



# THE PURPLE HEARTBEAT

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' NEWSLETTER

### NATIONAL COMMANDER'S CALL

Patriots

As we are heading into the back stretch of our year, It has been an honor and privilege to serve all of you as your National Commander.

Recently there have been major adjustments to the Order; the National HQ went from a staff of 18 employees down to 3. The National Adjutant is a Volunteer for the first time in the History of our Organization. For our beloved organization to succeed under these conditions it is critical that all elected officers step up and take on many new challenges

As your National Commander, I requested the National Adjutant to set up weekly leadership Video Conference calls. We all need to come together and start getting information sent out to the membership. We no longer have the staff available at the National HQ to be able to provide the level of needed support to the membership.

The Appeal was filed and the Law firm informed us that it could take to the end of the year. The Convention will happen we are working on the finalization on the dates for July. The HQ is working around the clock to get the Life membership rebate sent out.

We are requesting that Departments and Chapters submit fundraising requests to the National Adjutant for the use of Purple Heart (Word Mark). The foundation will issue to you a no-fee licensing agreement. The Leadership Conference Calls that we are talking about is with your Region Commanders and I ask all Department Commanders to hold your Region Commanders accountable for not disseminating the word down to the Department and Chapters.

We are down to two National Service Officers who are paid by the National Organization and we are working on revoking the Power of Attorneys that we currently have. We had a couple of meetings with the Office of General Counsel about the program and our status moving forward we are nowhere, and it will never be like it was in the past.

Yours In Patriotism,

*Felix Garcia III*

Felix Garcia III

National Commander

### Inside this issue:

Dept. of VA Fast Facts	3
Chapter of the Month	4
Patriot of the Month	5-6
Activities Across the MOPH	7-10
Space A Flight for Free	11
Veterans Research	12
Important Dates	13
National Committee's	14



**USAA:** USAA is proud to serve The Military Order of the Purple Heart.

USAA has joined forces with the Military Order of The Purple Heart to help show pride in their mission and programs. When you join USAA, you become part of an extended, military-based family that can be passed down from generation to generation.

Discover what a FREE USAA membership can do for you <http://www.usaa.com/moph> or call 855-221-MOPH (6674) to learn more.



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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' NEWSLETTER

## NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S CALL

Dear Patriots,

We are working around the clock trying to get the Life membership rebate prepared to be sent out. Last year during the furlough there was a full stop on all reports, this has been very challenging for us to get caught up. Last year there were over 130 chapters that did not qualify for not submitting reports, I have sent out this list of chapters to the Region commanders. Once I have confirmation on the status of these chapters I will be able to complete the report and get the annual Rebate sent out. I want to remind everyone that we went from a staff of 18 to 3. The current staff is working overtime and doing all we can to support the membership. If anyone has any major issues please contact me and I will do everything I can to assist you.

I want to address the Website, we have been working to get the officer sign on and chapter locator fixed for months.

I want to thank all the membership for your support and understanding during this difficult year, if we all remember the sacrifice we made to qualify as members of this beloved organization we can definitely overcome these obstacles.

At the HQ we are here to support the membership, if you have questions, concerns or need assistance do not hesitate to contact me anytime at: [ernierivera@purpleheart.org](mailto:ernierivera@purpleheart.org).

**“Believe in the Order”**

Yours In Patriotism,

*Ernie*



## DEPARTMENT CONVENTION NOTIFICATION

WE MUST HAVE YOUR INPUT NO LATER THAN CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON **MARCH 1ST, 2020** TO COMPLETE PLANNING FOR NATIONAL OFFICER VISITS TO DEPARTMENT CONVENTIONS - WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION.

Email: [ernierivera@purpleheart.org](mailto:ernierivera@purpleheart.org)

Fax: National Adjutant  
MOPH Headquarters

Mail:

Ernie Rivera  
National Adjutant  
MOPH Headquarters  
5413 - B Backlick Road

Sources: CNN

- ◆ There are 18.2 million veterans in the U.S., according to the most recent statistics from the US Census.
- ◆ More than nine million veterans are served each year by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ◆ Health care facilities are made up of 1,074 outpatient sites and 170 VA Medical Centers.
- ◆ US President Donald Trump requested an appropriation of \$220.2 billion for the department of the 2020 Budget, a 9.6% increase over 2019.

## **Short Timeline**

**1789**– The US government passes legislation ensuring pensions for disabled Revolutionary War veterans.

**1862**– During the Civil War, Congress passes a bill allowing the president to purchase land for national cemeteries. Between 1865 and 1870, 70 national cemeteries open for burial of Union soldiers.

**1912**– Congress passes the Sherwood Act, guaranteeing pension for Union veterans of the Civil War and veterans of the Mexican-American War, regardless of their health.

**June 22, 1944**– During WWII, US President FDR signs into law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, also known as the "G.I. Bill of Rights," a package of education benefits, federally guaranteed loans and unemployment compensation.

**1984**– US President Ronald Reagan signs a bill requiring the VA to pay benefits to Vietnam veterans suffering from chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda, possibly caused by Agent Orange exposure.

**July 2010**– The VA unveils new regulations making it easier for men and women who served in the armed forces to receive benefits for PTSD. Under the new rules a veteran only needs to demonstrate that he or she served in a war and performed a job during which events could have happened that could cause the disorder.

**2014**– Thousands of mistreatment to the veterans.

**June 23, 2017**– Trump signs into law the Department of VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017.

**June 6, 2018**– Trump signs the VA Mission Act.

**August 21, 2019**– Trump signs a Presidential Memoranda to automatically forgive federal student loan debt for totally and permanently disabled veterans.

**Western Massachusetts Chapter 875**

Chapter 875 participated in a Purple Heart presentation to the family of Charles Parkin, USCG, KIA during WWI when the USS Tampa was sunk by a German U-Boat 101 years ago. Charles, an immigrant from England was just 17 years old.

The Tampa was one of six cutters assigned to the Navy for convoy duty in Europe during World War I. It had just completed its 19th convoy and was headed to Wales to get more coal when a German U-boat fired on the ship as it sailed alone in the Bristol Channel. The vessel sank in just under three minutes. The Purple Heart — bestowed on those wounded or killed in combat — has so far been presented to the families of about 40 of the 111 Coast Guard members who were assigned to the vessel, which was attacked Sept. 26, 1918.



VFW State Cdr Jeff Najarian, Coast Guard Rear Admiral Andy Tiongson, Frances (no last name given) a niece, Joan, in red, ( no last name given) a great-niece, Tom Worrington (great-nephew) and Brian Willette (Chapter 875 Commander)

**William “Bill” or “Robbie” Robinson: Chapter 260, Omaha, NE**

Bill Robinson comes from a military family. His father served in the Army Air Corps in WWII. His younger brother served in the Air Force and completed a tour in Da Nang. His father-in-law was also in WWII and was part of the D-Day invasion forces.

After completing college, Bill joined the Air Force and began officer training, basic and advanced navigator training. He was assigned to B-52s and shortly after checking out, was deployed to South East Asia operating out of the two locations supporting B-52 operations. In 1972, operations escalated a good deal. In December, Operation Linebacker II began with combined air forces, now including B-52s, attacking significant targets in North Vietnam in and around Hanoi and Hai Phong harbor. Bill was assigned to a crew commanded



(Photo credit: Veterans Portrait Project)

by Capt John Mize and they flew four missions over what was then the most defended cities. On the fourth mission, a barrage of surface-to-air missiles were launched at the bomber. One was successful a damaging their aircraft, blowing out all the engines on the left side and knocking out many systems. It took both pilots' full effort to regain control of the aircraft and see if they could navigate their way to safety. It was soon apparent that they could not make it back to their base or attempt a landing. Although steadily losing altitude, the crew managed to continue until they were safely over Thailand and began to bailout. But Bill's downward ejection seat would not fire. The airplane was failing and the pilot directed all other crewmembers to bailout. Capt Mize said he would try to give Bill three more minutes to manually bailout, which he did. Everyone on the crew was successfully recovered from the jungle area in Thailand. All members of the crew were awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained from the original blast and the bailouts. Soon after those Linebacker II sorties, serious negotiations effectively stopped the conflict and within a couple of months, POWs were on their way home. Job Done!



After 23 years of military service and 20 years at the Creighton University providing IT support for their School of Medicine maintaining computers, servers, and medical simulators.

Bill now spends time at home with his wife of over 43 years and volunteering with local organizations. Bill is a commander of MOPH Chapter 260, Omaha, NE. The chapter is involved with the community providing aid to recent flood in the area

## Patriot David L. Grasso, Jr.: Chapter 1787, Delaware

David went into the service December 1965. Inducted at Fort Dix for the basic and advanced training, then he was assigned to a unit at Fort Benning, the 199th LIB to did an extensive training. During his time in Shelby, Mississippi he had a Military Driver's License, he was assigned to the company Commander's driver. Due to that he was privileged to drive on weekends taking his fellow soldiers back and forth to town at Shelby. He had to go back to Fort Benning for helicopter training and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry (Old Guard) of the 199th.

He was assigned to an advanced party to fly over to Vietnam. He and his battalion worked on setting up the base camp, had a lot of patrols in the Long Bien Ammo Dump once every one got there and finished the camp, it was during Christmas and New Year. During that time, it was brought to his attention that a radio man was needed and it was given to him since he could read a map very well.

He was out on search and destroy, while he was taking a break, he was having trouble reaching brigade headquarters and extended his agenda when a shot rang out. He was immediately hit, and tried to move but he couldn't, as they were trying to take out the sniper David got back to his radio and called in a medivac while the medic worked on him. Fortunately, the call was received back at base camp, the Brigade Sargent Major was making a mail drop. The bullet entered his abdomen one side exited the other side and landed in his right forearm. He was picked up and flew to Saigon Hospital, 95th. With the amount of blood loss, he was very lucky to be alive. He was hospitalized and rehabbed for several months in Camp Zuma, Japan.

He joined American Legion Post 28 and then AmVets Post 2. After one year, he became Junior Vice Commander and his wife became President of the Auxiliary.

Today, Patriot David Grasso is a Senior Vice Commander for the Chapter 1787, he has been able to help his neighbor find and return a WWII Veterans' Family his Purple Heart in Tennessee through the Purple Hearts Reunited. Also been very involving with the community services by giving his fellow Veterans advice to help them to receive what is rightfully theirs from the VA.



**Chapter 49: Chaula Vista, CA****Chula Vista Starlight Parade**

The city of Chula Vista is just south of San Diego and holds an annual holiday lights parade on the first Saturday of the month to celebrate the start of the holiday season. Participants decorate vehicles and floats with different themes, lights and decorations. Chapter 49 also participated in the Wreath Across America.

**Chapter 647: Rockingham, NC**

Chapter 647 in Rockingham, NC has been doing so much work by helping Veterans to live a productive life one day at a time. They have seen so much improvement every single day.

**Chapter 400: Orlando, FL**

(L-R National Adjutant/ Commander MOPH 400, Ernie T. Rivera, Sr. with Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma)

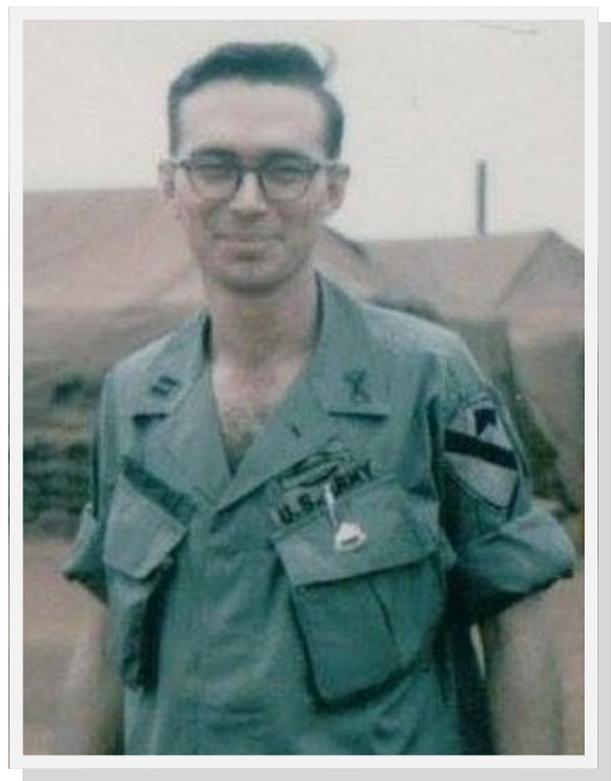
The Seminole County Sheriff's Office became an official Purple Heart Agency in recognition for our dedication to veterans in our agency and within the Seminole County community. Over the past few years, the SCSO has taken on initiatives to recognize those who currently serve, have been discharged, retired, and the family members of those who have supported their loved ones through their military careers. This includes supporting the members of the Sheriff's Office who are called to serve their country in the Reserves. In recognition of the SCSO's efforts, a proclamation was presented by the Military Order of The Purple Heart Chapter 400 Commander Mr. Ernie Rivera, National Adjutant for Military Order of the Purple Heart. The ceremony coincided with an unveiling of a Veteran Recognition Wall that salutes past and present members of the SCSO who have served in the United States military./courtesy of FB

**Chapter 524, Jacksonville, FL**

Commander Vedvick (L) and Patriots of MOPH Chapter 524 were recognized recently by the Jacksonville Jaguars during their Salute to Service game at TIAA Bank Field. Patriots from WWII to OIF were represented on the field and we were proud to host the National Adjutant and our Department of Florida Auxiliary members at the game as well. The Jaguars continue to provide assistance to Veterans throughout the area and Chapter 524 appreciates their continued partnership with the team. They also go out of their way to include our Purple Heart recipients each year and we couldn't be happier to have such a strong relationship with our local team.



On November 11, 2019. This particular day and date was especially special for the Department Commander of Mississippi, Patriot Truitt Breazeale. This day was celebrated at the National Infantry Museum in Fort Benning, Georgia, home of the infantry. The commander was surprised by his family as they had purchased a paver in honor of their father. The paver was placed around the Vietnam area. This was quite a reunion for Fort Benning is where he spent most of his 32 years of active duty, and this was basically home for his children. This was the first time in over 35 years that the family had gathered together at Fort Benning. The reunion was outstanding. The picture depicts a young captain in 1968 at Song Be, RVN. The other pictures are of his 2 sons, both veterans, his daughter-a school teacher in Columbus, GA and his wife, Vonnell, of almost 60 years.





When congress signed the *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act* last year, 100% service connected disabled Veterans became eligible for Space Available Travel. Better known as ‘Space-A’ or military hops, Air Mobility Command (AMC) maintains an extensive network of flights throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. Supplementing this network, several Air National Guard and Naval Aviation Units have flights available.

To be eligible for Space-A flights, Veterans must have a permanent and total service-connected disability rating. These Vets must also obtain a DD Form 2765, “Department of Defense/Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (TAN).

The Space-A Program fills surplus capacity and seating on DOD aircraft. A popular perk among retirees, now eligible Veterans can take advantage of the program and fly for free. So, whether the Veteran is looking for a getaway to Hawaii or a trip to catch-up with their Veteran brothers and sisters on the other side of the country, the Space-A travel program can fly you there.

#### **Some things to know before flying Space-A:**

- Disabled Veterans, along with retirees, are in priority group 6. This means active service members on emergency leave; post deployment respite and other important transportation needs will have priority.
- A contingency plan and resources, including commercial airfare, need to be available in case of a scheduling change or sudden unavailability.
- Dependents of disabled Veterans are not eligible for Space-A travel.

Eligible Veterans looking for flights should review schedules at AMC passenger terminals. Most AMC terminals, on military bases or at commercial airports, have a Facebook page that posts flight schedules and seat availability. Once a flight and destination are selected the Veteran can register in person at the terminal, or by email/fax.

Disabled Veterans, with a little flexibility and patience, are taking to the sky for free with Space-A travel and seeing more of the country thankful for their service and sacrifice.

For more information including: eligibility, locations, schedules, baggage, contact info, and; to register for the Space-Available Travel Email Sign-Up visit the [Air Mobility Command—Space Available Travel Page](#).

Source: [blog.va.gov](http://blog.va.gov)

Source: The Health for Every Veteran

**Seeking individuals who served in the military!**



“We invite you to participate in a study focusing on your health behaviors and life experiences as a Veteran.

The goal of the Health for Every Veteran Study is to better understand the experiences of Veterans from all backgrounds and promote their health and well-being. We are interested in hearing the diverse voices within our communities.

The study is being conducted by researchers at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. It consists of completing a confidential, web-based questionnaire every 9 months for approximately 2 years (for a total of 4 questionnaires). All research activities are completed online, with no in-person visits required. For more information, please go to <https://healthforeveryvet.questionpro.com>.”

**February**

- 3rd: Four Chaplains Day
- 19th: Coast Guard Reserve Birthday

**March**

- 3rd: Navy Reserve Birthday
- 13th: K-9 Veterans Day
- 25th: Medal of Honor Day
- 29th: Vietnam Veterans Day

**April**

- 5th: Gold Star Spouses Day
- 14th: Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 23rd: Army Reserve Birthday

**May**

- 1st: Silver Star Banner Day
- 8th: Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- 13th: Children of Fallen Patriots Day
- 16th: Armed Forces Day
- 25th: Memorial Day

**June**

- 6th: Anniversary of WWII Allied invasion in Normandy, France, known as D-Day.
- 14th: Flag Day
- 14th: Army Birthday
- 23rd: Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- 27th: National PTSD Awareness Day

**July**

- 4th: Independence Day
- 27th: Korean War Veterans Armistice Day

**August**

- 4th: Coast Guard Birthday
- 7th: Purple Heart Day
- 29th: Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

**September**

- 11th: Patriot Day
- 18th: Air Force Birthday
- 27th: Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day

**October**

- 13th: Navy Birthday
- 26th: National Day of the Deployed

**November**

- 10th: Marine Corps Birthday
- 11th: Veterans Day

**December**

- 7th: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 13th: National Guard Birthday
- 19th: National Wreaths Across America Day

# NATIONAL COMMITTEE'S 2019-2020

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## FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- Patriot Dennis Wallot (Chair)
- Patriot Doug Middleton (4 years members)
- Patriot Al Flyr (4 years Member)
- Patriot Paul Pickart (3 years Member)
- Patriot Felix Garcia (ex-officio with vote)
- Patriot Francisco "Paco" Elizalde Jr.( non-voting member)
- Patriot James McCormick ( non-voting member)
- Patriot Phil Moore (non-voting member)
- Patriot James Gurley (non-voting member)
- Patriot Ernie Rivera (non-voting member)

## INVESTMENT COMMITTEE:

- Patriot Dennis Wallot (Chair)
- Patriot Al Flyr (4 years Member)
- Patriot Paul Pickart (3 years Member)
- Patriot Doug Middleton
- Patriot Felix Garcia (ex-officio with vote)
- Patriot Phil Moore (non-voting member)
- Patriot Ernie Rivera (non-voting member)

## PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:

- Patriot Chris Smrt (Chair)
- Patriot Nick McIntosh (4 years Member)
- Patriot Matt Bridges (3 years Member)
- Patriot Charles Eggleston (2 years Member)
- Patriot Felix Garcia (ex-officio with vote)

## BYLAWS COMMITTEE:

- Patriots Charles W. Adkins (AR), (Chair)
- Patriot James L. McCormick (WV), (Co-Chair)
- Patriot James L. Anderson (CA), (Secretary)
- Patriot Charles R. Gatlin (MT), Member
- Patriot Christopher J. Vedvick (FL), Member
- Patriot Walter Kroptavich (VA), Member
- Patriot Leon P. Brown (CT), Member
- Patriot Wade L. Jenson (NE), Member
- Patriot Larry D. Leighton (AZ), Member

## Alternates:

- Patriot John T. Flener (GA), Member
- Patriot Gilbert N. Brown (TX), Member
- Patriot Robert J. Delgado (TX), Member

## Legal Consultant:

Patriot James L. Gulley (TX), Nat't Judge Advocate

## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE:

- Patriot John Logan (Chair)



# JOIN THE LEGACY PROGRAM

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PH: 703-642-5360

# MOPH CALENDAR 2020 - 2021

## JANUARY 2020

- 01..... NEW YEAR'S DAY - HQs CLOSED
- 15..... INVESTMENT CONFERENCE CALL (2ND QUARTER)
- 20..... MLK DAY - HQs CLOSED

## FEBRUARY 2020

- 15.....MOPH SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DUE
- 17..... PRESIDENT'S DAY - HQs CLOSED
- 22..... GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

## MARCH 2020

- 01.....CHAPTER PATRIOTS OF THE YEAR SUBMISSION DUE
- 30.....CHAPTER ELECTION REPORT DUE

## APRIL 2020

- 01.....DEPARTMENT PATRIOTS OF THE YEAR SUBMISSION DUE
- 12.....EASTER'S DAY!

## MAY 2020

- 01.....REGION PATRIOTS OF THE YEAR SUBMISSION DUE
- 31.....DEPARTMENT ELECTION REPORT DUE

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### FUTURE CONVENTIONS

- 2020 NATIONAL CONVENTION, CHARLESTON, WV.....JULY 27 - JULY 31
  - 2021 NATIONAL CONVENTION, TBD
-