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**LDVA HONORS PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS,
ENCOURAGES PUBLIC TO WEAR PURPLE ON AUG. 7**

BATON ROUGE, La.—The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs is proud to honor all Purple Heart recipients this Wednesday, Aug. 7 on National Purple Heart Day. LDVA Secretary Charlton Meginley and Military Order of the Purple Heart Louisiana State Commander Deron Santiny encourage all Louisianians to wear purple to acknowledge recipients for their selfless sacrifice to our country.

“Today’s freedom and individual liberties enjoyed by all 342 million Americans was, in large part, purchased by the blood of those wounded or killed in combat defending our great nation,” said Secretary Meginley. “It is our duty to never forget those whose lives, and the lives of their loved ones, changed in an instant that all started with the voluntary ‘Send me’.”

“As a Purple Heart recipient, I received an award that no service member wants to receive, yet it symbolizes one of the most meaningful things I’ve done in my life, which was to serve my country at all costs,” said Commander Santiny. “It’s an honor for me to serve as state commander, and as a Veterans Affairs Commission member representing Louisiana’s Purple Heart recipients as MOPH’s designee, working with the LDVA team to best serve them and their families.”

LDVA awards the Louisiana Veterans Honor Medal to eligible veterans with an honorable discharge; to Purple Heart recipients; to veterans or the families of veterans who were prisoners of war/missing in action; or to the families of veterans killed in action. Veterans or veterans’ family members may apply for a medal(s) online at vetaffairs.la.gov/honormedal; via email at veteran@la.gov; or by phone at 225.219.5000.

National Purple Heart Day is celebrated annually on Aug. 7 honoring the nearly two million servicemen and women for their sacrifice while serving in the United States Armed Forces. The Purple Heart, originally referred to as the Badge of Military Merit, is the military’s oldest medal created by Gen. George Washington in 1782.

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