

VETERANS DAY 2025: PURPLE HEART HEROES SELECTED FOR NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Representing 50 States, Purple Heart Recipients Will Be Honored with an All-Expenses-Paid Trip to New York for a Week-long Salute to their Service and Sacrifice

NEWBURGH, NY, UNITED STATES,
November 10, 2025 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- They represent the very best of our nation, having put their lives on the line for America and the freedoms we all cherish. Now, they're getting the trip of the lifetime from a grateful nation. This Veterans Day, the [National Purple Heart Honor Mission](#) is proud to announce the honorees selected for 2026 Purple Heart Patriot.

Selected from among hundreds of nominees and deserving candidates for their courage and service, both in combat and in their communities, this annual 'Honor Flight'-style salute will bring together Purple Heart recipients from across conflicts and generations. The multi-day Patriot Project Mission will feature visits to a number of historic sites, including the U.S. Military

Academy at West Point; a private tour of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor; time at historic Washington's Headquarters, where the Badge of Military Merit originated in 1782; and the 9/11 Memorial. Other special tribute events are also being planned.

This year's Patriot Project honorees include men and women from all branches of military



service, who sacrificed for America and then went on to be leaders in their communities and professions.

“These honorees represent a true cross-section of America and the diversity of our combat wounded through the decades. They answered the nation’s call and then kept on serving. This is our opportunity to say ‘thank you’ on behalf of a grateful nation, especially for our Vietnam veterans, the Patriot Project provides proper homecoming they never received,” said Jeremy McVey, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Purple Heart Honor Mission and a U.S. Army veteran.

“These Patriot Project missions recognize the sacrifices made by our Purple Heart recipients and honor those who never made it home. They provide an invaluable opportunity for these heroes to bond with other combat wounded to help with healing, understanding and of course, know that this nation will never forget their sacrifice,” said National Purple Heart Honor Mission Executive Director Colonel Russell O. Vernon (Ret). “We are tremendously honored to recognize all that they have done, both during their service careers and in their civilian lives through this unique and powerful program.”

Among the distinguished honorees is six-time Purple Heart recipient, Thomas “Stormy” Matteo, who served in Vietnam. A Marine Corps Staff Sergeant, Matteo, was a Rifle Platoon Commander and Infantry Platoon Leader during 1968 and 1969 in Quang Nam Province. After his service in Vietnam, Matteo entered a career in law enforcement that eventually led him to become Police Chief in two Florida municipalities.

Also being recognized is Marine Corps Major James Capers Jr. The son of a sharecropper, Capers enlisted in the Marines and was selected to join the elite Force Recon Marine unit where he broke training records, participating in 64 long range reconnaissance patrols and five major campaigns in Vietnam. Capers was the first African American to command a Marine Recon company and the first enlisted African American Marine Officer to receive a battlefield commission. Earlier this year, 47 members of Congress sent a letter to President Trump urging him to award the Medal of Honor to Major Capers.

Another honoree, U.S. Navy Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) Steve Woelk, a two-time Purple Heart recipient, who was serving on the U.S.S. Pueblo when it was captured in 1968 by North Korea. He was wounded severely during the capture of the ship and spent 11 months as Prisoner of War (POW).

The 2026 Purple Heart Patriot Project honorees include:

- National Honoree – James Capers Jr. – U.S. Marine Corps – Vietnam
- Alabama – Roger Ward III – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Alaska – John Knott – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Arizona – John R. Moore – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Arkansas – John Parette – U.S. Army – Operation Enduring Freedom

- California – Dr. Larry Iverson – U.S. Marine Corps – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Colorado – Frank Cirullo – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Connecticut – John Alberghini – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Delaware – Gary Morris – U.S. Air Force – Vietnam
- Florida – Thomas Matteo – U.S. Marine Corps – Vietnam
- Florida – Denise Woodfin – U.S. Navy – Bombing of the U.S.S. Cole
- Georgia – Alfred "Al" Lipphardt – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Hawaii – Shaun Curry – U.S. Army – Operation Enduring Freedom
- Idaho – Ian Freeman – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Illinois – Thomas Brown – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Indiana – Thomas Ray – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Iowa – John Mansfield – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Kansas – Steven Woelk – U.S. Navy – U.S.S. Pueblo Incident
- Kentucky – Joseph Steele – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Louisiana – Matthew King – U.S. Army – Operation Enduring Freedom
- Maine – Daniel Contois – U.S. Marine Corps – Operation Enduring Freedom
- Maine – Michael Webster – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Massachusetts – Wayne Henry – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Minnesota – Ryan Sabinish – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Missouri – Roger Hoehn – U.S. Marine Corps – Vietnam
- Montana – Christopher Grudzinski – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Nebraska – Maurice Ramirez – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Nevada – Vincent Palmieri, Jr. – U.S. Marine Corps – Vietnam
- New Hampshire – Stewart Jackson – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- New Mexico – Tyson Walsh – U.S. Army – Operation Enduring Freedom
- New York – Geroge Bates – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- North Carolina – Robert Cloninger – U.S. Marine Corps – Vietnam
- North Dakota – Michael Goff – U.S. Air Force – Khobar Tower Bombing
- Ohio – Jerry Galant – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Oklahoma – John Clipp, Sr. – U.S. Army – Operation Enduring Freedom
- Oregon – Keith Wittnebel – U.S. Navy – Vietnam
- Pennsylvania – Karl Spidel – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Rhode Island – Albert Guarnieri, Jr. – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- South Carolina – Jackie Drakeford – U.S. Marine Corps – Vietnam
- South Dakota – Bill Flippo – U.S. Army – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Tennessee – Carl Parlatore – U.S. Air Force – Vietnam
- Texas – Ronny Cowart – U.S. Navy – Vietnam
- Virginia – Tony Nadal – U.S. Army – Vietnam
- Washington – Robert Olivarez – U.S. Marine Corps – Operation Iraqi Freedom
- West Virginia – James McCormick – U.S. Army – Persian Gulf War & Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Wisconsin – Timothy La Sage – U.S. Marine Corps – Operation Enduring Freedom & Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Wyoming – Charles Livermont – U.S. Army – Vietnam

Video footage from previous Patriot Project missions and moving interviews with previous Purple Heart honorees can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/@NatlPurpleHeartHonorMission>.

The National Purple Heart Honor Mission is an approved 501(c)3 national charitable organization that provides a range of tribute programming to honor our Purple Heart heroes and preserve their legacy.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HONOR MISSION

The National Purple Heart Honor Mission is an approved 501(c)3 non-profit organization, whose strategic objective is to pay tribute to our nation's combat wounded and killed in action through special outreach and educational programming. Through Purple Heart Patriot Project Missions, celebration of National Purple Heart Day, and other public events and programs, the Honor Mission engages people of all ages by telling the stories of our nation's heroes. Learn more and support their efforts at www.PurpleHeartMission.org.

Bob Driscoll

THE NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HONOR MISSION

+1 716-307-7406

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/865405229>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.