



Some gave all, all gave some

Purple Heart

For Combat Wounded Veterans

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HONORING ALL WHO SERVE ...

... AND THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED



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The Cover
The cover is photo from a Marine Corps web site showing Pfc. Justin R. Carman, a 19-year old Marine rifleman from Tampa FL, watching LCpl. Alfred J. Lomando's back above a rooftop in Husayba during Operation Rubicon. The cover and this issue of *Purple Heart* are dedicated to all who serve and have served, along with the hope that a grateful Nation will continue to produce brave men and women who can be counted on to safeguard the legacy that has been handed down through generations.

Are you in the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor?



© Bettmann/CORBIS

If you are a Purple Heart recipient or you know someone whose memory should be preserved in the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, let us know. Consider sharing your story, whether on paper, through photographs and personal mementos, or videotaped interviews.

For more information contact:

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor
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Phone: (845) 561- 1765 • Fax: (845) 561- 6577
www.nysparks.com



Be a Part of History Again . . . At the Opening of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor
Friday, November 10, 2006

From “Welcome Home” To Recovery

By Cy Kammeier

“When a Soldier goes to war—the Family goes to war.

When a Soldier is wounded, the Family and Community are also wounded.”

—Michael Wagner, Ph.D., Director, Medical Family Assistance Center, Walter Reed Army Medical Center

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. A group of Ladies and Patriots from the Washington, DC Metro area has been meeting them at least three times per week at Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews Air Force Base (AFB) in Maryland. They have also been visiting and supporting 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 warriors, 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.

Operation “Welcome Home,” a joint special program of the MOPH Greater Washington Chapter 353 and LAMOPH Greater Washington Unit 353, started in April 2004. In part, it was prompted by a phone call from the MOPH Past National Commander Al Silvano when he asked if Patriots and Ladies could visit a new Purple Heart recipient recovering at Walter Reed. Operation “Welcome Home” team consists of Steve Cobb, Ed Schnug, Gene Forster, Chris Harl (deceased on 08/20/06), Joe Zimmer, Al Ortiz (Chapter 1775, VA), Ransom Jordan (Chapter 2222, MD), Tanya Cobb, Val Ortiz, Sylvia Harl, Harriet Epstein, and Barbara Murphy. As of September 30, 2006, they have greeted and provided im-



MOPH Department of Virginia Commander and Past Ch.#353 Commander Steve Cobb greets and welcomes home another combat-wounded troop returning from the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) in Iraq and Afghanistan. The troop is not identified for his privacy and security protection. All returning troops are thanked for their service, welcomed home, and given written information on their benefits and how to get help when needed.

Photo Maj J. Eric Bermudez, Flight Surgeon, 89th Aeromedical Staging Flight (ASF), Andrews AFB

mediate and/or follow-up assistance to over **14,820** Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard military service members as well as their immediate families. Our troops and their loved ones can count on their support until everybody comes home and completely adjusts to non-combat life.

In addition to being an integral part of every hospital visit, Tanya and Steve Cobb have been meeting every flight with wounded and injured OIF/OEF warriors arriving at Andrews AFB at all hours of the day and night. They have been receiving an average of 20 to 30 phone calls per week, which come in at all hours, and numerous email messages with questions and requests for assistance.

Son of Barbara Murphy, Michael, lost one leg as a result of his wounds received in Afghanistan. Barbara and her fellow members of the Ashburn Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department 6 organized a drop-off point for monetary and in-kind donations for returning wounded and injured warriors. Thanks to the outstanding response from Ashburn and Loudoun County communities, Barbara’s SUV has been very tightly packed every time she delivers all donated items to Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval hospitals.

Chris Harl did not have a warm and grateful reception when he returned from the war in Vietnam. He wanted no other generation of Veterans to return home without the proper welcome and appreciation for their service and sacrifice. Chris knew how much the smallest thing from home meant for our deployed troops. He contacted his nearby Krispy Kreme Doughnuts store in Alexandria, VA, and organized a weekly donation of these very homelike treats for wounded and injured warriors arriving to Andrews AFB and Bethesda Naval hospital.

Supporting our returning wounded and injured OIF/OEF warriors and their families have been an emotional and mutually rewarding experience. During “Welcome Home” visits to Bethesda Naval hospital, Joe Zimmer always shares a story about his long, very difficult, yet successful recovery from wounds received near the end of World War II. Ed Schnug encourages wounded Marines to “take it one day at a time” and “carry on”. A retired Marine Raider, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veteran, who was

(Continued on page 14.)



OIF Veteran John Keith, Jr., and Vietnam Veteran Steve Cobb enjoy camaraderie after the Purple Heart Stamp Dedication Ceremony on May 26, 2006.

Photo by Tanya Cobb, LAMOPH Unit 353

wounded in combat three times, he continues to serve as a Senior U.S. Marshall. For many wounded and injured Marines, Joe and Ed provide a living proof that life after the Purple Heart can be good.

Tanya and Steve Cobb often receive phone calls in the middle of the night. Sometimes, it is a Soldier or Marine who is dealing with an unbearable pain, a survivor's guilt, or the terrible memories he or she brought home from the war. Another time, it is a spouse or a parent who would like to ease the suffering of their loved one but does not know what to do. Both



Patriot Steve Cobb presents the MOPH Distinguished Service Award to Master Sergeant Bobby Anderson, Team NCO, U.S. Army Medical Evacuation to CONUS Hospital, Military District of Washington, for his outstanding care of returning combat-wounded and injured troops. MSG Anderson is a Veteran of the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

Photo by Tanya Cobb, LAMOPH



Tanya and Steve understand their feelings. They are always ready to answer the call, listen, and provide moral support and practical advice.

For almost a year, Tanya and Steve supported U.S. Army Sergeant Shon Holler wounded in Afghanistan during his recovery at Walter Reed. He sent them a post card saying, "I'm OK," and "Thanks for every thing"—when he returned to combat in Afghanistan. It is easy to imagine their joy when Shon came back home with his unit, this time unharmed, just in time for his birthday.

Tanya and Steve met U.S. Army Sergeant John Keith Jr., his wife Pam, daughter Alyssa, and son Pearson, at a complimentary Friday night dinner in downtown Washington, DC, for OIF/OEF patients from Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval hospitals and their families. An insurgent missile hit John's Humvee on November 9, 2004. While all four soldiers in the vehicle survived, John was the most seriously wounded. The Friday night dinner was the first night out of the hospital for John and his family after his mangled leg was amputated at Walter Reed. The emotional bond between the Keith and Cobb families was instant.

During his yearlong recovery at Walter Reed, John joined the MOPH and Greater Washington Chapter 353. While speaking at the recent Purple Heart Day ceremony in Mount Vernon, VA, John said, "It is absolutely true that everyone is wounded when a soldier is wounded. The community is a family whether that be your military community, your family, or whatever. The Order of the Purple Heart is my new family. We all have to rely on one another." Despite his lifetime disabilities, Sgt.



Department of Virginia Commander Steve Cobb and Past Region I President Tanya Cobb presented the MOPH Distinguished Service Award and LAMOPH Certificate of Recognition to Chief Warrant Officer Marc Creak (center) of the Marine Liaison Office. For over two years, CWO Creak has been meeting every flight with returning wounded and injured OIF/OEF troops at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland and taking care of them at the Aeromedical Staging Flight.

Photo by USMC Liaison Office, 79th Aeromedical Staging Flight (ASF), Andrews AFB, MD

Keith continues to serve on active duty in the U.S. Army. John has not missed a Viola Drive or a Chapter meeting, even a few days after yet another surgery. In late 2005, Chapter 353 Patriots paid for John's Life Membership in the MOPH, which he earned together with their appreciation. Earlier this year, they unanimously elected John as the Junior Vice Commander of the Chapter.

Our wounded and injured OIF/OEF warriors always need some basic but essential supplies. Some of them return with nothing more than hospital clothes or military uniform they wear. Operation "Welcome Home" team maintains a Wish List that has been reviewed and approved by medical staff. Breakaway/snap-sided pants, sweat suit sets, colored T-shirts and boxer shorts, flip-flops, nonperishable snacks, and prepaid phone cards with 60 or more minutes are always among the most needed items. The latest copy of the Wish List is available in several formats at the Operation "Welcome Home" website at <http://welcomehome.purpleheart353.com>. ☆