



# THE PURPLE HEARTBEAT

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' NEWSLETTER

## NATIONAL COMMANDER'S CALL

Patriots, Associates, Auxiliary, and Friends of MOPH:

It is with a great sense of personal loss and sadness that I inform you that the National Viola Chairman, Robert J. "Bob" Connor, passed away on October 3, 2019 and joined the ranks of America's great fallen heroes. Patriot Connor was appointed to the position of National Viola Chairman in 2012 by Past National Commander Bruce McKenty. In addition to serving as both Adjutant and Finance Officer for Chapter 268, he also served as Adjutant for the Department of Minnesota for several years.. In 2011, Patriot Connor served as Chairman of the MOPH National Convention. Bob is a Vietnam Veteran and served on active duty with the US Army from 1967-1969. He is a 1967 graduate of St. John's University (MN). Bob was born in St. Paul, Minnesota where he continued to reside with his wife Nan and Children. Additional information on memorial services and burial will be provided when made available.

Yours In Patriotism,

*Felix Garcia III*

Felix Garcia III

National Commander MOPH

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## NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S CALL

Dear Patriots,

Since arriving at the National HQ in July, we have been able to get 95% of all past bills paid and all contracts restructured. 3 bills are pending NFC approval and we hope to resolve them soon.

We are working on getting all reports inputted into Netforum, and are continuing to input all remaining membership applications for this fiscal year.

We appreciate your patience — as you know, our staff is still shorthanded and we are diligently trying to complete all the membership requests. Our priority is to get the database updated in time to provide the correct Life Membership rebates by January 2020.

We are continuing to repair and update the National Website, and hope to have the Officer sign on and Chapter locator fixed in the near future.

If you need assistance, please contact me anytime at: [ernierivera@purpleheart.org](mailto:ernierivera@purpleheart.org)

Yours In Patriotism,

*Ernie*

Ernie Rivera

National Adjutant MOPH



### Chapter's & Department's Inputs:

- ◆ All are welcome to provide photos and articles for the Purple Heartbeat. Send to: [communications@purpleheart.org](mailto:communications@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](mailto:ernierivera@purpleheart.org)

Fax: National Adjutant  
MOPH Headquarters  
Fax No: 703-642-1841

Mail:

Ernie Rivera  
National Adjutant  
MOPH Headquarters  
5413 – B Backlick Road  
Springfield, VA 22151



## MEMBERSHIP MOMENTS

**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](mailto:accounting@purpleheart.org) or send by fax to 703-642-1841.

For further assistance or questions, please contact the Membership Department, [membership@purpleheart.org](mailto:membership@purpleheart.org).



**Website:** All forms are available on the website under the Forms. We are currently working of getting the Website fixed and wanted to get members access.

please email [communications@purpleheart.org](mailto:communications@purpleheart.org) if you are having any issues

**National Convention Ad:** Support the Department of West Virginia and place an advertisement in the 2020 National Convention Book.

## Chapters on the Move:

On October 9th , 2019, the Department of the Dakotas Commander Kenneth Tieunessen and Chapter 5355, who had been instrumental in gaining approval for its establishment, participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery..

South Dakota Veterans had been advocating for a Veterans Cemetery in the eastern side of South Dakota for more than twenty years. In 2016, the South Dakota Veterans Council adopted the objective of establishing a Veterans Cemetery closer to the state's largest population of Veterans, and approached the Sioux Falls City Council about the best location for a Veterans Cemetery. In turn, the City Council invited two members of the Veterans Council to join a committee to review the land that the city owned. After selecting a site, the committee recommended the site be donated to the State for a Veterans Cemetery. The Sioux Falls City Council approved the donation and the land was deeded over to the state in January 2019.

Meanwhile the Veterans Council presented the plan to the Legislators at the legislative round tables before the Legislative session began in 2018. During the legislative session Senate Bill 91 was unanimously passed in every sub-committee, committee and on the House and Senate Floors. On March 23,2018, Senate Bill 91 creating a South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery near Sioux Falls, SD was signed and enacted. The application was submitted to the National Cemetery Administration and on October 21, 2018, the FY 2019 Priority List was published



**Department Commander Tieunessen is the second on right in this photo**

with South Dakota first on the list for establishing a new Veterans Cemetery.

## Chapter of the Week: Beirut Memorial Chapter 642

Chapter 642, at 775 members, is the second largest Chapter in the country; Hundreds of young people receive Americanism classes each year, either in summer camps or during the year in elementary school classes, participated, resulting in the award of (5) \$1000.00 scholarships each year to Purple Heart recipient dependents. This year. over 100 local businesses have proclaimed themselves “Purple Heart Supporters” through our “Business Purple Heart Supporter Proclamation” Program (including 1st hospital in state, 1st college in state, 1st newspaper in state). The Chapter conducted the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at NC State Veterans Cemetery attended by an average 250-350 people each of the past 10 years; and establishment of the “Take Pride in Your Flag” program in 2012 which designates local businesses, organizations, and individuals who display an American flag in an appropriate and respectful manner, for recognition in the local paper and a plaque to recognize their efforts. The Chapters main goals are to promote Patriotism in our younger citizens and also promote the objects of our Order in the surrounding community for awareness of the Purple

Heart. We “show the flag” throughout our community at every chance we get to interact with and spread the word to those who don’t have knowledge of the MOPH. For his efforts, the Chapter’s Americanism Officer receiving the “National Americanism Officer of the Year” award in 2018.



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## Patriot of the Week: Christopher M. Beck, Chapter 0900

SGT (P), Christopher M. Beck, of Midland, Texas. First and foremost, I am a Christian and put my faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. If not for that faith I wouldn't be where I am today. I reside in Lubbock, Texas with my beautiful wife Kerry and two kids, Matthew and Kassie. I have been serving as a Soldier in the Texas State Guard (2017-Current) alongside my Twin Brother PV2 Robert (Tony) Beck, training for Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid during state emergencies. I will (in the near future) hopefully be Commissioning as a Primary Skills Officer, 1st Lieutenant with the Engineers DRU.



I served in the US Army as an 11B/M with B co 1st Brigade 22 Infantry Regiment 4 Infantry Division Fort Hood, Texas from 1997-2001. I attended Midland College from 2002-2004 and again in 2006. I served with C Co, 2nd Battalion, 142 Infantry Regiment, 49 Armored Division/36 Infantry Division from 2003-2007, and deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I was wounded, along with 6 other Soldiers, on August 27, 2005 in a mortar attack on Convoy Support Center Scania. After being injured, my CLS (Combat Life Saver) training kicked in, performing buddy aid on injured soldiers and getting them to safety and the aid station. I continued the mission and was awarded the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Wheeled Driver's Badge and Army Commendation Medal, while deployed. I attended Texas Tech University, graduating in 2010 with my Bachelor's in Architecture, and 2012 with a Master's in Architecture. I became an Associate AIA in 2013. In 2018, Texas Tech University recognized me and 10 other alumni/soldier students in an unveiling of the Texas Tech University Wall of Honor and Purple Heart Recognition Ceremony.

I have been active in the Veteran Community in Lubbock and across Texas. I am currently working at WCA Design Studio's and actively pursuing my License as an Architect. I am Associated with Military and Veterans of Texas Tech; Veterans Association at Texas Tech University (2009-2012) - President, VP and Treasurer; MOPH Chapter 0900 - Life Member - Former Adjutant and life member of VFW Post 2466.

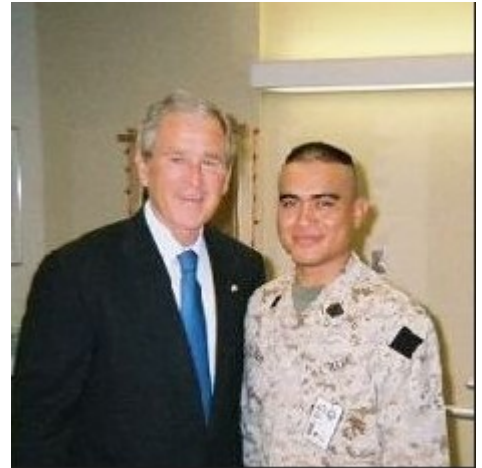
**(Check out Patriot Beck's beautiful artwork in the next page!)**



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## The Patriot of the Week from Chapter 2007 Guam is Patriot HN Elley

I was born, and raised in Kosrae, Micronesia. In 2002, after the World Trade Center attack, I joined the Navy out of Jacksonville, Florida. I went to boot camp on March 5th, 2002, and after boot camp my first duty station was on the USS Sacramento out of Bremerton, Washington. In 2003, I was deployed to the western pacific supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. After 15 months on USS Sacramento, I went to the "A" School Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Illinois, followed by Field Medical Service School at Camp Johnson, North Carolina. After finishing my Field Medical School, my second assignment was to 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, Camp Lejeune, NC. In December, 2004, I was deployed to Fallujah, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III. I got injured on January 30th, 2005 by rocket propel grenades (RPG). The RPG blew up an ammonia and chlorine tank inside the concrete building where we were, and five of us inhaled the chemicals — severely burning our lungs and putting us into a coma. We were Medevaced out of Fallujah to San Antonio, Texas, via Germany. I stayed at Brooke Army Medical Center for a year and four months until I was medically discharged from the Navy on May 23 ,2006. At that time, I decided to move my family to Guam where we now reside, and I immediately joined the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Asia Pacific Guam. I am a life member of MOPH. a member of chapter 2007, and I am currently the Junior Vice Commander for chapter 2007.



Patriot HN Elley has represented himself and the MOPH in the highest standards. Patriot HN Elley military awards consist of: Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Navy Pistol Expert Medal, and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Patriot HN Elley is married to Ruth Nena Elley and has three children; Joseph Bailey Elley, Rodson Bailey Elley, and Edwina Bailey Elley.



## **Patriots of the Week:** *Patriot John Footman, Region V Chief of Staff* **Unfinished Business:** A Patriot Tells of His Return from the Vietnam War.

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On his bookshelf, Patriot John Footman, Region V Chief of Staff, has a scrapbook filled with photographs depicting the stories his two tours in Vietnam. In between patrols and his duties as a Platoon Sergeant, John found time to mail letters and the rolls of film back to his mother in the States. When he returned home, he found his Mom had had the film developed and waiting for him.



“They’re memories”, says Patriot Footman, who lives in Harker Heights, Texas. “I sit down sometimes, take the scrapbook out, and look at the pics of my buddies and the battles we fought in.” Unlike many Vietnam Veterans, these memories, while difficult, aren’t the things John wants to block out, thought that has not always be the case. “You can’t push it down. I fought it for years but found I needed to get up and find a way to get it out of my system. There was no way I was going to hold this in, hold me back, and take me down”, says Footman.

During a firefight on 30 March 1968, then SPC 4 Footman was shot in the leg and evacuated to an Army Field Hospital and was awarded his first Purple Heart. In November 1968, Patriot Footman returned from his first tour in Vietnam and a few months later, he was transferred to Germany. But after short time there, Patriot Footman felt he had unfinished business back in the jungles and requested a return to Vietnam. “Many of my fellow Soldiers thought I was nuts for wanting to go back”, said the former Infantryman. “I just felt that I had an incomplete mission that I had to make whole”. So in April 1970, Patriot Footman returned to Vietnam, initially with the 4 TH Infantry Division before being switched to the 5 TH Mechanized Infantry Division. *(Continues next page)*

His second tour in Vietnam was filled with many close calls resulting in many of his fellow soldiers being wounded or killed in action. John figured he would get through another tour unscathed. However, it turned out not to be the case. During one patrol, the M113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) John was riding in ran over a 60 pound land mine, throwing him out of the vehicle, and landing him in a hospital for 15 days. Because of his injuries, Patriot Footman received his second Purple Heart on 15 October 1970.

After he was released from the hospital, Patriot Footman was returned to his unit. "I wasn't worried about anything because I knew I had somebody upstairs looking out for me. So, I went back out on patrol and I did not regret it," Footman said.

Now at age 72, this self-proclaimed "Soldier for Life" spends much of his time assisting Veterans and Soldiers still serving receive the recognition and benefits they earned while serving our great nation. John regularly attends Award Ceremonies at nearby Fort Hood, Texas. "I get a little overwhelmed when I see a Soldier be awarded the Purple Heart," says Patriot Footman. "I understand what they must have gone through in order to receive it." John then meets with the medal recipients after the ceremonies to let them know what state, federal and Veterans Affairs benefits that come with it. He also provides them with information about the Military Order of the Purple Heart and an application with an invitation to join. "My heart just blooms because I felt I have done something to help the Soldier or Veteran," he adds.

Patriot Footman joined the Military Order of the Purple Heart on 21 November 1993 and has served in many positions to include Commander, Chapter 1876, Commander, Department of Texas and currently serves as Chief of Staff, Region V. John states he'd serve another 20 years in the Army if they'd let him. But for now, he is very satisfied helping the current generation of Soldiers. "When God calls me to Heaven, I'll go knowing my business will be finished."

## Moody County Enterprise: Purple Heart Veteran to receive 'rolling tribute' truck



Congratulations to Patriot Jack Gill of Chapter 5355 Sioux Falls, South Dakota!

“For Jack Gill, an early peek at what he will be driving this November has been “like a dream.” On Veteran’s Day, the Sioux Falls veteran and Purple Heart recipient, who grew up south of Flandreau, is the only person in the nation who will be driving a newly minted Ford F150 truck with a full patriotic wrap. The truck is being presented to Gill, 69, who was chosen in a contest by the Wounded Warriors Family Support Foundation, a long time supporter of the MOPH. He got to sit in the truck last week when the WWFS “High Five tour” made a stop at the Sioux Falls Ford dealership.

“It’s going to be like going from a Model T to the Starship Enterprise,” said Gill. “It’s got all the bells and whistles and is going to be super truck,” The 2018 vehicle with customized lift and hand controls pushes \$100,000 in price, he estimates. He likely will keep his current truck, too, a 1997

F150 with 320,000 miles, so he can have the older truck in Arizona during the winter.

Gill, who attended both Flandreau and Egan high schools before skipping graduation and volunteering to serve in Vietnam. He lost both legs in a land mine only six weeks after getting to the war zone. It was July 18, 1969, and at 19 was, the oldest of five with four younger sisters. “Both of my legs were blown off. I just about lost the left arm,” he said. He is missing his triceps. “It was a close call.”

The truck has transfer seats that will help him go from his wheelchair to the driver’s or passenger seats, a big convenience, he said. The truck also has a 360-degree view of the outside of the vehicle, said Ed Mardiat, who explained all of the truck’s technology to Gill. “It’s kind of a rolling tribute,” he said. Gill has spent the last few years working for the Veteran’s Affairs office for processing prosthesis. He has two that allow him limited mobility. He also has volunteered with some veterans’ organizations and loves to hunt. He plans to be in Flandreau this month for a couple of hunts. “I do a lot of volunteer work,” he said. He also earned a degree from Augustana University and was a jeweler for awhile. He and his nephew, Chris Gill, own a coffee franchise in Mesa, Ariz. As part of the tour, people along the way have signed words of inspiration and thanks for Gill to read. “Thank you for your service,” several say. “I couldn’t believe it. That was mind blowing. That was touching, very touching,” he said. Gill was presented with a special coin and pin while at Sioux Falls Ford from the volunteers who are taking the vehicle on tour. “We’re finally giving back to our Vietnam Veterans,” said Jim Doriron, a volunteer driver with Wounded Warriors Family Support.

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## **Postal Service to start selling new Purple Heart stamps on Oct. 4**

The [U.S. Postal Service has announced](#) that a new Purple Heart Medal Forever stamp will be dedicated and will go on sale nationwide Oct. 4. The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the U.S. military who have been wounded or killed in action. According to the Military Order of the Purple Heart, an organization for combat-wounded veterans, the medal is “the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first award made available to a common soldier.” The Purple Heart Medal 2019 stamp is a redesign that features a purple border matching the purple of the medal and its ribbon. The Purple Heart Medal 2019 stamp is being issued as a Forever stamp in self-adhesive sheets of 20. Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through The Postal Store at [usps.com/shop](https://usps.com/shop), by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724), by mail through USA Philatelic or at Post Office locations nationwide.





# JOIN THE LEGACY PROGRAM

Help Preserve the Legacy of the Purple Heart



**Choose your donation frequency:**

**Choose your donation level:**

**Or enter your own amount:**

### Your Details

First Name\*

Last Name

Email\*

Mailing Address\*

Message of Support

City\*

State/Province\*

Postal Code\*

Country\*

CHECK / MONEY ORDER NO: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO:

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

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### FUTURE CONVENTIONS

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

2021 NATIONAL CONVENTION, CHARLESTON, WV

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## Know Your National Officers: Greg Lutes, VAVS National Director

I served in the US Navy as a Combat Navy Corpsman FMF with the US Marines in Vietnam. I was in Marine CAP units, in other words, as an advisor (Co van) in the villages of Vietnam. We were mobile so we didn't have a base camp. The Marines called me "Doc" and the Vietnamese called me Bac si.

I served in Vietnam 1969, 1970-1971.  
(A late bloomer for some of you.)

I am a widower who recently married the love of my life, Holly. I have one son and one grandson who live in Arizona. I am a California boy. My wife's and my hobbies and headaches are a 30 foot Ericson Sail Boat docked in Long Beach, CA.

I just went back to volunteering at the VAMC, Long Beach after a couple of years out of the loop. I have been a MOPH VAVS Representative since 2004.



# 2019-2020 Region Commanders

Region 1



CT  
DE  
MA  
MD  
ME  
NJ  
NNE  
NY  
PA  
RI  
VA



Region I Commander: Charles J. Eggleston  
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Region 2



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Region 3

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OR  
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WY



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Region 4



AL  
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Region 5



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Region 6



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