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FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge  
19th Judicial Circuit  
Lake County  
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

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Point of Contact: Kasey Dunn Morgan  
Telephone: 847-377-3818

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Waukegan, Illinois

## **19<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT RECOGNIZES VETERANS DAY WITH THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT**

On Monday, November 11, 2019, 23 veterans participated in the Veterans History Project at the Lake County Courthouse. The Veterans History Project gathers the oral histories of veterans, which are given in response to questions by judges and attorneys and recorded by court reporters. The typed transcripts are archived at the Library of Congress, making accessible the personal accounts of American veterans for future generations to hear the stories directly from the members of the military. This year's group included members of the United States Air Force, the United States Army, the United States Army Air Corps, the United States Marines, and the United States Navy who were involved in the military during both conflicts and times of peace dating back to World War II.

"The events that these men and women have witnessed firsthand, and the memories of their brothers and sisters in arms need to be preserved for future generations," said Chief Judge Jay W. Ukena.

One of the veterans that participated in the project was United States Army Specialist Christopher Kasperski, from the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineering Company, 7<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. Kasperski's Unit was responsible for finding 84 IEDs and had 55 IED strikes or detonations between 2009 - 2012. He personally survived 3 IED strikes to his RG-31 vehicle while serving as a gunner, mine detector, and dismounted "tunnel rat" in Kandahar, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Hold, Thor Hammer, Wheat Seed, and Moshtarak. "After surviving 3 IEDs, I was still asking to stay. Those were my brothers out there. There was nothing worse than watching those taillights roll out and being left behind. I wanted to do everything I could to be with them," Kasperski said. After his 3<sup>rd</sup> IED strike, he was medically retired.

Christopher Kasperski of Lindenhurst is the recipient of: Combat Action Badge, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with 2 Campaign Stars, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service NATO Medal.

The Lake County Veteran's History Project is supported by resources from many community organizations and individuals, including volunteers on what would otherwise be a court holiday. The event began with a breakfast reception, donated and served to the vets and their families by the Tri-County Marine Corps League, the Young Marines and many other sponsors. Court reporters from Lake County, other courthouses, and from the private sector donated their time to attend and transcribe the wartime experiences. And judges and lawyers from Lake County, including several veterans, also volunteered to serve as interviewers.

The event was chaired by three of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's judges who are also veterans: Michael Betar, United States Marine Corps, Michael Fusz, United States Navy, and Retired Associate Judge John Scully, United States Navy.

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