



Illinois' Department of Veterans' Affairs hosts Purple Heart Day ceremony

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SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) honored approximately 5,000 Illinois heroes who've received a Purple Heart for their service to the country.

“Our Purple Heart recipients are true heroes whose courage cannot be matched,” said Governor Bruce Rauner. “They are the epitome of bravery and we are stronger because of their service. We owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.”

IDVA Director Stephen Curda, Ph.D. recognized the Purple Heart recipients during a ceremony in the Illinois State Capitol rotunda in Springfield today, and paid a special tribute to those who lost their lives on the battlefields.

“There is no greater honor than to recognize the men and women who have been killed or wounded while protecting our freedom,” said IDVA Director Stephen Curda, Ph.D. “We can stand proud because of the sacrifices they made. We honor them today and every day.”

The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after April 5, 1917, has been wounded or killed.

Specific examples of services which warrant the Purple Heart include any action against an enemy of the United States; any action with an opposing armed force of a foreign country in which the Armed Forces of the United States are or have been engaged; while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party; as a result of an act of any such enemy of opposing armed forces; or as the result of an act of any hostile foreign force according to US Army regulations.

The Purple Heart differs from most other decorations in that an individual is not "recommended" for the decoration; rather he or she is entitled to it upon meeting specific criteria. A Purple Heart is awarded for the first wound suffered under conditions indicated above, but for each subsequent award an oak leaf cluster or 5/16-inch star is worn in lieu of another medal.

In honor and tribute to all Purple Heart Recipients, the Capitol Grounds in Springfield will be lit in purple the night of August 7, 2018.

Members of the Military Order Purple Heart Hayes-Krell Chapter #159 participated in the Capitol rotunda ceremony and presented the IDVA with a Purple Heart Service Flag.

ABOUT ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, a state agency is dedicated to empowering veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, to thrive. We do this by helping veterans navigate the complex veteran support system and assisting them in obtaining benefits; by providing long term health care for eligible veterans at our four Veterans' Homes; and by working with other government agencies and non-profits to help veterans address education, mental health, housing, employment, and other challenges.