



MILITARY ORDER of the PURPLE HEART
FIRST RESPONDER PROGRAM
Honoring those who protect and serve our communities



GENERAL

To honor all **First Responders** (Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters) killed or wounded/injured in the line of duty, the Military Order of the Purple Heart established this program, under the leadership and guidance of the National Public Safety Officer (NPSO), to present their families with the appropriate Memorial Plaque. Since we cannot award the Purple Heart Medal for their sacrifices, these distinctive plaques convey MOPH's respect and appreciation for each First Responders' sacrifice.

FUNDING

In light of budgetary restrictions, First Responder funding for plaques will be limited to those First Responders who are *shot, stabbed, beaten or those injured/killed during a criminal incident or fighting a fire*. The National Coordinator of the Program will adjudicate the merits of each award.

MOPH HQ will no longer fund awards to Responders for less direct circumstances, such as being killed or injured while responding to a situation or while, in the case of police, in pursuit of a felon or, in case of firefighters, en-route to or returning from a fire. However, this doesn't preclude Chapters and Departments funding, ordering, and presenting awards to local Responders they wish to honor, not being funded at the national level.

ADMINISTRATION

In order for this program to work efficiently and uniformly, all Chapters and Departments should follow the guidance in this document and only present the plaques mentioned.

National Public Safety Officer (NPSO) will:

- Approve the appropriate plaque.
- Provide funding estimates for the program to the National Adjutant for inclusion in MOPH's national budget.
- Keep an e-mail roster of First Responder Department Coordinators.
- Forward *Officer Down Alerts (Police)* and *Line of Duty Deaths (Firefighters)* notices to Regional Commanders when received. They are the ones that would be approved for funding.
- Monitor and encourage the efforts of Departments and Chapters to expand the program in their respective areas within budgetary parameters.
- Provide leadership with an annual Convention Report that summarizes the program's activity.

National Region Commanders should:

- Monitor the efforts of their Department Commanders and respond to any requests for assistance.
- Assist the NPSO in administering the program as requested.

Department Commanders should appoint a **Department First Responder Coordinator** to assist in implementation of the program. Report that name to the NPSO at pidi1955@yahoo.com.

Duties of the Department First Responder Coordinator could include:

- Keeping an e-mail roster of Chapter First Responder Coordinators.
- Keeping Chapter First Responder Coordinators informed on any new information on the Program.
- If a National Convention is being hosted by the Department, arrange for First Responder plaques for awardees within a fifty mile radius of the Convention site be presented by the National Commander during the Convention.

Chapter Commanders should appoint a **Chapter First Responder Coordinator** to assist in implementation of the program. Report that name to the Department Coordinator.

Duties of the Chapter First Responder Coordinator could include:

- Establishing liaison with local police, sheriff, and fire departments to make them aware of the MOPH program and to establish a point of contact for information on killed or wounded officers and firefighters.
- Keeping the Department Coordinator advised on significant problems, developments or needs of the Chapter.
- Scanning local media daily and clipping news items on police or firefighter casualties.

[While it is important that Chapter and Department Coordinators work in tandem, don't let lack of a Coordinator in your Department inhibit your Chapter's effort.]

Guidance on Appointing Coordinators.

If possible, appoint coordinators with backgrounds in law enforcement or firefighting. But don't delay an appointment because that experience is lacking. Just pick an aggressive motivated member to fill the position as it's important to have functioning coordinators in every Chapter and Department.

PROCEDURES

First Responders Killed In the Line of Duty

1. Families of First Responders killed in the line of duty will receive a MOPH Memorial Plaque, produced exclusively for MOPH by *Personalized Just For You, LLC* manager@mophproducts.com

2. **Identifying honorees** is the key to success of the program and requires a joint effort at both Department and Chapter levels. Department Coordinators should monitor www.odmp.org (for Law Enforcement Officers) and www.firefightinglinks.com (for Firefighters) to identify honorees and pass the data to their appropriate Chapters. Not all of those listed on the websites are eligible for our presentations. (See **Definitions** below).



Chapters must maintain contact with local sources and scan local media, keeping the Department Coordinator advised of potential honorees. Suggested websites to monitor: www.officer.com, www.policelink.com, and www.firerescue1.com. Incident pages can be emailed to pidi1955@yahoo.com to support Memorial Plaque requests.

3. Once a **First Responder Killed in the Line of Duty** is identified at any level, the Chapter in or near the city/town where the death occurred will take the lead by ordering the **Memorial Plaque** from *Personalized Just for You*; see below – **How to Order Plaques**. *If possible, include the Officer Down Memorial page from www.odmp.org or the Firefighter Down page from www.firefightinglinks.com as documentation supporting your request.*

4. The Chapter will receive the **Memorial Plaque** directly from *Personalized Just For You* for presentation to the family.

5. The Chapter Commander or his Coordinator should make contact with the Family Assistance Officer or the designated person of the First Responder agency involved determining the appropriate time and place for presentation of the plaque.

GUIDELINES ON PRESENTATION

The presentation should be made by the ranking MOPH Officer attending the event. The presenter should make a few short remarks before reading and presenting the plaque, for example:

For several years prior to September 11, 2001, the Military Order of the Purple Heart has recognized Police Officers & Firefighters killed or wounded in the line of duty. They are the

front line troops that battle daily to control peace and tranquility in our society, thus allowing each of us to pursue our daily activities”. Then the plaque should be read and presented.

6. Notify Mr. John Bircher, MOPH Public Relations Director, publicrelations@Purpleheart.org or 352-259-9555 (cell), as soon as possible to arrange for press coverage of your presentation.

First Responders Wounded in the Line of Duty

1. First Responders wounded/injured in the line of duty will receive a MOPH Plaque, recognizing their bravery that is also produced exclusively for MOPH by *Personalized Just For You, LLC* manager@mophproducts.com.

2. Use same process for identifying recipients as above.

3. Once a **First Responder Wounded in The Line of Duty** is identified at any level, the Chapter in or near the city/town where the death occurred will take the lead by ordering the **Plaque** from *Personalized Just for You*; see below – **How to Order Plaques**. *If possible, include details on the incident as documentation from www.officer.com, www.policelink.com, or www.firerescue1.com.*

4. Follow the same guidelines on presentation as above.



HOW TO ORDER PLAQUES

ALL requests for plaques must originate within MOPH.

Only one plaque per request – if duplicates are needed, then the chapter or department will bear the additional cost.

No scheduled MOPH presentation – no plaque!

Cost: \$39.50

Ordering MOPH Memorial PLAQUES (Wood, with photo and inscriptions)

1. Confirm that presentation arrangements are completed – do not order a plaque until this is done.

2. Order the plaque from *Personalized Just For You, LLC*, using the email format in **Attachment A** which allows the NPSO to approve/disapprove the award. [Associated documentation can be scanned and included as an attachment to your email.]

3. Ensure the information is correct in the email – spelling of recipient's name and details on the incident. These plaques are expensive and the data must be accurate.

4. Mr. Phil Darbonne of *Personalized* will verify data, and track your order and its shipping. You can reach him at (337) 856-7789 or manager@mophproducts.com for any follow-up actions.

5. *Personalized* will send invoices and copies of NPSO approving messages to MOPH HQ (Attn: Supply Room) for payment.

DEFINITIONS

Law Enforcement Officer. Any police officer, marshal, deputy sheriff, or agent or employee of any other title employed by a municipality, city, county, state or federal agency that has the power of arrest. Any employee of a public authority, railroad, private institution of higher education or otherwise holds a police commission from a state are considered law enforcement officers.

Firefighter. Any fulltime salaried employee of a city, town, county, state or any Federal Agency whose primary responsibility is to fight fires, provide EMS services and or rescues. Volunteer Fire Departments are also eligible for the plaques.

Wounded. Has the same connotation as for the Purple Heart Medal; shot, stabbed, cut or beaten with an object, the results of which requires, medical treatment by a Doctor at a medical facility. A Firefighter/Police Officer receiving severe burns of their bodies is considered wounded, but this must occur in the line of duty.

Non-qualifying Injuries. Officers/Firefighters who sustain minor injuries during the normal course of their duties, i.e., smoke inhalation, cut by broken glass while fighting a fire or minor injuries suffered during a scuffle while trying to affect an arrest are not considered as wounded

POLICE PURPLE HEART AND CERTIFICATE

Don't be concerned when you hear or read about police officers receiving "Purple Hearts." They're not getting military Purple Heart Medals, but Police Purple Heart Medals and Certificates designed to recognize paralyzed and disabled police officers. A quick survey of the internet did not reveal a similar program for Firefighters.

REPORT ANY FRAUDULENT USE OF THE PURPLE HEART MEDAL DIRECTLY TO THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION. THE ADJUTANT WILL CONTACT THE AGENCY INVOLVED TO CORRECT MISUSE OF THE PURPLE HEART.

Signed:



Harry C. Smart, NPSO

Attachment:

A. Email format for ordering MOPH Memorial Plaques

ATTACHMENT A

EMAIL FORMAT FOR ORDERING MOPH PLAQUE

STEP ONE – CHAPTER

[Requests plaque – create an email using this format]

From: Chapter e-mail address
To: pidi1955@yahoo.com
Cc: manager@mophproducts.com

Subj: MOPH First Responder Memorial Plaques

Please produce a MOPH Plaque based on this information:

Type Plaque: (Choose applicable plaque)

Killed in the Line of Duty [Law Enforcement] or [Fire/Rescue/others]

OR

Wounded/Injured in the Line of Duty [Law Enforcement] or [Fire/Rescue/others]

Date of Incident:
Recipient's Name:
Title:
Department:
City/State:

Ship plaque to: [Chapter address]

Chapter contact: [Name and phone number]

STEP TWO – NATIONAL COORDINATOR

[Approves and forwards message]

From: pidi1955@yahoo.com
To: manager@mophproducts.com
Cc: supply@purpleheart.org
Chapter e-mail address
Request approved.

STEP THREE – PERSONALIZED JUST FOR YOU

[Ships plaque to requester and sends invoice and National Coordinator's approving email to MOPH HQ (Supply Room) for payment.]

COST OF EACH PLAQUE: \$39.50