2012 TREASURE OUR TROOPS Gala

Military families and United States Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Joe Lieberman (Ind-CT) plus Goldman Sachs Gives were honored on July 11th at the 2012 ThanksUSA “Treasure Our Troops” Gala at the Newseum in Washington, DC.

With sponsors including the Blavatnik Family Foundation and Fluor, this sold-out event raised scholarship funds for the children and spouses of active-duty personnel and was “enceed” by Fox News anchor Bret Baier. ThanksUSA scholarship recipients offered a personal look into how their lives have been touched by the ThanksUSA.

And the keynote speaker, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Martin Dempsey, emphasized the importance of the ThanksUSA work and delighted the crowd by leading the singing of “God Bless America.”

Since its beginning in 2006, ThanksUSA has provided $7.5 million in need-based academic scholarships to America’s military families, including the families of the wounded and fallen. Scholarship recipients represent all military branches – Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve – and come from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

FILM REVIEW

New version of ‘Total Recall’ slicker than the original

By Christy Lemire
The Associated Press

Colin Farrell replaces Arnold Schwarzenegger in the new version of “Total Recall,” and the smug sense of campy meanness that made the original 1990 film feel so muscular and grotesque gives way to a vibe that’s slick, shiny and deadly serious.

Seriously, this movie has no sense of humor. Farrell doesn’t get to utter any corny one-liners as he rips off a bad guy’s arms. And maybe this is good, this attempt at reinvention. It certainly makes director Len Wiseman’s film move more energetically and efficiently, at least until the repetitive and overlong ending.

Both films are super violent, but less seems to be at stake in the latest version. Farrell is certainly a better actor than Schwarzenegger, and he’s capable of far more emotional complexity, but Schwarzenegger was better at conveying a sense of panic and fear, of discombobulation. Farrell is confident and competent regardless of the situation; there never seems to be any real threat of him coming out alive.

Like the original “Total Recall,” Wiseman’s film is based on the Philip K. Dick sci-fi short story “We Can Remember It for You Wholesale,” a futuristic exploration of memory and identity. It’s the end of the 21st century, and chemical warfare has made most of Earth uninhabitable except for two regions: the briskly anti-antisect United Federation of Britain and the grimy, crowded Colony, formerly known as Australia.

The densely packed, vertical urban sprawl of the Colony, a multicultural ghetto that’s kind of Japanese and kind of Russian and constantly rainy, is where Farrell’s Douglas Quaid lives with his beautiful wife, Lori (Kate Beckinsale). They share a dark, cramped apartment, and he works a menial factory job he hates. But dreams of danger haunt him, and eventually inspire him to visit Rekall, a lab that offers sort of minivacations through implanted memories (a charismatic, silver-haired John Cho runs the place).

Things go wrong during the procedure, as we know, and Quaid quickly finds himself under attack, on the run and accused of being a totally different person. A freedom fighter named Melina (Jessica Biel), a lieutenant for the head of the underground resistance with the women are stronger and fiercer than they were in the original. Here, when Biel and Beckinsale square off against each other, it’s with all the skill and intensity of the men. Similarly, they don’t break a single bone as they scramble across rooftops and leap from one ridiculously perilous height after another.