

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System  
Military Order of the Purple Heart  
7180 Highland Drive 118-VH  
Building 1, Room 6023W  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Combat  
Wounded  
Veterans



## Military Order of the Purple Heart GREATER PITTSBURGH CHAPTER 455



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# PURPLE HEART NEWSLETTER

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### Vet, Families of KIA Torn Over Flag Proposal



The simple banner is designed to honor those who served and died in the military. But a national campaign to add the red-and-white “Honor and Remember” flag to official U.S. flag displays on military holidays is creating painful divisions among veterans and the relatives of loved ones killed in action.

For lawmakers nationwide, the “Honor and Remember” debate forces an uncomfortable question: Who can say what should be done to honor people who died for the country?

The banner a red-and-white background with a star, an eternal flame and the words “HONOR AND REMEMBER” was conceived by a Virginia man, George Lutz, who lost his son in Iraq in 2005.

Lutz has visited all 50 states to promote its display beneath the American flag and the POW/MIA flag adopted by Congress in 1989. Delaware, North Carolina and Virginia have adopted the banner, and federal legislation to do so is pending  
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**MAJOR CHAINS OFFERING MILITARY DISCOUNTS**

The following businesses are known for offering discounts, but not all locations may participate:

**APPAREL**

- \* Aeropostale
- \* The Buckle
- \* Dress Barn
- \* The Finish Line
- \* FootAction
- \* Footlocker
- \* Gadzooks
- \* Goody's
- \* Hot Topic
- \* Jos. A. Bank
- \* Jockey
- \* Kohl's
- \* New York & Company
- \* Nike
- \* Pac Sun
- \* Timberland Outlets (active duty only)

**AUTO**

- \* Auto Zone
- \* Big 10 Tires
- \* Checker Auto Parts
- \* Kragen Auto Parts
- \* NAPA Auto Parts
- \* O'Reilly Auto Parts

**SERVICES**

- \* AT&T
- \* Geico
- \* Jiffy Lube
- \* Meineke
- \* Sears Portrait Studio

**RESTAURANTS**

- \* Applebee's
- \* Arby's
- \* A & W
- \* Burger King
- \* Captain D's
- \* Chick-Fil-A
- \* Ci-Ci's
- \* Denny's
- \* Dunkin Donuts
- \* Golden Corral
- \* IHOP
- \* Java Café
- \* KFC
- \* Long John Silvers
- \* McDonald's
- \* Pizza Hut
- \* Red Robin
- \* Shoney's
- \* Sizzler
- \* Taco Bell
- \* Texas Roadhouse
- \* Wendy's
- \* Whataburger

**CELL PHONE DISCOUNTS**

- \* Alltel-Call 1-800-ALL TEL 1
- \* Cingular-Call 1-866-246-4852
- \* Nextel-Call 1-800-639-6111
- \* Sprint-Call 1-888-703-9514
- \* T-Mobile-New customers should call 1-866-646-4688  
Current customers should go to [www.tmobile.com/corpdiscout](http://www.tmobile.com/corpdiscout).
- \* Verizon-Call 1-800-922-0204

**TRAVEL & LEISURE**

- \* Amtrak
- \* Beaches Family Resorts
- \* Blockbuster
- \* Camp Jellystone
- \* Greyhound
- \* Movie Theaters
- \* Professional Sports Teams
- \* Ripley's Attractions & Museums
- \* Sandals Resorts

**OTHER PRODUCTS**

- \* Apple Computers
- \* Bass Pro Shop
- \* Dell
- \* Dick's Sporting Goods
- \* The Discovery Channel Store
- \* GNC
- \* K-Mart
- \* Michael's
- \* Play It Again Sports
- \* Spencer's Gifts
- \* Wilson's Leather

## Father of Fallen Soldier Says White House Turned Down Request for Obama Phone Call



It was bad enough that after Sgt. Sean Collins was killed in Afghanistan his parents received a senator's letter of condolence with the wrong name.

But the soldier's father says the White House added to the sting by subsequently turning down a request for President Obama to personally call Collin's mother.

Pat Collins, a retired lieutenant colonel, told Q13 FOX in Seattle that the family was told last month that the president could not fit "into his schedule" to call mother Linda Collins about their son's death. Pat Collins, who initially made the

request with the White House, said he would've understood, except for the fact that around the same time, Obama found an opening in his schedule for a much-publicized phone conversation with Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie.

"He is the president of the United States, and he's a very busy man, very important man-but then to find out that he fit it into his schedule to call the president of the Eagles to thank him for giving Michael Vick a second chance, that kind of burns a little bit," Collins said.

The White House's response marked another "disappointing" turn for the family in the government's handling of their son's death.

Collins, who joined the Army in 2005 and had already served two tours of duty in Iraq, was killed Dec. 12, 2010 while on patrol in Afghanistan. Five others were killed in the attack as well.

After the attack, the Collins family received a letter of condolence from Washington Sen. Maria Cantwell. The top of the letter got Sgt. Sean Collin's name right, but the final paragraph referred to him as "Bryn."

Linda Collins, in an interview with Q13 FOX, called the mistake "a little disappointing."

Cantwell has since acknowledged the error, and the Collins family has accepted her apology.

It's unclear who the family may have spoken with in the White House regarding the possibility of a presidential phone call.

Pat Collins said he was told within "two or three days" of asking that his request would not be granted. Though Collins voiced concern that Obama carved out time to talk about the Eagle's Vick, that discussion was part of a broader conversation between Obama and Lurie about the use of alternative energy at Lincoln Financial Field.

A senior administration official told Fox News that the president remains committed to honoring the troops.

The president honors the sacrifice of all our men and women in uniform and sends hand-signed letters to the families of those who lost their lives. My understanding is that President Bush had the same policy," the official said.

Aside from sending hand-signed letters, Bush also reportedly met privately with hundreds of families of troops who died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As far as we know President Obama doesn't have that policy.

## WOMAN IN COMBAT

### Military panel backs it

Women should finally be allowed to serve fully in combat, a military advisory panel said Jan. 14, in a report seeking to dismantle the last major area of discrimination in the armed forces.

The call by a commission of current and retired military officers to let women be front-line fighters could set into motion another sea change in military culture as the armed forces, generations after racial barriers fell, grapples with the phasing out of the ban on gays serving openly.

The newest move is being recommended by the Military Leadership Diversity Commission, established by Congress two years ago. The panel was to send its proposals to Congress and President Obama.

It is time “to create a level playing field for all qualified service members,” the members said.

Opponents of putting women in combat question whether they have the necessary strength and stamina. They also have said the inclusion of women in infantry and other combat units might harm unit cohesion, a similar argument to that made regarding gays.



**TAPS!**

**James S. Collins ARMY WWII  
Karl G. Piedle ARMY WWII**

## Newsletter update!

Our chapter 455 is making a decision on whether to continue mailing the newsletter or just putting it on the web. It has become very expensive to mail the newsletter and we just don't have the funds to continue. We will still continue quarterly putting the newsletter on our website.

Since most families have computers today we are hoping that members who don't have a computer will be able to get the newsletter from one of their family members or grandchildren.

Even if we no longer mail a newsletter we still need money to continue with the cost of preparing the newsletter and to pay our web master.

So we are still asking our members to support the newsletter with a gift of **\$6.00** and we will list your name and your spouses name for the upcoming year. If you can afford to give more, you will be listed as a special booster. If it wasn't for the **boosters** and **special boosters** we would not be able to continue the newsletter, so please become a member of this generous group!

We also are selling advertising space in our newsletter, the price for the business card ad is \$25. The newsletter will be printed quarterly. Advertising in our newsletter will help continue it in **2011**. If you are interested in helping our chapter please send your money to the address at the top of the newsletter. Checks can be made out to MOPH Chapter 455.

I would also like to add, that if any member would like to put something of interest in the newsletter or a picture I will do my best to get it in as soon as possible. *Editor: Jim Lang*

## PAYING TO SEND JOBS AWAY!

I wonder how many people know about General Motor's recent decision to invest \$540 million in a new plant in Mexico creating 1,000 new jobs, or that since 2006 they have invested \$5 billion in Mexico. This from a company that recently needed a \$50-plus billion bailout provided by taxpayers. The fleeing of America continues unabated.

It is sad to think that many of these jobs could be used by returning veterans.

**BOOSTER'S - JAN. 1, 2011 TO DEC. 31, 2011**

MIKE & VERONICA BLAZEIVICH

CHARLES & IRENE HALL

JOHN & CATHERINE COLLINS

WILLIAM & LINDA HYSLOP

WAYNE DONALDSON

**SPECIAL BOOSTER'S**

JOHN & CAROLYN ABRAM

LOU & DOLLY LaCIVITA

DAVE & JANET ALDEN

ROBERT LAKES

JOHN & JOAN ALDEN

JAMES & BETSY LANG

EDWARD & SUSAN BARKER

MICHAEL LASKOWSKI JR.

GEORGE & MARY ANN BIGELOW

M/SGT. LEROY LEWIS

CONRAD BLACK & MARILYN  
OBRIEN

MASSARO CORPORATION

STEVE MASSARO

ROBERT & FLORENCE BUCHOLTZ

JOE MLINAC & DONNA MADEJA

WILLIAM CARR

CHARLES MANCUSO

VANCE & MARGARET CARTER

OLIVER McCLELLAND

DOMINIC & BETTY CERSOSIMO

COL. ALEX & MOLLY McCLINCHIE

PHILLIP CERUSSI

HARRY McCRACKEN

ANNE C. ROCHE-CONNORS

DARRYL MERRISON

JAMES & RENAE COSTABILE

JAMES PELLA & MICHELE HANSON

ANDREW & DOROTY CHEROK

MICHAEL & MICHELE RATWAY

MICHAEL & MICHELE CUMMINGS

ERNIE & NANCY RIVERS

GREG & BARBARA DALEY

STANLEY & MARY ROZANKSKI

HOWARD & EDNA EICHNER

CHESTER & M. JANE SATTIAUX

RAY & PEARL FRITZ

JOE & ANNA MAE SERENKA

LOU & GLORIA GAMBOGI

ROBERT & PEGGY SMITH

JOHN & DONNA GOCHNOUR

MARK & NANCY SUTTON

EMIL HOSKO

TERRY & RUTH SWIDELL

IRA C. HOUCK JR.

LARRY & MARY UPLINGER

JOHN & DOROTHY HRIBAR

ROBERT & RUTH VANCE

LENNY KASUBICK

NICHOLAS VIGLIONE

JOE & LOIS KENNEY

ED & JOAN VOGEL

BROCK KEPHART

ED & CHERYL WERLE

JAMES & JULEEN KEPHART

JOHN & PATTY WRIGHT

DENNIS & MARSHA KING

LARRY KUSHNER

WAYNE & KAREN LAMPING

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**CHAPTER 455  
MEETINGS**

Our meetings are held the last Wednesday of the month at the VA Hospital at Highland Drive at 10 am sharp. Our office is in building one, 6th floor, room 6023W. Recently we have been having our meetings on the 2nd floor in room 2010W in building one because we have more space. After the meeting a lunch will be provided. If you need more information please call at 412-954-5166 and ask for Dan or Jim.

## Unclaimed Vets Buried with Honors

**CALVERTON, N.Y.—**They were once for gotten: 20 Americans who had served their country in uniform and died years later, their remains unclaimed—until now.

On Saturday Jan. 8, they were buried with full honors at Calverton National Cemetery on eastern Long Island, complete with flag draped coffins, prayers by a military chaplain and a 21-gun salute.

“Go gently dear brothers, your wait is done,” said John Caldarelli, an American Legion member. “Taps has sounded and you are dismissed....No longer forgotten or cast aside.”

Along with their names went life stories that placed the men in military service as far back as World War II.

In that conflict, Anderson Alston served as an Army master sergeant, Pvt. Frederick Hunter was a U.S. soldier from 1968 to 1971, and Myron Sanford Mabry was in the Navy from May 1960 to July 1971.

They were among the 20 who died in recent years in New York City, with no one to legally claim their remains.

Ordinarily, they would have been quietly buried in a potter’s field, their graves unmarked.

On Saturday morning Jan. 8, hearses bearing their remains pulled up to the cemetery entrance

to the sound of bagpipes, with color guards representing various branches of the military. In tribute, local fire department trucks – two at a time—hoisted their ladders to form arches from which American flags were suspended.

Later, a folded flag from each coffin—usually presented to the next of kin—was handed to mourners standing in for absent relatives. They included members of Gold Star Mothers, a group of parents who lost their children in the military.

“It was bittersweet,” Michele McNaughton said later of the moment she received the flag from the coffin of John Palazzo, a U.S. Navy seaman who served from 1965 to 1967 and died in 2006.

Calverton, McNaughton said, “is the same place where my son is buried.”

A white rose was placed on each coffin after it was undraped.

The somber service was part of a national effort by the Department of Veterans Affairs and private groups to clear a backlog of unburied or unclaimed veterans remains. Speakers included two Long Island congressman, - U.S. Rep. Timothy Bishop, D-N.Y., and Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y.

### Do you know an Outstanding Patriot?

We are asking our members to submit a person as an outstanding Patriot who has donated a lot of time and energy in helping our veterans. The Patriot name will be listed in our Chapter 455 MOPH newsletter. We would like to get at least one Patriot for each quarterly newsletter.

Please submit a picture and a brief history of the Patriot.



## Drug Expiration Dates—Do They Mean Anything?

With a splitting headache you reach into your medicine cabinet for some aspirin only to find the stamped expiration date on the bottle has passed—two years ago. So, do you take it or don't you? If you decide to take the aspirin will it be a fatal mistake or will you simply continue to suffer from the headache?

This is a dilemma many people face in some way or another. A column published in *Psychopharmacology Today* offers some advice.

It turns out that the expiration date on a drug does stand for something, but probably not what you think it does. Since the law was passed in 1979, drug manufacturers are required to stamp an expiration date on their products. This is the date at which the manufacturer can still guarantee the full potency and safety of the drug.

Most of what is known about drug expiration dates comes from a study conducted by the Food and Drug Administration at the request of the military. With a large and expensive stockpile of drugs, the military faced tossing out and replacing its drugs every few years. What they found from the study is 90% of more than 100 drugs, both prescription and over-the-counter, were perfectly good to use even 15 years after the expiration date.

So the expiration date doesn't really indicate a point at which the medication is no longer effective or has become unsafe to use. Medical authorities state expired drugs are safe to take, even those that expired years ago. A rare exception to this may be tetracycline, but the report on this is controversial among researchers. It's true the effectiveness of a drug may decrease over time, but much of the original potency still remains even a decade after the expiration date. Excluding nitroglycerin, insulin, and liquid antibiotics, most medications are as long-lasting as the ones tested by the military. Placing a medication in a cool place, such as a refrigerator, will help a drug remain potent for many years.

Is the expiration date a marketing ploy by drug manufacturers, to keep you restocking your medicine cabinet and their pockets regularly? You can look at it that way. Or you can also look at it this way: The expiration dates are very conservative to ensure you get everything you paid for. And, really, of a drug manufacturer had to do expiration-date testing for longer periods it would slow their ability to bring you new and improved formulations.

The next time you face the drug expiration date dilemma, consider what you've learned here. If the expiration date passed a few years ago and it's important that your drug is absolutely 100% effective, you might want to consider buying a new bottle. And if you have any questions about the safety or effectiveness of any drug, ask your pharmacist. He or she is a great resource when it comes to getting more information about your medications.



### American Serviceman Played With Tiger

An American Army officer serving in Afghanistan has won the chance to play with Tiger Woods, in the Dubai Desert Classic pro-am on Feb. 8 in Dubai.

Lt. Col. Michael Rowells, who has a nine handicap and is deployed currently with the 401st Army Field Support Brigade, beat 16,000 other amateur golfers in a draw ahead of the tournament's traditional curtain raiser at the Emirates Golf Club.

Rowells said he was thrilled to be playing with the former No. 1 golfer and called it "a dream come true."

## “JIHAD JANE”



The Pennsylvania woman who captured national attention when she was charged last year with conspiring with foreign terrorists to commit murder changed her plea to guilty Tuesday afternoon Feb. 1 in federal court.

In doing so, Colleen LaRose, 47, who also used the names “Jihad Jane” and “Fatima Larose,” avoids a trial and sets herself up for a potential sentence of life in prison, five years of supervision if she is ever released, and a \$1 million fine.

The proceeding in Philadelphia lasted 15 minutes. LaRose pleaded guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, conspiracy to kill in a foreign country, false statements to government officials relating to international terrorism and attempted identity theft to facilitate an act of international terrorism.

LaRose was accused of conspiring with others in Asia and Europe to murder Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, who drew the prophet Muhammad’s head on a dog’s body in 2007.

LaRose initially pleaded not guilty to a four-count indictment in March.

LaRose returned to the United States in mid-October and the FBI took her into custody at Philadelphia International Airport.

Mark Wilson, a lawyer for LaRose at the Federal Community Defender Office in Philadelphia, declined to comment. LaRose has not yet been scheduled for an arraignment on the charges, according to a spokesman for U.S. Attorney Michael L. Levy.

## Vets, Families of KIA Torn Over Flag Proposal (continued from page 1)

for a third consecutive year in Congress.

It’s public recognition of the price of freedom, and I don’t think we can do that enough,” said Lutz, of Chesapeake, VA., who has gathered signatures of support from countless relatives of fallen service members and many public officials, including governors and members of Congress. Lutz says the campaign helps him mourn his son, Pfc. George Anthony “Tony” Lutz II, killed at age 25.

“It’s a great idea,” said Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va, who has sponsored bills in Congress requiring the “Honor and Remember” flag to be flown under the national flag and POW/MIA flag at federal buildings on federal holidays.

“There was no flag that was separate and apart to honor those who had given their lives in the defense and honor of the country, Forbes said. But many oppose the new banner’s display alongside Old Glory.

In Colorado, state senators last week rejected a second attempt to have the “Honor and Remember” flag flown over the state Capitol on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The decision literally brought tears to the eyes of some on the Senate State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee after hours of emotional testimony from veterans. Dozens in the standing-room-only crowd dabbed their eyes.

Molly Morel is president of the nation’s largest organization for mothers who have lost children in battle, American Gold Star Mothers, created after World War I. She’s a passionate supporter of the “Honor and Remember” flag and has one embroidered with her son’s name.

The debate is giving officials an uncomfortable choice between veteran’s groups and grieving relatives. The National American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars groups haven’t taken positions on the banner, though many state chapters oppose its inclusion.