



Military Order of the

Purple Heart

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National Leadership

NEIL VAN ESS
NATIONAL COMMANDER

NEIL VAN ESS, NATIONAL COMMANDER



Neil Van Ess is the National Commander. Neil served in the US Army from 1968 to 1970, and was wounded in August 1968 while assigned to Company C, 3/506th, 101st Airborne Division. Following military service, Neil returned to college, receiving Bachelor and Master Degrees in Criminal Justice. In 1982, Patriot Van Ess entered into law enforcement with the Totowa Police Department, advancing steadily until his promotion to Captain Patrol Commander in 2010, capping a distinguished 30-year career. Devoting himself to the community, he served on the Totowa Board of Education from 1986 to 2005, including 12 years as President of the Board, and served as Chairman of the Governor's Council of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse for 6 years. Patriot Van Ess and his wife Luisa live in Totowa, New Jersey.

DOUG MIDDLETON
SR. VICE COMMANDER

DOUGLAS "DOUG" MIDDLETON, NATIONAL SENIOR VICE COMMANDER



Doug Middleton entered the US Army in 1964 and one year later graduated from OCS and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. Doug had a successful 30-year Army career, retiring in 1994 as a Colonel. During his first tour in Vietnam he was wounded by an enemy land mine. After retiring, Patriot Middleton became COO of the Metropolitan Atlanta Chapter of the American Red Cross and later became CEO of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia. Doug joined the MOPH in 1995 and held leadership positions at the Chapter, Department, and Region levels before becoming the National Senior Vice Commander. He holds a BA degree from Loyola University and Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Missouri. Doug is married to the former Pat King of Salinas, CA and they have a daughter Julie, a son Dan, and four grandchildren.

FELIX GARCIA
JR. VICE COMMANDER

FELIX GARCIA, NATIONAL JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER



Felix Garcia served in the US Marine Corps, deploying to Iraq with the 3rd BN, 1st Marine DIV in August and November 2004. He was wounded while participating in search and destroy missions in Al Karmah and Fallujah and was awarded three Purple Hearts and a Navy/Marine Commendation Medal with Combat "V." After leaving the Marines, he joined MOPH Chapter 493 in Vista, CA, moved to Chapter 701 in Point Pleasant, NJ, and then on to Florida where he founded Chapter 808 in Palm Coast. In 2012, Garcia moved to Texas and joined Chapter 723, becoming Commander for three terms. As Dept. of TX Commander, he helped all Chapters with IRS compliance and membership issues. He worked with other VSO's to improve cooperative efforts and better support Texan veterans. Medically retired, he lives in Texas with his wife, Christina, and their three children.

JOHN P. LEONARD III
NATIONAL ADJUTANT

JOHN P. "JACK" LEONARD, NATIONAL ADJUTANT



National Adjutant **John "Jack" Leonard** joined MOPH in 2004 and served previously in MOPH HQ as HR Manager, and National Service Director (NSD). Patriot Leonard is a native of McLean, Virginia, first entering military service in 1963. He is a graduate of LaSalle University in Philadelphia, PA and holds a Masters in International Business Administration (MBA) from National University, San Diego, CA. Severely wounded in August 1969 near Hill 55/Phung Loc 6 in Northern I Corps, RVN, Patriot Leonard completed active military service in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1990 as Head, Logistics Plans and Operations (LPO-1), HQMC in Washington, DC. In addition to the Purple Heart, he holds the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal and the Navy Achievement Medal. Jack and his wife Sheila reside in Ashburn, VA.

ANGELO WIDER
NATIONAL SERVICE
DIRECTOR

ANGELO WIDER, NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR



Patriot Angelo Wider joined the US Army in 1964, and deployed to Vietnam with Company C, 1st BN, 27th Inf., 25th Inf. DIV. He was wounded in action in 1966 after becoming the youngest NCO in his unit at the age of 19. Angelo left the service in 1967 and after receiving a BA at CCNY and Masters at George Washington Univ., he worked in telecommunications for 10 years. He then joined the U.S. Postal Service Executive Cadre, and was Master of Ceremony for the unveiling of the Purple Heart stamp at MT. Vernon, Virginia in 2003. He retired in 2010, and served as Chairman of the Loudoun County Community Service Board, National President for The African American Postal League United for Success (APLUS); and Curator for the National Postal Museum Advisory Committee. He is a member of MOPH Virginia Chapter 353, and each Memorial & Veterans Day is the MOPH representative at the wreath laying ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

FOR FURTHER
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