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# Missouri Joins the Purple Heart Trail

MARCH 12TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

## Missouri Joins the Purple Heart Trail

MoDot has joined the crew and has become a large part of the new official Purple Heart Trail that has been recently established in the state of Missouri. Both I-70 and I-44 will be associated with the new trail and road signs will be placed along these highways for miles upon miles in honor of the Purple Heart recipients. Sixteen road signs were unveiled at the official ceremony that took place last week on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at Jefferson City. These two highways and the other roadways, bridges, and historical monuments serve as symbols to honor the soldiers that have received Purple Hearts.

The idea of the Purple Heart Trail was introduced by Carl Dietrich, a retired United States Navy electrician from Springfield. Dietrich is a member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, which has been a big inspiration to his newest proposal.

Dietrich began planning a committee and received help from Representative Charlie Denison and former Representative Jerry Nolte played a large part in the passing of the Senate Bill 480 at The Missouri General Assembly's latest session.

"I am pleased with the support we received to honor those wounded or killed while serving their country." Dietrich stated.

The three men worked closely together and created a committee that helped put the plan into action. They also received a helping hand from MoDot and a new worker joined their project. MoDot's Assistant Chief Engineer, Don Hillis, agreed with the men who had taken on the task of bringing the Purple Heart Trail into Missouri.

“I believe that what we are going to see with these highway signs is a continual reminder of the sacrifice that people have made so that we can maintain our freedom in this country.” Hillis explained.

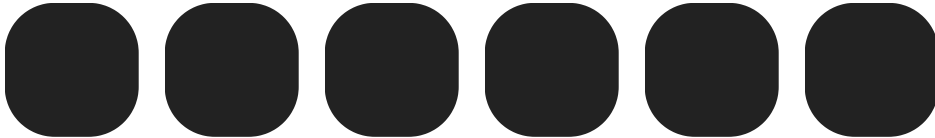
Missouri is not the only state that has taken on the responsibility of joining the Purple Heart Trail and we certainly will not be the last. In fact, the trail was first established in 1992 by the Members of the Purple Heart and the trail officially begins at the burial place of George Washington in Mount Vernon, Virginia. We are proud to say that Missouri has joined the other forty-five states that participate in the Purple Heart Trail so that we can honor our military members and soldiers who have received this medal of honor and for all of the ones that will in the future.

“It is my hope that the people who travel through the state of Missouri will recognize that we want to honor our veterans.” Denison concluded.

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