

Excerpt from the Cleveland Daily Banner; March 16, 2023

CLEVELAND DAILY BANNER

Military Appreciation Baseball Game Set for Lee April 15

By ALLEN MINCEY

Since 2013, Lee University's baseball team has held a special game to honor local armed forces veterans, and will do so again this year at their Military Appreciation Day on April 15.

"That's April 15, so you get your taxes done, and then you can come over to the field at honor our local veterans, and enjoy a good ballgame," said Lee University Coach Mark Brew. (Actually, the deadline for filing income taxes this year is Tuesday, April 18.)

At that ballgame, to be played at the Larry Carpenter Stadium at Olympic Field, local veterans will be not only be recognized by the team, but proceeds will go toward a local veterans organization. The game will begin at 1 p.m., with special activities beginning at around noon leading up to the game.

"Obviously, we're honored to be able to thank those that have served — that's the primary goal, to be thankful to the service of the men and women in our community," Brew said. "A secondary goal is to come alongside a veterans organization in our community and help them.

This year, the baseball game proceeds will go to the Bradley County Honor Guard, which serves at local funeral processions for area veterans. "We've had the Honor Guard before, but we're going to reach out to them again and they're going to be the recipient of this year's funds," the coach said.

The Military Appreciation Day event took a hiatus for a couple of years due to COVID restrictions, but returned last year. In 2022, proceeds from the Military Appreciation Day game — \$12,000 — went to the Bradley County Tennessee Veterans Home last year. The veterans home, located off Westland Drive, is scheduled to open sometime later this year.

The event is sponsored by the Bank of Cleveland, the primary sponsor, and the Cleveland Daily Banner, and is a chance for veterans of all wars, all branches of service, to be recognized for their service to their country. Not only is Bank of Cleveland the primary sponsor, but a special scholarship named for the bank's founder — Bobby Taylor — is presented at the game.

"We have the Bobby Taylor scholarship that is for a student who has served in the military or has family that has or is serving," Brew said. "We are proud to have this scholarship, and thank the Bank of Cleveland for allowing us to honor Mr. Taylor in this way."

Taylor served in World War II with the U.S. Army Air Corps. He flew 35 missions in a B-17 over enemy occupied Europe during his three year service. Taylor returned to Cleveland in 1945 to join Merchants Bank as a bookkeeper and was mobilized in 1950 during the Korean Conflict. He served with the 278th Regimental Combat Team of the U.S. Army National Guard, serving as infantry heavy weapons Company Commander and Executive Officer of the heavy mortar company. He was awarded the Air Medal with Five Gold Leaf Cluster. He received the Air Medal on six different occasions, prior to his honorable discharge in July 1952.

“We appreciate the university and Coach Brew establishing this scholarship, and honoring my dad’s memory,” said Bank of Cleveland Chief Executive Officer Scott Taylor. “I was raised listening to him talk about his military service — he’s a World War II and Korea veteran

“He spoke about how much he felt about the military veterans, and this is a way of honoring those patriots,” Taylor continued. “I am looking forward to April 15.”

Brew said that there are a few players on the team who the day has special meaning for, including catcher Isaac Quinones and first baseman Matthew Batts.

Quinones’ father served in the military, and attended last year’s Military Appreciation Day to be with his son, while Batts’ brother, a U.S. Marine, will soon be deployed to Australia. His brother will not be able to attend the April 15 game, but was to be with Batts and other family members at Lee this past weekend.

“The Cleveland Daily Banner is honored to partner with Lee University and Bank of Cleveland again in 2023,” said Joyce Taylor, publisher of the Cleveland Daily Banner. “The Bradley County Honor Guard is a worthy recipient of the 2023 donation.”

There will be a goody bag for all veterans in attendance with lots of free gifts donated by businesses in the community, and food will be free for veterans, donated by Zaxby’s. Food will also be sold to others at the event.

T-shirts for the event are on sale now, and can be purchased at the Bank of Cleveland, at Cleveland Daily Banner offices at 2075 North Ocoee St., Suite B, or at the university. More information on the event will be announced as the game nears.



LEE UNIVERSITY will again host a Military Appreciation Day baseball game this year, to honor local armed forces veterans. Proceeds from the April 15 event will go toward the Bradley County Honor Guard. Holding the shirts for this year’s event are, from left: Lee baseball coach Mark Brew; Bank of Cleveland President Scott Taylor; and Tim Siniard of the Cleveland Daily Banner.