

2026 Patriot Award Candidate Bio Form

Please submit this form no later than **Monday, October 6, 2025 at 5pm.**

Email *

iziska@americandunesgolfclub.com

Name of Nominee: *

Ian Ziska

Facility Employed at: *

American Dunes Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2001

Please describe your involvement in the promotion and development of targeted player development programs at the club level and within the community for military personnel and Veterans in 250 words or less: *

Throughout his professional career, Ian has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to serving and supporting the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. His leadership and dedication have made a lasting impact through the creation and delivery of player development programs designed specifically for service members, veterans, and others who share in the mission to give back.

In 2022, Ian's commitment was evident as he played a pivotal role in launching the Grand Haven PGA HOPE Program at American Dunes Golf Club. Under his direction, the program provides coaching and education in all aspects of the game, including on-course instruction. While teaching golf is essential, Ian's true purpose lies in serving those who served, creating a welcoming environment where veterans can connect, heal, and enjoy the game together in a safe and supportive setting.

Ian's dedication to the heroes who attend the PGA HOPE Program at American Dunes is unwavering. He continues to explore ways to expand the program's impact, assisting both the Michigan Section PGA and the PGA of America in developing a next-generation model, "HOPE 2.0." This initiative will help veterans remain engaged with the game, continue to learn from coaches, and transition into more competitive opportunities.

Through his leadership, compassion, and service-first mindset, Ian exemplifies the core values of the PGA HOPE mission, empowering veterans through golf and honoring their service through purpose.

Please describe your contribution to programs and events including PGA Hope and Patriot Golf Day which supports the Armed Forces and Veterans in 250 words or less: *

Ian's dedication to service members, youth, and the game of golf continues to make a profound impact. Through his player development programs and fundraising events, countless veterans and their families have benefited from his efforts, while his youth initiatives help shape a hopeful future for the game. What began with his "Kids for Folds Youth Golf Program" has grown into a wide-reaching mission that now includes major events raising awareness and funds for the Folds of Honor Foundation.

Driven by his passion for competition and tournament operations, Ian played a pivotal role in developing the Folds of Honor Collegiate, a nationally televised college invitational featuring both men's and women's teams. His leadership and innovation have elevated the event into one of the most meaningful tournaments in college golf.

Ian's creative vision extends to high school golf, where he founded two impactful tournaments, "The Corporal B." and "Capt. Sally." These invitationals combine competition, education, and patriotism, contributing over \$18,000 to Folds of Honor. Coaches have praised them as "one of the best high school golf experiences in the country."

At American Dunes, Ian's drive to give back inspired him to create "Patriot Golf Days," held each Memorial Day weekend. This event provides guests with a complete American Dunes experience, Golf's Most Heroic Round, patriotic gear, food and fellowship, and supports PGA HOPE and Folds of Honor through charitable contributions.

Ian's work embodies purpose, passion, and the power of golf to honor America's heroes.

Please describe your image, service and leadership in the area of support for the military, its personnel and Veterans in 250 words or less: *

Ian's professional image and leadership reflect a deep, authentic commitment to serving those who serve. As the Head Golf Professional at American Dunes Golf Club, Ian leads by example, ensuring that every element of the club's operation honors the sacrifices of America's military personnel and their families. His leadership style, rooted in humility, respect, and purpose, sets the tone for a team of more than fifty staff members, several of whom are veterans proudly carrying forward the club's patriotic mission.

Ian's presence on property is both symbolic and service driven. He engages daily with guests, veterans, and active-duty service members, sharing the story of American Dunes and the Folds of Honor Foundation with genuine passion. His leadership in organizing and hosting events such as the Veteran Golfers Association, Holes 4 Heaven's Heroes, and Veterans Golf League, and The Roll Call, all showcases his ability to merge professional excellence with purpose-driven outreach.

Beyond his daily role, Ian's impact extends nationally. He collaborates with Folds of Honor Chapters across the country, assisting with tournament support, logistics, and outreach, often traveling to personally contribute his time and expertise. His efforts have directly enhanced fundraising initiatives, awareness, and engagement within the veteran community.

Through his example, Ian embodies the values of honor, service, and gratitude. His unwavering dedication to veterans and their families defines his image—not just as a PGA Professional, but as a leader who uses the game of golf to heal, unite, and inspire.

Please describe how you inspire fellow PGA Professionals in his/her support and contributions to the Armed Forces in 250 words or less. *

Ian serves as an inspiration to PGA Professionals across the country through his unwavering commitment to honoring and supporting America's Armed Forces. As the Head Golf Professional at American Dunes Golf Club, he leads by example, using his platform to demonstrate how golf can serve as a bridge between the game and gratitude. His actions embody the values of service, integrity, and leadership that the PGA of America stands for.

Through his work with the Folds of Honor Foundation, Ian continually motivates fellow professionals to engage in meaningful service. By sharing success stories, mentoring peers, and helping others implement veteran-focused programs at their own facilities, he has elevated awareness and participation in initiatives that benefit military families. His involvement in developing and expanding PGA HOPE programs has directly inspired other PGA Members to launch similar efforts, furthering the mission to heal through golf.

Ian's example is also seen through his leadership of major events such as the Folds of Honor Collegiate and Patriot Golf Days, which unite players, sponsors, and professionals around a shared cause. His dedication demonstrates that service is not just part of the job, it's a calling.

Through his tireless advocacy, Ian continues to inspire PGA Professionals to embrace the power of golf as a platform for purpose, encouraging others to stand beside him in honoring our nation's heroes while growing the game.

Are you PGA HOPE certified? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Please provide any additional information you would like to share in support of your nomination for the Patriot Award including awards or recognition you've received in conjunction with your support of the Armed Forces and Veterans in 250 words or less: *

As the Head Golf Professional at American Dunes, Ian's leadership directly impacts the contributions and programs that benefit veterans, active service members, and their families. The funds raised through the Club's initiatives provide educational scholarships to the spouses and children of America's fallen and disabled heroes. To date, the collective efforts of Ian and the American Dunes team have generated more than \$5 million in support of the Folds of Honor Foundation.

Ian fully understands the responsibility of upholding the Club's mission and considers himself fortunate to serve at American Dunes, a place built to honor sacrifice and inspire purpose. He remains deeply committed to supporting veterans, service members, and the Folds of Honor Foundation. Under his leadership, the team strives to deliver extraordinary experiences for patriots and America's heroes nationwide.

Looking ahead, Ian is focused on the continued growth of American Dunes, enhancing its legacy through signature events, unique competitions, and player development programs such as PGA HOPE and Patriot Golf Days. Each initiative is designed to provide meaningful support while showcasing the Jack Nicklaus Signature Design that stands as the birthplace of Folds of Honor.

Ian is grateful for the opportunity to share his story and hopes his passion for serving our nation's heroes is evident. He is honored to be considered for the Patriot Award and remains committed to carrying forward the mission of honoring those who serve.

List any other PGA Section or National Awards you've received and the year(s) you received them (50 word limit): *

Patriot Award
Michigan Section PGA – 2023

Merchandiser of the Year – Public Category
PGA of America – 2023
Michigan Section PGA – 2023, 2022, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2006

Horton Smith Award
Michigan Section PGA – 2021

Youth Player Development Award
Michigan Section PGA – 2018

Bill Strausbaugh Award
Michigan Section PGA – 2016

Merchandiser of the Year – Resort Category
Michigan Section PGA – 2014

Junior Golf Leader Award
Michigan Section PGA – 2010

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