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NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

HERSHEL W. GOBER
NATIONAL COMMANDER

NEIL VAN ESS
SR. VICE COMMANDER

DOUG MIDDLETON
JR. VICE COMMANDER

JOHN P. LEONARD III
NATIONAL ADJUTANT

FRANK VAN HOY
NATIONAL SERVICE
DIRECTOR

THE HON. HERSHEL W. GOBER, NATIONAL COMMANDER



Hershel W. Gober is the National Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Prior to his election in 2016, he served for 14 years as the National Legislative Director. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1956 to 1959 as an enlisted man, then reenlisted in 1961 in the U.S. Army. Following OCS, he continued to serve as an officer, retiring in 1978 as a Major. Patriot Gober served two tours in Vietnam and was wounded on March 11, 1969 while commanding Co. C, 5th Bn., 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division.

In 1988, Patriot Gober was selected by then Governor Bill Clinton to serve as the Arkansas Director of Veterans Affairs, where he remained until 1993. From 1993 until the end of President Clinton's Presidency, Gober served as the Deputy and Acting Secretary of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Hershel and his wife, the Hon. Mary Lou Keener, reside in Palm Coast, Florida.

NEIL VAN ESS, NATIONAL SENIOR VICE COMMANDER



Neil Van Ess is the National Junior Vice Commander. Neil served in the U.S. 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 on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse for 6 years. Patriot Van Ness and his wife Louisa live in Totowa, New Jersey. He is the proud father of two grown children.

DOUG MIDDLETON, NATIONAL JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER



Doug Middleton was born in Long Beach, CA and in 1964 was drafted into the US Army. One year later, he graduated from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. For the next thirty years, Doug had a very successful Army career, retiring in 1994 as a Colonel. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam and was wounded during his first tour by an enemy land mine. Over the course of his career, he had the privilege of commanding soldiers six times. He has numerous awards and decorations including the Army General Staff Identification Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the German Air Force Missile Qualification Badge in Gold. After retiring from the Army, Patriot Middleton dedicated his life to community service and until 2003, was the CEO of the Metropolitan Atlanta Chapter of the American Red Cross. He then became CEO of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, where he led the only statewide non-profit in Georgia whose mission was the prevention of child abuse and neglect before it occurs. Doug joined the MOPH in 1995 and has held leadership positions at the Chapter, Department of Georgia, and Region levels. He holds a BA degree from Loyola University and Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Missouri. He is also a graduate of the Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government. Doug has been married to the former Pat King of Salinas, CA for 51 years and they have a daughter Julie, a son Dan, and four grandchildren.

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.

FRANK VAN HOY, NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR



National Service Director **Frank Van Hoy** is a native of Goldsboro, NC. He is a graduate of Troy University, Alabama, with a BS in Social Sciences. Patriot Van Hoy enlisted in the US Army in 1966 and retired from active military service in 1986 as a Major. Patriot Van Hoy served two tours in Vietnam, first with the 5th Special Forces Group in 1968 and again with the 1st Aviation Brigade in 1970. He was wounded during both tours, for which he received two Purple Hearts. Prior to retirement from military service, Van Hoy was the Curriculum Development Officer at the Defense Intelligence College, Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington D.C. Patriot Van Hoy joined the National Staff of the MOPH in 2007 and is responsible for all aspects of the National Service Program. He and his wife Cindy have three grown children and presently reside in Owings, MD.

FOR FURTHER
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