

# *Purple Heart Statistics*

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Patriots: I am often asked how many Purple Heart recipients there are, and how many are members of the MOPH. Because there is so much interest by the public and membership alike, I thought I would share the numbers I have with you for your use in your own discussions and presentations.

YIP – John Bircher

1. How many Purple Heart recipients are members of the MOPH?

MOPH Statistics:

World War II Members: 10,973

Korean War Members: 4,886

Vietnam Members: 23,987

War on Terrorism: 4,406

Female Members (Incl Associate); 92

TOTAL: 44,344

2. How many servicemen and servicewomen have received the Purple Heart Medal?

History reveals that 250,000 doughboys were eligible for the Purple Heart decoration as a result of Gen. MacArthur's decision to create the Purple Heart medal in 1932 and allow retroactive awards.

World War II saw close to 300,000 combat deaths and 650,000 military members wounded in action—nearly one million recipients of the Purple Heart. Next, the Korean War resulted in nearly 137,000 Purple Hearts awarded (33,600 killed in action and 103,000 wounded in action).

With the advent of the Vietnam War, again Purple Heart medals were awarded to American servicemembers who died or were wounded in battle. Over 200,000 Purple Hearts were given to military members or their next of kin (47,000 combat deaths, 153,000 wounded in action).

Since the Persian Gulf War, followed by the global war on terrorism, almost 50,000 Purple Heart medals have been awarded to servicemembers. Of these, over 35,400 went to military members or their next of kin who were wounded or killed in Iraq, and another 12,500 in Afghanistan.

It is difficult to fathom that since Gen. George Washington established the Purple Heart decoration on August 7, 1782, over 1.6 million Purple Heart medals have been awarded to members of the United States military.

Today we have more than 500,000 living veterans who are Purple Heart recipients.

War I: 257,404<sup>1</sup>

War II: 962,403

Korea: 137,023

Vietnam: 200,737

Persian Gulf: 615

Afghanistan: 12,534 \*

Iraq: 35,411 \*

New Dawn: 169 \*

War on Terrorism Sub-Total: 48,729

Total Estimated: 1,606,296

NOTE<sup>1</sup>: Estimates only. Battlefield awards and incomplete records: 1974 fire in St. Louis repository. \* War on Terrorism statistics as of May 13, 2011.

**Note: Upon not seeing a Beirut Lebanon Statistic, National's J. Bircher was contacted and he quickly sent us this to help clarify the numbers. Thanks, we Beirut Veterans appreciate it!**

Although listed in a separate table, it was not clear whether these numbers were included in one of the major categories. John

**Table 2. Worldwide U.S. Active Duty Military Deaths-Selected Military Operations Military Operation/Incident Casualty**

Lebanon Peacekeeping, August 25, 1982 - February 26, 1984: Hostile 256

Urgent Fury, Grenada, 1983: Hostile 18

Just Cause, Panama, 1989: Hostile 23