



CONGRESSMAN

**Tim Ryan**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***Rep. Tim Ryan and Sen. Sherrod Brown Recognize Mahoning Valley Veteran with Army's Second Highest Military***

***Honoring Robert Towles with Distinguished Service Cross***

WINDHAM, OH — Today, Congressman Tim Ryan (OH-13) and Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) honored Mahoning Valley veteran, Robert Towles, with the Distinguished Service Cross—the U.S. Army's second highest military honor. Ryan and Brown recognize Towles for his heroism during the Vietnam War. Despite being wounded during an ambush that left 155 in his company dead and 128 wounded, Towles saved the lives of several men when he singlehandedly attacked and disabled an enemy machine gun position, allowing his wounded comrades to escape.

"Mr. Towles is a hero who exemplified true bravery, honor, and sacrifice all while sustaining a combat wound," said **Brown**, a senior member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. "His service to our nation promoted peace and democracy, and his actions saved the lives of his fellow soldiers. It is for these reasons that Mr. Towles deserves our gratitude, respect, and the Distinguished Service Cross."

"It is my honor to play a part in awarding Mr. Towles the Distinguished Service Cross," said **Ryan**, a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. "This recognition is well deserved and long overdue. I commend him once again for his life-saving heroic service to our country."

Towles is a 2001 inductee of the Ohio Military Hall of Fame and the first Vietnam veteran elected National Commander of the Combat Infantrymen's Association. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions on November 17, 1965. On that day, Army Specialist Towles was seriously wounded by shrapnel when his unit of 400 men was ambushed by a larger force, leaving 155 allied soldiers dead, and 128 wounded. Under heavy fire, Towles disregarded his own safety and injuries to attack—and disable—an enemy's machine gun position. This led the enemy to temporarily withdrawal, enabling Towles' company to evacuate with many of its wounded members. Towles then led a group of soldiers in returning to dangerous territory to ward off the enemy while the remaining wounded soldiers evacuated.

Towles was initially awarded the Bronze Star for Valor but was later determined to be eligible for the Distinguished Service Cross. In December 2013, language introduced by Ryan that honored Towles was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives as a part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Brown and Ryan continue to fight for Northeast Ohio veterans and to ensure our service men and women have the resources they need to defend the United States and preserve our peace and democracy. Brown is the only Ohio Senator to serve a full term on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and is Co-Chair of the Senate Air Force Caucus. He also is an original cosponsor of the VOW to Hire Heroes Law, which offers

job retraining assistance to veterans between 35 and 60 years of age.

Ryan serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense and is Co-Chair of the Military Mental Health Caucus. He also introduced the Veterans and Armed Forces Health Promotion Act, which takes steps to improve the quality of health care provided to wounded warriors by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). Ryan first began working to upgrade Mr. Towles's Bronze Star for Valor to a Distinguished Service Cross in 2005.

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