**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 4th, 2015**

**National Veteran Service Organization to Kickoff Army/Navy Weekend in Philadelphia with 4th Annual “If Not Me, Then Who…” Gala**

**PHILADELPHIA, PA —** The 106th Army vs. Navy Football Game will take place in the City of Brotherly Love on Saturday December 12th. In conjunction with the big game, the largest Veteran Service Organization in the Philadelphia region, the Travis Manion Foundation, will host a number of festivities that weekend, kicking off with the 4th annual “If Not Me, Then Who…” Gala at the historic Union League of Philadelphia. This black tie event, which is a national recognition of character and leadership, will have attendees from across the country who are being honored for their dedication to selfless service within their local communities and beyond.

Some of the high profile and notable figures in attendance include:

* Robert A. McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Secretary McDonald was nominated by President Obama to serve as the eighth Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and will be a guest speaker for the evening.
* General John M. Paxton, Jr - Assistant Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, and our Guest of Honor.
* J.R. Martinez - Renown actor, best-selling author, motivational speaker, and wounded US Army Veteran. He played an injured combat veteran on the Emmy Award winning daytime drama, *All My Children*. Following its final season, he went on to surprise and inspire a nation on ABC’s *Dancing with the Stars.* Along with partner Karina Smirnoff, J.R. won the coveted mirror ball trophy, and they were named season 13 champions; J.R. will be emceeing the evening.
* Daniel Akerson, Vice Chairman and Special Advisor to the Board for the Carlyle Group. Dan will represent the Carlyle Group, which is being recognized as the recipient of the 2015 Corporate Leadership Award.
* Jake Harriman, CEO and Founder of NURU International; Jake will be honored as the recipient of the 2015 “If Not Me, Then Who…” Award.
* Pete Scobell; celebrated Navy SEAL, competitive skier and athlete, mountain climber, inspiration and advocate, and will be putting on a musical performance.

The evening will begin with a VIP reception at 6pm, which will be open to the media, followed by the full program starting at 7:30pm. Top level sponsors for this inspirational evening include Johnson & Johnson, Goldman Sachs, Penn Medicine, Comcast, and J. Walter Thompson. For video footage from last year’s Gala, click [here](https://youtu.be/Ejl06RkuSl8).

**On Friday December 11th, the Travis Manion Foundation will continue the focus on military and Veterans by hosting an exclusive panel discussion at the Union League on *“Character in Action: Serving Beyond Military Service.”*** As service members transition from the military community--and out of uniform--they refocus their attention toward civilian careers, personal development and philanthropic endeavors. They also bring with them the skills, experiences, and most importantly, *character*, that their military service has afforded them.

How is this *character* activated by America’s new generation of veterans? What are American companies, government agencies and Veteran Service Organizations doing to promote this? What are the challenges? Our esteemed panel, consisting of Veterans and their families who continue to serve in the corporate, government and non-profit sectors, will share stories about how Veterans translate strong core values into serving their country at home. The panel will include:

* Alex Gorsky – CEO, Johnson & Johnson, United States Army Veteran
* Ryan Manion Borek – President, Travis Manion Foundation
* Redmond Ramos - United States Navy Veteran, and Winner of the 2015 Triumph Games.
* RADM Thomas Lynch - NewDay USA, and United States Navy Veteran.
* Paul Rieckhoff – Founder and CEO of IAVA, United States Army Veteran
* JR Martinez - Actor, Motivational Speaker, and United States Army Veteran.
* BGEN Carol Eggert - Comcast, VP of Military & Veteran Affairs, United States Army Veteran.

The event will begin with a networking opportunity at 10 a.m., followed by the panel discussion promptly at 10:30 a.m. and running until 12 noon. The panel discussion will be broadcast via live stream, and available at: <http://www.youtube.com/c/TravismanionOrg/live>

**Lastly, the Travis Manion Foundation will partner with Johnson & Johnson, Comcast, IAVA, JP Morgan, Wharton Veterans, and KPMG, to host a fully catered Veterans Tailgate event prior to the Army vs. Navy football game, in the “K” Parking lot of Lincoln Financial Field.** The Travis Manion Foundation has arranged for game tickets and tailgating for 8 Gold Star family members, plus 26 wounded military members who will travel from Walter Reed Hospital in a luxury bus with police escort to the tailgate event. Estimated arrival of the wounded Veterans is 12:30pm on the 11th Street side of stadium, and they will then go directly to the tail gate.

**About Travis Manion Foundation**

The Travis Manion Foundation is a qualified 501(c)3, which assists our nation’s Veterans & families of the fallen, by empowering them to take the next step in their personal journeys and inspiring the next generation of leaders. The Foundation believes the best way to honor the fallen is by challenging the living. Shortly after the death of 1st Lt. Travis Manion in Iraq on April 29, 2007, the fallen Marine’s mother, the late Janet Manion, founded the Travis Manion Foundation to assist our nation’s veterans and families of the fallen. “If Not Me, Then Who…”, the words Travis spoke before leaving for his second and final deployment to Iraq, have inspired a national movement to service.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Derrick Morgan, Travis Manion Foundation (267) 987-1588 - Derrick@travismanion.org

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**\*\*\*Great Interview & Photo Opportunities Available\*\*\***

**WHAT**: Kickoff to Army/Navy Weekend: The 4th Annual Travis Manion Foundation “If Not Me, Then Who…” Gala

**WHEN:** Thursday, December 10th, 2015, 6pm – 9pm

**WHERE:** The Union League of Philadelphia, 140 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

**WHAT**: Veteran’s Panel Discussion - “Character in Action: Serving Beyond Military Service”

**WHEN:** Friday, December 11th, 2015, 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Union League of Philadelphia, 140 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

**WHAT**: Army vs. Navy Football Game Veteran’s Tailgate, hosted by Travis Manion Foundation for wounded Veterans from Walter Reed, Gold Star family members, and additional supporters.

**WHEN:** Saturday, December 12th, 2015, 12 noon - 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** Lincoln Financial Field, “K” Parking Lot, 1 Lincoln Financial Field Way, Philadelphia, PA 19147

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