbasa.org](http://www.goldenkielbasa.org).