



**Jack Potter, Postmaster General  
United States Postal Service  
Purple Heart FDOI  
May 30, 2003**

---

**It's an honor to be here at Mt. Vernon for this special event. As you've heard from Mrs. Lee, we are here at George Washington's beautiful home, to do far more than simply dedicate a new postage stamp.**

**But, it was a long and hard road to today's ceremony at Mount Vernon.**

**That path was first cleared by the thousands upon thousands of brave men and women who have risked all in defense of a simple, revolutionary and noble proposition. They believed that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain Unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.**

**And they were willing to back up that belief with their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.**

**For many of them, the cost was their lives. For many others, terrible injuries. And for all, the extreme hardship of serving in grueling combat with the Continental army.**

**They served their nation and they served their leader, General George Washington, faithfully.**

**Just as faithfully, General Washington recognized their sacrifice and created the Purple Heart as a badge of honor for them in 1781. At the time, he said that “the road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is open to all.” But a free country does not come without cost.**

**Generation after generation, the citizens of this great nation understood and heeded Washington’s challenge.**

**They served. They sacrificed. And, because of them, that revolutionary idea that was voiced two centuries ago has become the common and defining bond of the millions upon millions of people who today call themselves “Americans.”**

**Now, we have the chance to honor all the members of our nation’s Armed Forces who have demonstrated what General Washington called “singularly meritorious action...”.**

**In fact, as Angelo mentioned, we have a number of Postal Service employees here today whose actions have earned them the Purple Heart.**

**I would like to ask them and all other Purple Heart recipients here today to please stand.**

**Would all the other veterans who served our nation please stand as well.**

**To each and every one of you – and all veterans around the country – you have earned our nation’s eternal gratitude for your service to America!**

**Even though they are not here, I want to recognize the families of three of our employees who lost sons during the recent war in Iraq.**

**Mr. Leo Boule is a distribution clerk in the Lowell, Massachusetts, Post Office. He and his wife Susan lost their son, Mathew, who was a crew chief aboard a Black Hawk helicopter that went down in Iraq.**

**Ms. Jean Prewitt is a Human Resources Specialist in Birmingham, Alabama. Her son, Army Private Kelley Prewitt, was a tank crewman who was killed in action south of Baghdad.**

**Mr. Kevin Addison, an Atlanta, Georgia, City Carrier, lost his son, Army Specialist Jamaal Addison, who was killed in an ambush of his unit in Iraq.**

**Let's pause for a moment to send our thoughts and prayers to the families of these patriots and all the families throughout the country who lost loved ones in defense of freedom.**

**The cost of liberty can be high. Only 87 years after Washington’s army fought to create our new nation, Abraham Lincoln looked out over the terrible battlefield at Gettysburg, and reflected on the cost...**

**"It is for the living," he said, "...to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they, who fought here, have thus far so nobly advanced ... the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here, so highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain..."**

**It is our hope, that with the issuance of this stamp, the Postal Service, along with the rest of our nation, can pay tribute to those whose sacrifices have given all of us a country that is truly the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.'**

**So, I'm particularly humbled and honored to be here, at such a historic spot, representing the United States Postal Service at today's dedication.**

**Through our postage stamps, we have a long tradition of honoring and depicting the people, events, and symbols in our history that have made this nation great.**

**Our stamps are also a way to remind Americans of the special people, places and events that have defined our country for more than 200 years.**

**That is why this new Purple Heart stamp is so important. It will travel on letters and packages to households throughout America and around the world.**

**It is this stamp, and many others, that appear on hundreds of millions of pieces of mail every day. They are the foundation of our mission – to provide universal mail service at affordable prices.**

**Our stamp image captures the essence of that badge of merit through a photograph by Ira Wexler of a Purple Heart awarded to local hero James Loftus Fowler, from right down the road in Alexandria, Virginia.**

**Fowler was a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Marines and he received this Purple Heart – one of two he received – in 1968 in Vietnam.**

**So, in this small way, through this postage stamp, we have created a lasting tribute to the many brave members of the Armed Forces who have served our country, and we are proud to share their legacy with America and the world as we deliver our nation’s mail.**

**As of today, 120 million Purple Heart stamps are available nationwide. I encourage you to use them often, and when you do, remember Washington’s call to the “road to glory” and the brave sacrifices and commitment to “a free country, open to all” that the Purple Heart represents.**

**Now, I’d like to ask the platform guests to join me in officially dedicating the Purple Heart stamp.**

**– END –**