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Brandon McCoy named 2013 Armed Forces Merit Award Winner

FORT WORTH, TX - Brandon McCoy, a senior defensive end at North Texas, is the second recipient of [Armed Forces Merit Award](#) presented by the [Football Writers Association of America \(FWAA\)](#). Coordinated by the staff at the [Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl](#), the Armed Forces Merit Award presented by the FWAA was created in June 2012 "to honor an individual and/or a group within the realm of the sport of football."

Nicknamed "The Sarge", the 28-year old McCoy will be presented the award today at an 11:30 a.m. (CT) media conference in Denton at North Texas' Apogee Stadium by Brant Ringler, the Executive Director of the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl, and Steve Richardson, the FWAA's Executive Director.

McCoy, who walked-on to the North Texas squad after serving five years (2004-2008) in the U. S. Army where he was discharged on August 19, 2008 after receiving numerous medals for his service time in Iraq, joins Bronze Star winning Green Beret soldier Nate Boyer, as recipients of the Armed Forces Merit Award presented by the FWAA. Boyer, a member of the University of Texas football team, was honored on Veteran's Day 2012.

"On this very special day, Veterans' Day 2013, we are pleased to join with the Football Writers Association of America to honor Brandon McCoy from the University of North Texas as the second recipient of the Armed Forces Merit Award," said Ringler. "We had list of outstanding nominations for this year's award and it is difficult to honor only one each year when we have men and programs that are very deserving of the honor."

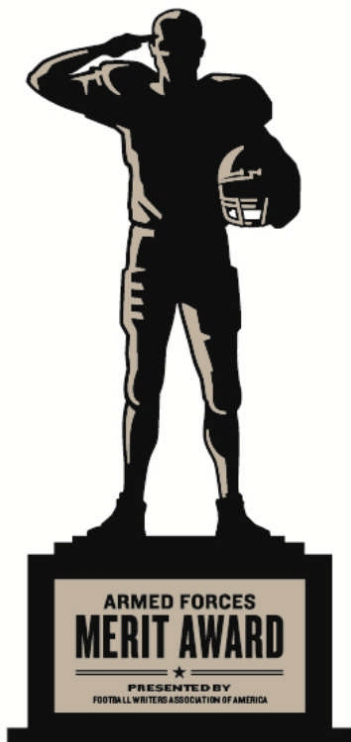
Richardson echoed Ringler's sentiments along with adding that the FWAA is "pleased to team with Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl to recognize McCoy's achievement as a veteran that used his armed forces experiences to benefit his teammates and coaches at the University of North Texas. The FWAA also salutes the other 2013 nominations for their contributions on-and-off the field of play."

Since starting his North Texas career in 2010, McCoy has played in 41 games (through November 9 with 26 starts) with 1211 total tackles, including 59 unassisted. He has been credited with 12 sacks and 18 tackles for losses during his career.

After missing North Texas' 2013 season opener against Idaho with a sprained ankle, McCoy has played in the next nine games with six starts and 24 total tackles to rank second among Mean Green defensive linemen. He leads the team in quarterback hurries with six. North Texas is currently 7-3 and leads the West Division of Conference USA with a 5-1 record.

In his nomination letter for McCoy, North Texas coach Dan McCarney said that "Brandon is one of the great examples of what the term 'student-athlete' means to all of us. He is a highly motivated young man of character, principle and integrity. His humility and sense of responsibility provide him with the qualities necessary in responding positively to his coaches, teachers, teammates, opponents and to the countless challenges that face him. Brandon has constantly brought honor, prestige and positive exposure to the University of North Texas and college football."

On McCoy's military service, McCarney said his player has shown "the same courage, heart and class as a leader on our football team as he did overseas protecting the freedom of our country. He is a true patriot. We are all defined by our own moments in time. The obstacles we overcome, dreams we achieve, handling success and failures, and the legacy we leave behind. Brandon's legacy will live on for generations."



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McCoy's journey into the Army began after he was kicked out of high school his senior year in 2003 for cheating, forcing him to go to summer school to complete his high school diploma. After being kicked out of his home for using drugs, McCoy lived in a drug house for a year before his father convinced him to speak with the Army about a possible career.

Once signed up, McCoy was assigned to the 116th infantry division at Fort Riley, Kansas. He spent 18 months in training in the Army before being assigned to the 134th armored unit, the same unit he would be with while in Iraq. McCoy's division was sent to Campo Anaconda in Iraq before being transferred to Taji, just 20 miles north of Baghdad. McCoy's assignment for 13 months was one of the most dangerous at the time as he drove Humvees in supply runs and combat missions.

Later, the unit's mission was to provide convoy security for supplies facing countless IED attacks and roadside bombings. His security unit did not suffer a single fatality in their entire 13 months of deployment in Iraq.

From Carrollton, Texas, where he attended Creekview High School, McCoy joined UNT's program in the spring of 2009 after being a full-time student for one year. Prior to entering North Texas, McCoy had no SAT score or completed high school grade point average or transcript when he tried to enroll at UNT.

He took the SAT, and his military service helped him gain part-time admission despite his academic record. After a semester, he had to enroll full-time in the spring of 2009 and show satisfactory progress for one year to receive football clearance by the NCAA.

"I needed the right path to go," McCoy said in an interview several years ago with Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl correspondent Troy Phillips. "I had no discipline. In the military, you either get it or you don't. I needed that structure. It was a huge outlook change, and it let me know what I really wanted to do."

In a web article this past May, Jarah Wright wrote with "senior season approaching, McCoy is focusing on his family, which includes 7-month-old son Tyson, and hopefully playing professional football. Due to his age (he's be 28 when the next season starts), it will be hard for McCoy to make it to the NFL but he said he's going to give it all he has."

"My dad always told me when you're doing something don't have any 'I wish' or 'coulda would as' because they can eat you up," McCoy said. "That's why I train as hard as I train and do extra on the side because I don't want any doubts."

McCoy's sister (April), was a straight-A student and a nationally ranked junior golfer at Creekview and currently starting her third season on the TCU golf team.

[ESPN Events](#), a division of ESPN Regional Television (ERT), owns and operates a large portfolio of collegiate sporting events worldwide. The roster includes two Labor Day weekend college football games; 11 college bowl games and eight college basketball events, which accounts for approximately 200 hours of programming, reaches almost 64 million viewers and attracts over a half a million attendees each year. With satellite offices in Boise, Birmingham, Dallas-Fort Worth, Albuquerque, St. Petersburg and Las Vegas, ESPN Events builds relationships with conferences, schools and local communities, as well as providing unique experiences for teams and fans. A subsidiary of ESPN, ERT is also the production headquarters for [ESPNU](#); syndication rights-holder and producer of national and regional shows for college conferences ([American](#), [Big 12](#), [Mid-American](#), [SEC](#)) and manages the Big 12 Corporate Partner Program. **Collegiate Football** - [AdvoCare Texas Kickoff](#) (Houston); [BBVA Compass Bowl](#) (Birmingham, Ala.); [Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl St. Petersburg](#); Boca Raton Bowl (Florida); [Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl](#) (Dallas-Fort Worth); [Famous Idaho Potato Bowl](#) (Boise); Gildan New Mexico Bowl (Albuquerque); [Heart of Dallas Bowl Presented by PlainsCapital Bank](#) (Dallas-Fort Worth); [MEAC/SWAC Challenge presented by Disney](#) (Orlando, Fla.); [Raycom Media Camellia Bowl](#) (Montgomery, Ala.); [Royal Purple Las Vegas Bowl](#); [Sheraton Hawai'i Bowl](#) (Honolulu); [Texas Bowl](#) (Houston) and [The Home Depot College Football Awards](#). **Collegiate Basketball** - [Armed Forces Classic](#) (Camp Humphreys, South Korea); [Charleston Classic Presented by Gildan](#) (S.C.); [Hawaiian Airlines Diamond Head Classic](#) (Honolulu); [Jimmy V Men's & Women's Basketball Classics presented by Corona Extra](#) (Madison Square Garden & Durham, N.C.); [Old Spice Classic](#) (Walt Disney World Resort near Orlando, Fla.); [Puerto Rico Tip-Off](#) (San Juan, PR); [State Farm Champions Classic](#) (United Center, Chicago) and [DIRECTV Wooden Legacy](#) (Orange County, Calif.). For more information, visit www.espnevents.com or follow on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

The **Football Writers Association of America** (FWAA, www.sportswriters.net) consists of the men and women across North America who cover college football for a living. Founded in 1941, the membership includes journalists, broadcasters and publicists, as well as key executives in all the areas that involve the game. The FWAA works to govern areas that include game day operations, major awards and an All-America team. Through its website, the FWAA works to improve communication among all those who work within the game. The FWAA also sponsors scholarships for aspiring writers and an annual writing contest. Behind the leadership of President Chris Dufresne of the Los Angeles Times, Executive Director Steve Richardson and a board of veteran journalists, the FWAA continues grow and work to help college football prosper at all levels. There are now over 1,200 members.



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