

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 26, 2006

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Stamp News Release
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**PURPLE HEART POSTAGE STAMP HONORS
SACRIFICES OF THOSE WHO SERVED**

ARLINGTON, VA — Tribute was paid today to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who courageously defend our country. The U.S. Postal Service and the Department of Veteran Affairs were joined by the Military Order of the Purple Heart in a ceremony rededicating the Purple Heart Definitive stamp.

The Purple Heart stamp was first issued on May 30, 2003, at Mount Vernon, Virginia. At a time when our military service members continue to serve in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is appropriate that the Purple Heart stamp be reissued at the new First-Class 39-cent rate.

“Today, we rededicate the Purple Heart stamp for every member of our armed forces who courageously goes in harm’s way to defend us all. And tomorrow we invite millions of Americans to join us by placing these stamps on their cards and letters,” said James C. Miller III, Chairman of the U.S. Postal Service’s presidentially appointed Board of Governors, who was joined by Secretary of Veteran Affairs R. James Nicholson in the stamp dedication.



The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to members of the U.S. military who have been wounded in combat or to the next of kin of those killed in action.

According to the Military Order of the Purple Heart, an organization for combat-wounded veterans, the medal is “the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first award made available to the common soldier.”

Nearly 100 Purple Heart recipients were invited by the Military Order of the Purple Heart to sit in a special VIP section so they can view the ceremony unobstructed. As part of the ceremony, Purple Heart Medals were awarded to two wounded OIF/EOF combat veterans, Army Specialist Michael Hilliard and Army Specialist Ian Wagner.

“The observance of VA’s 75th anniversary has involved many efforts to draw attention to the service of our veterans to our country. This stamp not only honors our combat-wounded veterans, but does so in a manner that lets all Americans reflect on their sacrifice. VA is proud to join the United States Postal Service and the Military Order of the Purple Heart in the re-issuance of the Purple Heart stamp,” Secretary Nicholson said.

The stamp image features a photograph by Ira Wexler of one of two Purple Hearts awarded to James Loftus Fowler of Alexandria, Virginia. Fowler was a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Marines and was serving as battalion commander of the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines, when he received this Purple Heart in 1968 following action close to the Ben Hai River on the border between North and South Vietnam.

The 39-cent Purple Heart stamp goes on sale nationally Saturday, May 27.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at The Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

PURPLE HEART DEFINITIVE STAMP
POSTMASTER
SPECIAL CANCELLATIONS
1435 N QUINCY STREET
ARLINGTON, VA 22210-9700

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by June 25, 2006.

How to Order First Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
US POSTAL SERVICE
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are five philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- ~~///~~ Item 189020, Block of four, \$1.56
- ~~///~~ Item 189030, Block of ten, \$3.90
- ~~///~~ Item 18940, Pane of 20, \$7.80
- ~~///~~ Item 103961, First Day Cover, \$0.77
- ~~///~~ Item 103993, Keepsake, \$8.57

These products will be available while supplies last at postal stores, online at www.usps.com, and by telephone at 800-STAMP-24.

Since 1775, the United States Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, have connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency that visits more than 144 million homes and businesses every day, the Postal Service is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. It receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$70 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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