



THE PURPLE HEARTBEAT

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL COMMANDER'S CALL

My fellow Patriots: As your National Commander, I am proud of each and every Patriot member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and I salute you for your loyal and valiant service to our great nation. Veterans Day is a special day, set aside for all Americans to reflect on the many sacrifices and the great achievements of the brave men and women who have protected and defended our freedom since the days of the American Revolution. For those of us who bear the scars of war, this day has special meaning and sentiment.

Unlike Memorial Day, when we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, this day honors the many other veterans who gave their all, but were able to return to their homes and their families. At home, they continue to serve and contribute to making their communities a better place to live. I urge all Americans to pause today to pay respect those veterans in your family, your community, and other friends by thanking them for their service and sacrifice. If possible, take time to visit with our sick and disabled veterans and assure them that they will not be forgotten. For me, Veterans Day is a day of reflection --it's the day that I allow my thoughts to return to Iraq and pay tribute to those brave men and women with whom I served.

President Reagan once summed it up perfectly when he said, "The blessings of liberty which our ancestors secured for us, and which we still enjoy, are ours only because, in each generation, there have been men and women willing to bear the hardships and sacrifices of serving in the military forces we need to preserve our freedom. These fine men and women have not sought glory for themselves, but peace and freedom for all. They exemplify the spirit that has preserved us as a great Nation, and they deserve our recognition for everything they have done. With a spirit of pride and gratitude, we honor and remember our veterans today."

To my brothers and sisters in the Military Order of the Purple Heart, I salute you on this special day

Yours In Patriotism,

Felix Garcia III

Felix Garcia III

National Commander

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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.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S CALL

Dear Patriots,

Thank you for your support and understanding with the HQ, We are working hard on getting everything caught up for last fiscal year. Our goal is to have Life Membership rebates sent out in January of 2020. I have received numerous messages about the Website officer sign on. We are currently working to get the website sign on fixed. 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.

"Believe in the Order"

Yours In Patriotism,

Ernie

Ernie Rivera

National Adjutant



CHAPTERS/DEPARTMENTS:

Life Member Rebates are scheduled for distribution in January 2020. Organizations credited with Election, Finance, 990 and Life Member Verification reports will share in this year's rebate.

Distribution is made by direct deposit. If your organization's bank account has changed, please submit a copy of a cancelled check to accounting@purpleheart.org or send by fax to 703-642-1841.

For further assistance or questions, please contact the Membership Department, membership@purpleheart.org.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION NOTIFICATION

WE MUST HAVE YOUR INPUT NO LATER THAN CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON **DECEMBER 1ST, 2019** TO COMPLETE PLANNING FOR NATIONAL OFFICER VISITS TO DEPARTMENT CONVENTIONS - WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION.

Email: ernierivera@purpleheart.org

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Albert Litrette, Chapter 825.

Albert Litrette Sr., of Houma, served in the Army for the Vietnam War. At Tuesday's festival, he was named an honorary Marine.

Litrette was on a Navy ship during the war, conducting search-and-destroy operations for two years. He was awarded four Purple Hearts. "I got hit in my left arm with a hand grenade," he said. "I got hit in my leg with the M79 grenade launcher. I got hit on the side of my back with a mortar attack, and then my last Purple Heart, I got hit right on my spine." Now, Litrette helps veterans obtain benefits, get help for post-traumatic stress disorder and join veterans' organizations. He's senior vice commander for the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 825 in Houma and also belongs to the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, United Veterans League, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Vietnam Veterans of America.



William “Bill” Englerth, III

William “Bill” Englerth, III was raised in a Coatesville, a blue collar community located 45 miles west of Philadelphia. The largest employer in the community was Lukens Steel Mill and many of his family and friends worked there. However upon high school graduation in 1966, with a business background, Bill was fortunate to land a job at one of the local banks. It was a low level clerk position, but being the only male in the booking department led him down the path of meeting his future wife Loretta. Bill began his move up the employee levels, while continuing his banking/accounting education at night school. However, in two years, his banking future was put on hold when he was drafted by the US Army in October 1968.



Bill experienced his basic training at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, reaching the level of Private First Class at graduation. With his prior banking/accounting experience, he thought he might be assigned to a position in the finance area of the Army. At that time, the Army was not in need of more finance clerks, it needed combat personnel for Vietnam. January 1969, Bill arrived at Fort Polk, Louisiana for Advanced Infantry Training.

At the completion of AIT, Bill received his orders for Vietnam. After a 30 day leave home, he travelled to Seattle, Washington and in April 1969, arrived at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. At Cam Ranh Bay, he was assigned to D Company, 2nd /501st ,101st Airborne, spending the next three months primarily in the bush in the A Shau Valley. Bill earned his Combat Infantry Badge within the first hour of joining his company in the field. On July 25th during a fire-fight, his very close friend Jimmy Courtney was killed. A short time later, the Company D Commander was killed and Bill was seriously wounded. After several surgeries, he was transported to Valley Forge Military Hospital, Phoenixville, PA. Bill earned his Purple Heart and was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor. After recuperating, he served the remaining year back at Ft. Bragg as a company AWOL-DFR clerk. (*Continues next page*)

After military service Bill returned to the same bank, started his climb in management and commercial credit leading a team of lenders responsible for commercial lending in southeastern Pennsylvania. After almost 40 years with the bank, Bill retired from banking and began working in the finance area of the Coatesville VA Medical Center, a far less stressful position than his career. He was fortunate to renew friendships with many of his high school buddies who had served in Vietnam and now came to Coatesville VA for medical benefits. He often thinks of the ones he knew so well that did not return from Vietnam to their families and friends.

Now fully retired, Bill spends much of his time volunteering in the community. He has served as the Finance Officer for Valley Forge Chapter 1777 for 10 years and participates in the Chapter's volunteer work at Coatesville VA as a DAV driver, monthly bingo parties, selling popcorn and pretzels as a fundraiser for Voluntary Service Programs, and serving on the VAVS Advisory Committee. Bill was recently elected Finance Officer for the MOPH Department of Pennsylvania. He lives in Tel Hai Retirement Community in Honey Brook, PA where he also volunteers as a mail clerk, pool monitor, on campus shuttle driver, and serves as the Commander of the 160 member Tel Hai Veterans Group.

Bill has been married for almost 50 years to his first true love, Loretta. He has two sons and four grandchildren.



Richard Hein

Richard Hein has been a Life Member of the Military Order Of The Purple Heart since 2010. Currently Richard is serving as Commander for the State of Iowa. As a member of Chapter 777 in Des Moines, IA; Richard has served in several positions at the Chapter and Department of Iowa.

His military service was in the U. S. Army from 1968-1970 as a Warrant Officer 100B (Helicopter Pilot). He spent one year in the Republic of Viet Nam from 1969-1970 flying primarily in III-IV Corps. Upon being discharged, Richard served in several National Guard and Army Reserve aviation units for a number of years as a helicopter and fixed wing pilot.

On April 1, 1970 during a mortar attack at Soc Trang airfield, RVN. Richard was wounded while flying, after healing and rehabilitation returned to complete his tour. The Purple Heart was awarded for his wound received during this operation. In addition to the Military Order Of The Purple Heart, Richard is a life member in the Distinguished Flying Cross Society and South Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association.

Retired for several years now; the additional time provides opportunities for family activities, friends, community involvement and other hobbies and interests. Richard is married (Jane) and resides in Des Moines, IA. Immediate family include a son, daughter and four grandchildren.

Welfare of our veterans from all branches of service continue to need our continuous support.



Chapter of the Month: Pennsylvania Chapter #519

Chapter #519 has been involved in many activities for outreach to Veterans. Among them are Veterans Day and Christmas parties for Vets in Personal Care homes. They are also involved and support all activities of neighboring Veteran Organizations. They bus the Vets to many outings such as the Erie Museum, the Boalsburg Military Museum, the Admiral Perry Niagara flag ship, the Railroaders Museum, Altoona , Pa, The Army Museum ,Carlisle, Pa. And the Pa State Capital in Harrisburg, Pa as shown on the attached photo at no cost to the Veteran.



(First row left to right: John DeLaney , and Ed Greenawalt, Ron Muth , John Starr , Dave Walker, Joe Woods and next in the white Shirt John Hibner)

Local Veterans System Receives Nation's 1st Purple Heart Designation

The Temple-based Central Texas Veterans Health Care System — which includes the Olin E. Teague Veterans' Medical Center in Temple — was designated the first Purple Heart VA Health Care System in the U.S. A dedication ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. Friday at the Temple VA in the Avenue of Flags area, 1901 S. First St. All veterans, active duty soldiers, the community and those who support veterans are welcome to attend.

The ceremony will dedicate a sign that will be installed in front of the hospital in Temple.

There will be combat-wounded Purple Heart recipients from numerous U.S. conflicts on hand to personally thank those who work at the hospital. Additional signs will be installed at the Waco VA, and surrounding VA clinics in Austin and Cedar Park.

To honor service members who have received the Purple Heart, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Texas, will present a proclamation designating Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, the first "Purple Heart Veterans Health Care System" in the United States.

"The VA hospital and surrounding outpatient clinics of the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System are providing outstanding treatment, and providing a central gathering point for the veteran community," Jon Lunkwicz, the Texas state commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, said in a release. "The Central VA Health Care System represents our hearts here in the Heart of Texas."

Veterans living in Temple, Waco and the Fort Hood areas owe their health to the Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System, Lunkwicz said.

"We cannot thank enough, the administrators, the caregivers and those who work every day on behalf of veterans," he said. "For all combat veterans, those who have 'borne the battle,' VA endeavors, every day to ensure that you never leave any of us behind, and for that, 'we thank you.'"

The Central VA Health Care System represents the hearts of the combat-wounded, the disabled veteran here in Central Texas, Lunkwicz said.

"As a combat wounded Army infantryman who receives medical care in Temple, it is my honor to designate the Central VA Health Care System, the first 'Purple Heart VA Health Care System' in the United States," Lunkwicz said.

The ceremony will consist of several local and regional dignitaries speaking, along with Purple Heart recipients of all branches, and military conflicts, as they congratulate all who work at VA, and recognize their important contributions to quality of life for Purple Heart recipients in Central Texas.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Texas, is unique among all veteran service organizations in that its membership is comprised entirely of combat veterans who

Happy 100th Birthday, Patriot Richard Thomas Tracy!

Patriots,

Please join me in wishing Patriot Richard Thomas Tracy a Happy Birthday. Monday, October 7, 2019, became a significant day. 100 years ago yesterday two time Purple Heart recipient made it to **ONE HUNDRED YEARS YOUNG**.

His name is Richard 'Dick' Thomas Tracy. Dick served in the United States Marine Corps. He joined at the age of 18 and served until 1945. He served all over the South Pacific, to New Guinea, Australia and Cuba. He fought in the battle of Peleliu a major battle fought by the Marines. So yesterday, the Department of Ohio Military Order of the Purple Heart Honor Guard helped Dick and his family and friends celebrate his 100th birthday. What a great day it was.

Honor Guard members are, Charlie Tobe, Randy Howson, Edward Damron, Glenn West, Victor Cook and yours truly.

Thanks Dick, for allowing us the opportunity to celebrate this special day with you.

God Bless you and congratulations.

Below are a few photos showing the Honor Guard and Mr. Tracy.



Syd Cole, 105th Birthday

Syd Cole, a member of Chapter 187 in Buffalo New York, celebrated his 105th Birthday on September 1st and a party was held in the VA Medical Center .



(Pictured with Patriot Cole is Jim Schaller, formerly Senior Vice Commander for the State of North Carolina and his Wife Carol, former President of the Ladies Auxiliary for the State of North Carolina.)



On Saturday, May 18, 2019, Alamo Chapter 1836, participated in the Armed Forces Day San Antonio River Parade for the first time. The parade had 32 float entries representing every branch of service and many veteran's organizations. The San Antonio River runs through downtown San Antonio and is home to the famous River Walk which is the most popular tourist attraction in Texas. The second most popular is the Alamo which is only one block from the river. All five of the original Spanish missions were built along the San Antonio River. The Alamo is the most northern of the five missions. The Purple Heart float was sponsored by the law firm of Thomas J. Henry. The crowd along the river was large, but most wonderful was the tremendous reception that the Purple Heart float received. We were near the end of the Parade and could see how the crowd responded to earlier floats, which was always polite, with clapping and cheering. When our float drew abreast of a section of the crowd, almost without exception, the crowd would rise to its feet with a standing ovation and many "thank you for your service" were very pronounced. It brought tears to our eyes.

There were eight participants from the Chapter:

Tony Roman, Commander, Chapter 1836, USMC, Vietnam

Bill Crumlett, SVC 1836, USA, Vietnam

Ed Stiteler, JVC 1836, USMC, Vietnam

Pete Rosie, 2017 Nat'l Patriot of the Year, USA, Vietnam

Anna King, 1836, USA, Iraq

Dale Prescott, Finance Officer 1836, USN, Vietnam

Ronnie Jordan, 1836, USA, Afghanistan

Sebastian Gallegos, 1836, USMC, Iraq



Purple Heart Community: Manville

Manville borough was officially proclaimed a Purple Heart community on Monday evening October 14th, 2019 at their borough council meeting. Members of Chapter 27 and the State Commander presented plaques commemorating the event to Manville mayor Richard Onderko. Purple Heart pins were given to all council members.



(From Washington Post)

When you're traveling in either direction along Interstate 95 in Virginia, you will likely pass more than one sign featuring a silhouette of George Washington's head framed by a golden heart. Some have a green background, others are white. And each announces that you're on a "Purple Heart Trail."

As attention-grabbers go, they fall on the subtler side. But the idea is, indeed, to grab your attention — to get people to think, "Wow, I know [the Purple Heart] is a medal, but what exactly is it?" explains retired Army Col. Gordon Sumner. He hopes the signs drive people to Google to learn more about America's oldest military honor.

Sumner is the former head of the greater Washington area chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH); he was also one of the original organizers of Northern Virginia's Purple Heart Trail in the 1990s. Back then, the trail consisted of a monument at Mount Vernon leading to a walking path, which in turn led to the George Washington Memorial Parkway and, ultimately, I-95.

The trail was one of the first of a network of signs that has since expanded across the country and become a full-blown program of the national MOPH. Today, you can find a Purple Heart designation attached to an eclectic list of entities: There are Purple Heart islands, cities, schools, sports teams, funeral homes, Texas ranches and even a string of Hooters restaurants. At a time when the main organization supporting Purple Heart recipients is losing membership, these many designations could end up being its most visible legacy.

Gen. George Washington gave out the first Purple Heart medals in 1782 to recognize acts of heroism during the Revolutionary War. The honor then went dormant until 1932, the bicentennial of Washington's birth and the year the MOPH was established.

Recipients of the modern Purple Heart must have been wounded or killed in combat. The order is now headquartered in Springfield; it has 473 chapters and approximately 48,000 members, all of whom have received a Purple Heart medal since World War II. That's small compared with some of the other better-known veteran service organizations: The American Legion has nearly 2 million members; Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans each have over 1 million. For MOPH, the pool of eligible members is shrinking. Nearly 58,000 troops have earned the medal since Sept. 11, 2001, including those who have been killed in action, according to the organization. By comparison, there were more than 350,000 Purple Heart recipients in the Vietnam War and over 960,000 in World War II. In recent years, the organization has had more members die than they've been able to recruit, says retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Ernie Rivera, the group's volunteer national adjutant.

The organization supports itself through membership fees and fundraising. But after recent fundraising shortfalls, it announced last year that it would dramatically reduce expenses for its outreach programs, which include services to help veterans file benefits claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Rivera says the group is also reorganizing as it figures out how to best deliver the same services within the confines of its new budget. He says the Purple Heart Trail Program could help in the long run by maintaining public awareness of the organization. "It's not like we're trying to use this program [to raise money]," he explains. "But do I think it's something that can really move us in the right direction? For sure."

There's no formal approval process for participants, but there is one main rule: Cities, businesses and other organizations must write a proclamation explaining why they want a Purple Heart designation. The Virginia General Assembly did this in 2016, making Virginia one of 26 Purple Heart states. Some entities sign on for the good publicity — a motive that doesn't seem to bother the MOPH members I spoke with — while others seek Purple Heart status after seeing a competitor or neighbor receive it. In September, South Kingstown, R.I., became the newest Purple Heart entity, a year after North Kingstown did.

(Continues next page)

It's the job of Matt Bridges, a Marine Corps veteran and volunteer Purple Heart Trail Program coordinator, to file the proclamations with MOPH headquarters, making the entities' participation official. "People are calling me every day," he told me. While there's no complete tally, since some entities claim the designation without ever sending in a proclamation, Bridges says there are approximately 2,300 entities in the United States and its territories. More than 500 of those have been added since he took over the position in 2017.



What the designation means in practice varies. Some entities do more than put up a sign, Bridges says, citing a few colleges that have set up scholarships for Purple Heart recipients. More often, it's a smaller gesture, such as a free parking spot for veterans. MOPH doesn't police how the Purple Heart designation is used, and some veteran advocacy groups have been troubled by schools that tout their Purple Heart association when they market themselves to prospective military students. Barrett Bogue, senior communications adviser for the nonprofit Veterans Education Success, calls such practices "a concern" and says that "prospective students should not make the life-changing decision of where to earn a degree based on 'military friendliness.'"

I asked Sumner whether granting Purple Heart designations with hardly any requirements waters down the meaning or undermines the prestige of the medal. "If anything, it brings awareness," he said. "It's the one medal that none of us ever wanted to earn, but, unfortunately or fortunately, some of us have it. And because of that we want to make sure the history is continued."

It could even help a combat-wounded veteran get valuable support, he said. Injured service members probably aren't thinking about joining an organization like MOPH during recovery. But once they get home, Purple Heart signs along the highway or designated parking spaces for them at a store could spark a search for help. "They can look on the sign and [say], 'Maybe I should contact, go online and see where my local Purple Heart chapter is,'" Sumner said. "If nothing else, hopefully it gets them thinking."

Written by Natalie Gross from Washington Post

Know Your Leader: Frank J. Bokan, Commander, Department of Pennsylvania

I grew up in a small farming community of Lower Saucon Township, in Southeastern Pennsylvania. I am the oldest of five children. I have four brothers and one sister. I went to Elementary School at St. Theresa School , Hellertown, Pa from 1956-1964, and High School at Hellertown Lower Saucon High School From 1964 to 1968 when I graduated. I joined the United States Marines May of 1968 and left for Boot Camp September 3, 1968 after graduation . I was sent to Parris Island for boot camp where I was stationed until graduating, November of 1968. I was then sent to Camp Geiger (part of Camp Lejeune)



North Carolina for AIT until Christmas Day 1968. After a 30 day leave I reported to Camp Pendleton, California for final training. I was sent to Vietnam February of 1969 and assigned to "K" Co. 3/9, 3rd Marine Division fighting in Asha Valley. After moving around in country I was wounded by a North Vietnam grenade on a hill overlooking Khe Sanh June 24, 1969. I was medivaced to the Hospital ship Sanctuary off the coast of Vietnam. I was later sent by ship to Okinawa ,where I spent three months, then to El Toro by plane where I was discharged February 1970. On arriving home I obtained a job as an apprentice in IBEW 375 Electrical Union. After passing the apprentice program I took and passed the test high enough to be accepted to the Allentown Police Academy Allentown Pa. where I served as a Policeman. I attended Alvernia College in Reading Pa while on the Police Department. After leaving the Allentown Police Department, I formed my own Electrical Contracting business from where I retired. I was married to my wife, Debra, March 26, 1971. We have two children a Frank Jr. and Wendy, and we now have four grandchildren. I have served as Americanism and Welfare Officer Jr.Vice, Sr. Vice and Commander of my local chapter, Lehigh Valley #190 in Pa. I have also served as Americanism Officer, Welfare Officer, Judge Advocate, Sr Vice Commander and now Commander of the Department of Pennsylvania. I am proud to be a Life Member of this distinguished Order.



JOIN THE LEGACY PROGRAM

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Choose your donation level:

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\$100

\$250

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Military Order of the Purple Heart (LEGACY PROGRAM)

5413-B Backlick Road, Springfield, VA 22151

PH: 703-642-5360

MOPH CALENDAR 2019 - 2020

NOVEMBER 2019

11 VETERANS' DAY

12 VETERANS' DAY OBSERVANCE - HQS CLOSED

28-29.... THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY - HQS CLOSED

DECEMBER 2019

07 PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

25 CHRISTMAS - HQS CLOSED

JANUARY 2020

01 NEW YEAR'S DAY - HQS CLOSED

15 INVESTMENT CONFERENCE CALL (2ND QUARTER)

20 MLK DAY - HQS CLOSED

26 MOPH SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE

FEBRUARY 2020

17 PRESIDENT'S DAY - HQS CLOSED

22 GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

FUTURE CONVENTIONS

2020 NATIONAL CONVENTION, CHARLESTON, WV.....JULY 27 - JULY 30

2021 NATIONAL CONVENTION, CHARLESTON, WV

Region 1



CT
DE
MA
MD
ME
NJ
NNE
NY
PA
RI
VA



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Region 2



IA
IL
IN
KY
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MO
NE
OH
WI
WV



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Region 3



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Region 4



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