

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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August 7, 2006 – Purple Heart Day in Mount Vernon, Virginia

The Purple Heart Day Commemoration will take place on **Monday, August 7, 2006, at 12:00 p.m. by the Purple Heart Memorial**, the starting point of the nationwide Purple Heart Trail, in Mount Vernon, VA. The theme of this year's Commemoration is *"When a Soldier goes to war, the Family and Community go to war. When a Soldier is wounded, the Family and Community are also wounded."*

The Commemoration of the establishment of the Purple Heart Medal and its predecessor, the Badge of Military Merit, is hosted by Greater Washington Chapter 353 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the United States of America, Inc. (MOPH) and Greater Washington Unit 353 of the Ladies' Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the United States of America, Inc. (LAMOPH). General George Washington established the Badge of Military Merit in Newburgh, NY, on August 7, 1782. General Douglas MacArthur issued War Department General Orders on February 22, 1932, reviving and replacing it with the Purple Heart Medal. The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association that maintains the home, tomb, and estate of General and the first President of the United States George Washington is also a traditional host of this annual event.

The keynote speakers are U.S. Army Sergeant and Junior Vice Commander of MOPH Greater Washington Chapter 353 John P. Keith, Jr. and LAMOPH Region I President and Past President of Greater Washington Unit 353 Tatyana Cobb. **SGT John P. Keith, Jr.** was awarded the Purple Heart Medal for his wounds received in the Operation Iraqi Freedom. After losing one leg and almost one year of rehabilitation in Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in Washington, DC, he stays on active duty in the U.S. Army. SGT Keith serves and lives with his wife Pam, daughter Alyssa, and son Pearson in Fort Belvoir, VA.

Tatyana Cobb is a European combat-wounded Army Veteran. Many military service members wounded or injured in the Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF) return to the United States for medical treatment and rehabilitation. From April 2004, Tatyana and her husband Stephen Cobb, retired U.S. Army Colonel and Vietnam and Desert Storm Veteran, have been meeting them at least three times per week at Andrews Air Force Base (AFB) in Maryland. They also visit and support OIF/OEF patients at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in Washington, DC, National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda, MD, and VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Washington, DC. Whenever they meet or visit our wounded and injured troops, they welcome them home and say "Thank You" on behalf of all grateful Americans. They also share information about benefits and assistance available to them and their families from various sources.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is the only veterans service organization chartered by Congress exclusively for combat-wounded Veterans. The MOPH has 38,572 Life and Annual Members, 383 Associate Members, 45 Departments, and 486 Chapters throughout the United States. It represents veterans interests before Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other Government Agencies. MOPH National Service Program provides free of charge assistance to all Veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Together with the MOPH, over 5,000 Members of its Ladies' Auxiliary promote Americanism, sponsor patriotic activities, and contribute to the welfare of all Veterans, military service members, their families, and local communities. Additional information about the MOPH and LAMOPH is available at www.purpleheart.org.

For additional information about the Purple Heart Day Commemoration, please visit www.purpleheart353.com and www.purpleheartladiesaux353.org or contact:

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