

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Honoring Sacrifice**  
***The Oldest Military Decoration in the World in Present Use Lasts***  
***Forever on U.S. Postage Stamp***



To obtain a high-resolution image of this stamp for media use only, e-mail [roy.a.betts@usps.gov](mailto:roy.a.betts@usps.gov)

SAN DIEGO — The U.S. Postal Service today honored the sacrifices of the men and women who serve in the U.S. military with the issuance of the Purple Heart with Ribbon Forever Stamp. The stamp goes on sale nationwide at Post Offices and online at [usps.com/shop](http://usps.com/shop) today.

"It is our hope, that with the issuance of this stamp, the Postal Service, along with the rest of our nation, can pay tribute to those whose sacrifices have given all of us a country that is truly the land of the free and the home of the brave," said Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman.

"Through this postage stamp, we have created a lasting tribute to the many brave members of the armed forces who have served our country. We are proud to share their legacy with America and the world, as we deliver our nation's mail," Stroman said.

Stroman was joined in dedicating the stamp by Rear Admiral Mac McLaughlin, USN (ret), president and chief executive officer, USS Midway Museum; Clayton Jones, commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; and Jerry Sanders, mayor, San Diego.

The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to members of the U.S. military who have been wounded or killed in action. According to the Military Order of the Purple Heart, an organization for combat-wounded veterans, the medal is 'the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first award made available to a common soldier.'

On Aug. 7, 1782, during the Revolutionary War, General George Washington issued an order that established a badge of distinction for meritorious action. The badge, which consisted of a heart made of purple cloth, is known to have been awarded to three sergeants from Connecticut regiments. Known as

the Badge of Military Merit, the award was distinctive because it was available to the lower ranks at a time when only officers were eligible for decoration in European armies. The road to glory in a patriot army, Washington wrote, is thus open to all.

Although not continued after the Revolutionary War, the decoration was reinstated by the U.S. War Department (now the Department of Defense) Feb. 22, 1932, the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth. The redesigned decoration consists of a purple heart of metal bordered by gold, suspended from a purple and white ribbon. In the center of the medal is a profile bust of George Washington beneath his family coat of arms.

This new stamp features a photograph taken by Ira Wexler of the Purple Heart medal awarded during World War II to 1st Lieutenant Arthur J. Rubin (1917-1978). In 2003, the Postal Service issued its first Purple Heart stamp. It featured a photograph, also taken by Wexler, of a Purple Heart awarded to Lt. Colonel James Loftus Fowler (USMC) in 1968.

### **How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [usps.com/shop](http://usps.com/shop), or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Purple Heart with Ribbon Stamp  
PO Box 85530  
San Diego, CA 92186-5530

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by July 5, 2011.

### **How to Order First-Day Covers**

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
PO Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

### **Philatelic Products**

There are three philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 114961, First-Day Cover, \$0.88
- 114991, Ceremony Program, \$6.95
- 114993, Keepsake (sheet of 20 stamps with First-Day Cover Envelope), \$9.95

To learn more about the Postal Service's Stamp Program, visit <http://beyondtheperf.com>.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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**Please note:** For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at [www.usps.com/news](http://www.usps.com/news).

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 150 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, [usps.com](http://usps.com), the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$67 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 29th in the 2010 Fortune 500. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity.

The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency six consecutive years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.