NEWS RELEASE

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GARY SINISE TO RECEIVE THAYER AWARD – October 8, 2015

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Actor and humanitarian Gary Sinise will receive the prestigious Thayer Award in a ceremony hosted by the U.S. Military Academy’s Association of Graduates Thursday, October 22. The Corps of Cadets will conduct a parade in his honor at 5 p.m. on the Plain, prior to the award presentation dinner. The parade is open to the public.

During his distinguished career as a film and theater actor and director, Sinise has won many accolades, including an Emmy, an Obie, and a Golden Globe Award, and he has been nominated for both an Academy Award and a Palme d’Or. Sinise co-founded the Tony award-winning Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago in 1974, and his first major critical success as an actor was in 1982 when he directed and starred in Steppenwolf’s production of True West, for which he earned an Obie Award. Sinise has starred with fellow actor Tom Hanks in three critically-acclaimed films: Forrest Gump, Apollo 13 and The Green Mile.

In addition to using his acting skills to help tell the story of America’s servicemen and women, Sinise has also served as their passionate advocate off screen for over 30 years. His activism began in the early 80’s with his support of Vietnam Veterans and the creation of Vets Night, a program offering free dinners and performances to veterans at the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. His commitment continued into the 1990’s, when he began working on behalf of the Disabled American Veterans organization, which he continues to actively support.

It was Sinise’s portrayal of Lieutenant Dan Taylor in the 1994 Academy Award-winning film Forrest Gump that created an enduring connection with U.S. servicemen and women throughout the military community. After participating in several USO tours, Sinise formed the “Lt. Dan Band” in 2004 and began entertaining troops serving at home and abroad. The band now performs almost 50 shows a year for military bases, charities and fundraisers supporting wounded warriors, Gold Star families, veterans and troops around the world.

Sinise has received numerous honors for his service to the military and veteran communities, including the Presidential Citizens Medal in 2008, the second-highest civilian honor awarded to citizens for exemplary deeds performed in service of the nation, as well as the Outstanding Civilian Service Award, which he received from former Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Raymond Odierno, West Point Class of 1976.

The Thayer Award, established in honor of Col. Sylvanus Thayer, “Father of the Military Academy,” is presented to an outstanding citizen whose service and accomplishments in the national interest exemplify the military academy’s motto, “Duty, Honor, Country.” The Association of Graduates has presented the award annually since 1958.