



THE MILITARY COALITION

February 23, 2017

The Honorable Paul Cook
1222 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Cook,

The Military Coalition, a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members and their families and survivors, writes to express our support for H.R. 544, the Private Corrado Piccoli Purple Heart Preservation Act. If enacted, this legislation would make it illegal to buy and sell military-issued Purple Hearts.

The Purple Heart is our nation's oldest medal, awarded exclusively to members of the armed forces who are wounded by an enemy instrument of war. When servicemembers are killed in action or die of wounds, the Purple Heart is presented posthumously to their next of kin. For those families, the Purple Heart is often the last tangible item they receive in memory of their loved one. In cases where Purple Hearts are subsequently lost or stolen, we believe every effort should be made to return them to their rightful owners.

Unfortunately, the military memorabilia collectors' market places a high value on military-issued Purple Hearts, with medals engraved with the names of those killed in action commanding the highest prices. The value to collectors is driven up even further if the medal is accompanied by documentation graphically detailing the exact circumstances of the servicemember's death. We believe that buying and selling the Purple Heart like a common collectible not only cheapens the incredible sacrifice that it represents, but also makes it harder to reunite veterans and families with lost or stolen medals.

The Purple Heart Preservation Act would put an end to this practice by making it illegal to buy and sell military-issued Purple Hearts, eliminating an offensive collector's market, and making it easier to return them to their rightful owners. We thank you for introducing this important legislation and look forward to working with you to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(Signatures enclosed)

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Army Aviation Association of America
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals
Association of the United States Army
Association of the United States Navy
Chief Warrant & Warrant Officers Association, USCG
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States
Fleet Reserve Association
Gold Star Wives
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Service Women's Action Network
The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
The Retired Enlisted Association
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Military Coalition Letter in re: February 23, 2017