



THE PURPLE HEARTBEAT
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S CALL . . .

Dear Patriots,

Patriot of the Year. One of the most important events at a Region Convention is honoring the MOPH Patriot of the Year. I received six nominations and sent the ballots to the Selection Committee. The Committee will return the ballots to me by 20 July, and I will provide the results at the National Convention Banquet Saturday night.

Life Member Rebates. Chapters and Departments need to file the following four reports to receive rebate checks: Election, Finance, IRS 990 and Life Member Verification. The first three should already be filed and the Verification Report is due October 1st. All four reports = MONEY!!!

Convention Colors. There's a suggested change to the Daily Colors - Tue/Purple, Wed/White, Thu/Purple or Black, Fri/Red, and Sat/Patriot's choice.

Vehicle Clearance. Height of your vehicle must be less than 5 ft. 9 in to use the Hotel's covered facilities. For Capital City Plaza parking, just around the corner from the Hotel, clearance is 7 ft. Cost for both locations is \$10.00 per night. Show your MOPH Convention identification at Plaza parking to get that rate.

Individual Printing Needs. If you need something printed or copied while at the Convention, please use the Hotel's Business Center located beside the coffee shop. MOPH HQ Office is dedicated to only Convention administrative support.

HQ will be shorthanded during the period of August 5-15 due to the Convention; but there will be enough staff on duty to handle all routine functions.

HQ Supply/Americanism Activities. Will be suspended between July 15 and September 1.

Honor Flight. The national program that takes WWII veterans on an all expense paid trip to Washington DC to visit the many veteran related memorials, has now started including ALL Purple Heart recipients as well, regardless of the war in which they served. I recommend that you check with your local organization or visit the national website at http://www.honorflight.org/.

As always, I look forward to meeting as many of my fellow Patriots as possible on and off the floor. I carry my notebook and want to hear comments on any aspect of MOPH operations - your observations will be of high value because they come from different vantage points across our operational spectrum. If you have something to say, please seek me out.

Yours in Patriotism,
Jack Leonard



THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH EXCEPT AUGUST. ALL ADJUTANTS AND COMMANDERS RECEIVE A COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER. ADJUTANTS RECEIVE THE SPECIFIC CHAPTER/DEPARTMENT INFORMATION.

ALSO ENCLOSED:

- CHAPTERS: June 2011 Roster of Monthly Changes; Full Roster
DEPARTMENTS: June 2011 Membership Status Report & Chapters Roster of Monthly Changes; Full Roster

Inside this issue:

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STILL WAITING FOR HIS MEDAL OF HONOR

Sergeant Henry Johnson was born in Alexandria VA in 1897, moving to Albany NY in his teens where he worked as a redcap porter at the Albany Union Station on Broadway before enlisting in the Army in 1917. He was assigned to the 369th Infantry Division, part of the 15th New York Infantry, an all black National Guard unit, known as *The Harlem Hell Fighters*. The 369th was lent to the 4th French Army by General Pershing and thus was under French command during the war.



On May 14, 1918, while standing guard at an encampment near the Argonne Forest, Privates Johnson and Needham Roberts, suddenly were attacked by an entire platoon of German infantry (25 to 30 men). Johnson was hit with a grenade and shot in the chest, while Roberts was shot twice and knocked to the ground. The Germans rushed in and grabbed Roberts and hauled him off as a prisoner. Johnson



then went after the Germans, firing his Lebel* rifle until it jammed, and then using it to club the enemy until it broke in half. He managed to grab a grenade from one of the Germans, using it to kill several more Germans. He then pulled his bolo knife, slashing at Robert's captors, and pulled the disabled Roberts back to their post, still fighting Germans along the way. He killed four and wounded at least twenty Germans during the battle, suffering over twenty gunshot wounds himself. When French troops arrived a few hours later, they found dead and dying Germans scattered around the outpost. Johnson had repelled the Germans, rescued a comrade from capture, and saved the lives of other soldiers in the encampment. His fellow soldiers nicknamed him "Black Death."



Promoted to Sergeant before returning home, Johnson's heroics were recognized by the French who awarded him the Coix de Guerre, with gold palm, France's highest honor (Johnson was the first American soldier to receive it). New York gave him a ticker tape parade, and later President Theodore Roosevelt named Johnson as "one of the five bravest men who fought in WW I." Sadly, Johnson died in Lenox Illinois at the Veterans Hospital on July 5, 1929, penniless, estranged from his wife and family, and without official recognition from the US government at that time. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.



However, interest in recognizing Johnson's bravery grew during the 1970's and 1980's. In November 1991, a monument was erected in Albany NY's Washington Park in his honor. In June 1996, he was posthumously awarded the **Purple Heart** by President Clinton. And in 2003, Johnson posthumously received the Distinguished Service Cross, the Army's second highest award. Work continues to upgrade his DSC to the Medal of Honor. A recently unearthed memorandum, signed by General Pershing, detailed Johnson's heroics and included these words: "one resorting to use of the bolo knife after rifle jammed and further fighting with bayonet and butt became impossible." (From various internet sources] *See page 3 for details on the Lebel Rifle.

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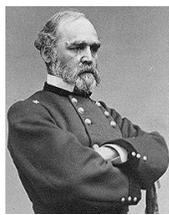
LEBEL MODEL 1886 RIFLE

This was the rifle carried by Sergeant Johnson during his tour; it was the basic weapon of the French infantry during WW I and was issued to all American soldiers assigned to the French—probably to ensure logistic support. It is a bolt action repeating 8mm rifle that entered service in April 1887, capable of holding eight rounds in its fore stock tube magazine plus one round in the transporter. The Lebel rifle had the distinction of being the first military rifle to use smokeless powder ammunition. It also used a new small bore 8mm full metal jacket bullet. 2,880,000 Lebel rifles were produced between 1887 and 1920.



CIVIL WAR 150—GIFT IN SAVANNAH

On December 21, 1864, as William Tecumseh Sherman's Army came to the end of its devastating March to the Sea, his soldiers found a gift awaiting them in Savannah, GA. A new wardrobe. A flotilla of transport ships in the harbor was crammed with comforts for the more than 62,000 weary men: tens of thousands of sturdy boots and shoes, fresh shirts, socks, underwear and trousers, camp kettles and pans, axes and spades, and even needles and thread. So complete was the Union stockpile—at a time when many hungry Confederate soldiers went barefoot and wore rags—it might as well have been heralded by a choir of Northern angels. One Washington man deserved the lion's share of credit, a little known organizational genius named Montgomery Cunningham Meigs.



At the war's outset three years earlier, chaos and corruption dominated the mobilization of the Northern Army. Speculators sold the government lame horses and leaky boots. Textile makers peddled material for uniforms called "shoddy," redefining the meaning "poorly made." It literally fell off soldiers in the field. A professional soldier in the Army Corps of Engineers, Meigs was named Quartermaster General and given responsibility for outfitting the Union Army, which would grow in one year from 17,000 to 500,000.

Meigs, who became one of Lincoln's trusted wartime advisors, also designed and built a massive aqueduct that still carries nearly 100 million gallons of water each day for use in Washington and Northern Virginia, one of the greatest engineering feats of the day.

VA ISSUES FIRST PAYMENTS TO CAREGIVERS

VA will send out more than \$430,000 in stipend payments to nearly 200 Family Caregivers of Veterans in July. These Caregivers are the first to complete their Caregiver training under the program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. The first payments to 96 recipients was made July 5. Caregivers will receive an average of \$1,500 in monthly payments. Initial payments will average \$2,500 because the first checks are retroactive to the date of application. The amount of the stipend is based on the condition of the veteran and the amount of care required as well as the geographic location where the veteran resides. Caregiver support coordinators are stationed at every VA Medical Center. For more details on the program and applications, go to www.caregiver.va.gov. There's also a National Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274.



SINGLE EXAMS DETERMINE VA RATINGS

After three years of testing, VA and the Pentagon implemented a streamlined evaluation process to determine disability ratings. Wounded troops will now receive a single set of disability exams and receive a disability rating based on VA standards.

Service members referred for medical evaluation boards after June 30 will go through a new Disability Evaluation System that integrates the processes of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs (VA).



The Integrated Disability Evaluation System, or IDES, provides a more seamless transition to Veteran disability benefits with fewer hurdles, faster results and more consistent ratings between Defense and VA than the previous system.

Under the previous system, service members completed the military Disability Evaluation System in an average of 10 months. This included a set of medical examinations by military physicians, a series of boards to determine if the member was still able to serve, and if not, assignment of a disability rating used by the Defense Department to calculate disability compensation. Service members could not begin to apply for disability compensation and benefits from VA until after receiving a discharge date from their service.

It was then up to the Veteran to complete an application to VA and provide all required documentation. If any documents were missing, it was the Veteran's responsibility to locate them. Then, the Veteran had to complete another set of medical exams in accordance with standards set by VA and wait for a panel at VA to provide another disability rating, this one used to calculate Veterans disability compensation and benefits. This second process took on average another eight months during which benefits were gapped.

Under the new IDES, there is only one set of medical exams, performed to the standards of VA, which provides all the information needed by both departments. A panel at VA issues disability ratings that will immediately be used once the service member is no longer active duty. The integrated process still takes just over eight months, but now when the service member is finished with the military process, a disability claim is already filed with VA so that Veteran disability compensation and benefit can arrive after one month in Veteran status. That is the earliest allowable under current law.

In designing the IDES, the two departments examined the recommendations of several commissions and task forces established to improve the delivery of benefits to wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans. The resulting integrated system was first introduced as a pilot program at three military treatment facilities in November 2007. It was further tested and improved as the pilot program expanded to 24 additional locations over two years, bringing the integrated system to 47 percent of service members referred for disability evaluation.

In thousands of surveys, service members and their families in the pilot program consistently reported higher average satisfaction with fairness, customer service, and the overall IDES experience than did participants in the legacy system.

Based on the proven performance of the pilot, the departments plan to extend these advantages to all remaining service members by the end of September 2011. By early March, more than 19,000 troops had gone through the IDES process.

[Source: VA]

PAUL J. WIEDORFER **MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT AND MOPH MEMBER**

Patriot Wiedorfer, 89, as an Army Private on Christmas Day 1944, charged two German machine gun nests and singlehandedly saved his platoon mates caught in an ambush, an act for which he received the Medal of Honor. He died May 25, 2011 at the VA Medical Center in Baltimore from congestive heart failure. He was a member of Maryland Chapter 0122.



He was 23 when his unit, part of General Patton's Third Army, was sent to rescue American troops trapped in Bastogne, Belgium, during the first days of the Battle of the Bulge. On Christmas Day, 1944, he and his platoon were advancing across a clearing in the snow draped forest near Chaumont, Belgium. It was about noon on a cloudless cold day when two camouflaged machine guns erupted with fire. Wiedorfer's official Medal of

Honor citation reads:

He alone made it possible for his company to advance until its objective was seized. Company G had cleared a wooded area of snipers, and 1 platoon was advancing across an open clearing toward another wood when it was met by heavy machinegun fire from 2 German positions dug in at the edge of the second wood. These positions were flanked by enemy riflemen. The platoon took cover behind a small ridge approximately 40 yards from the enemy position. There was no other available protection and the entire platoon was pinned down by the German fire. It was about noon and the day was clear, but the terrain extremely difficult due to a 3-inch snowfall the night before over ice-covered ground. Pvt. Wiedorfer, realizing that the platoon advance could not continue until the 2 enemy machinegun nests were destroyed, voluntarily charged alone across the slippery open ground with no protecting cover of any kind. Running in a crouched position, under a hail of enemy fire, he slipped and fell in the snow, but quickly rose and continued forward with the enemy concentrating automatic and small-arms fire on him as he advanced. Miraculously escaping injury, Pvt. Wiedorfer reached a point some 10 yards from the first machinegun emplacement and hurled a handgrenade into it. With his rifle he killed the remaining Germans, and, without hesitation, wheeled to the right and attacked the second emplacement. One of the enemy was wounded by his fire and the other 6 immediately surrendered. This heroic action by 1 man enabled the platoon to advance from behind its protecting ridge and continue successfully to reach its objective. A few minutes later, when both the platoon leader and the platoon sergeant were wounded, Pvt. Wiedorfer assumed command of the platoon, leading it forward with inspired energy until the mission was accomplished.

Two months later, crossing the Saar River in Germany, Patriot Wiedorfer's unit came under mortar fire and he was struck by shrapnel and the blast shattered his leg and injured his hand.

After the war, he spent three years in and out of hospitals recovering from his wounds. Patriot Wiedorfer left the Army in 1947 as a Master Sergeant and was a power station operator with Baltimore Gas and Electric when he retired in 1981 after 40 years of service. Commenting on his award, he once said "To be perfectly honest, I wasn't really sure what the hell the Medal of Honor was, because all I was, was some dogface guy in the infantry." In addition to his Medal of Honor, he also had a

Bronze Star and two awards of the Purple Heart. As he aged, Weidorfer said he prayed for the day there would be no living recipients of the Medal of Honor. "Because it will mean that we have learned to live in peace."



[Source: excerpts from "MD's Last Surviving Medal of Honor Recipient" by T. Rees Shapiro, [Washington Post](#), May 26, 2011 and Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia]

MOPH CALENDAR

COMBAT-WOUNDED VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

5413-B BACKLICK ROAD
SPRINGFIELD, VA 22151

Phone: 703-642-5360
Fax: 703-642-2054
E-mail: info@purpleheart.org

AUGUST 2011

- 01..... MAGAZINE DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER ISSUE
- 07..... PURPLE HEART DAY
- 09-13..... NATIONAL CONVENTION, SAINT PAUL MN

SEPTEMBER 2011

- 05..... LABOR DAY - HQ CLOSED
- 09..... NURSES MEMORIAL & RECEPTION, ARLINGTON NATL CEMETERY
- 09-10..... NATIONAL COMMANDER'S LEADERSHIP, ALEXANDRIA, VA
- 11..... PATRIOT DAY
- 19-23..... BASIC NSO TRAINING ORLANDO FL

OCTOBER 2011

- 01..... MAGAZINE DEADLINE FOR NOV/DEC ISSUE
- 10..... COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED - HQ CLOSED
- 19..... INVESTMENT COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL
- 24..... UNITED NATIONS DAY

NOVEMBER 2011

- 08..... ELECTION DAY
- 10..... MARINE CORPS 236TH BIRTHDAY
- 11..... VETERANS DAY - HQ CLOSED
- 24-25..... THANKSGIVING - HQ CLOSED

DECEMBER 2011

- 01..... MAGAZINE DEADLINE FOR JAN/FEB ISSUE
- 07..... PEARL HARBOR DAY
- 20..... HANUKKAH BEGINS
- 25-26..... CHRISTMAS - HQ CLOSED

JANUARY 2012

- 01..... HAPPY NEW YEAR
- 02..... HQ CLOSED
- 16..... MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY - HQ CLOSED
- 25..... INVESTMENT COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 2012

- 01..... MAGAZINE DEADLINE FOR MAR/APR ISSUE
- 12..... LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY
- 20..... PRESIDENT'S DAY - HQ CLOSED
- 22..... WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY
- 24..... FLAG DAY

MARCH 2012

- 15-23..... ANNUAL NSO TRAINING, ORLANDO FL
- TBD..... SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
- TBD..... NFC

2012 NATIONAL CONVENTION, SCOTTSDALE AZ..... AUGUST 7-11, 2012
2013 NATIONAL CONVENTION, ROGERS, AR..... AUGUST 6-10, 2013

WAR BIRDS



North American B-25 Mitchell was a twin-engine medium bomber. It was used by many Allied air forces, in every theater of WW II, as well as many other air forces after the war ended, and saw service across four decades. It was named in honor of General Billy Mitchell, a pioneer of US military aviation. By the end of its production, over 10,000 B-25s of various models were built. The majority of the aircraft were used in the Pacific, not in its traditional bombing mode, but as ground attack aircraft, strafing and skip-bombing. The Navy got some of the output and used the B-25 for anti-shiping attacks. In 1940, a B-25 hit NYC's Empire State Building in dense fog, killing 14 people, including the plane's crew. And it really became famous in Doolittle's December 1942 raid against Tokyo with B-25s launched from the aircraft carrier **USS HORNET**.