



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navy SEAL Museum to Host Indian River Woodcarvers' Purple Heart Cane Ceremony

Fort Pierce, Fla. – January 13, 2020 – The Navy SEAL Museum will host the Eighth Annual Purple Heart Cane Ceremony on January 18. The ceremony, which honors Purple Heart Medal recipients from every branch of military, was started by the Indian River Woodcarvers Club almost a decade ago.

The Purple Heart Cane Ceremony recognizes its namesake veterans through the donation of hand-carved, custom wooden canes to those who have earned the Purple Heart Medal as a result of wounds suffered in combat. Every intricately carved cane is fashioned with the head of a bald eagle; each displays the history of the individual veteran's service to his or her country, including service branch details, awards earned, and dates of enlistment and discharge.

"If we can help enhance the lives of our veterans, then we are fulfilling one of the primary precepts of the Museum's mission," said Rick Kaiser, Executive Director of the Navy SEAL Museum. "The Museum is about preserving the legacy of our Frogmen and educating our guests who visit, but we also stand to serve those who have stood in the line of duty to country. The Purple Heart Cane Ceremony is a community outreach opportunity that enables us to do just that."

With increasing interest among candidates and growing support annually, the Purple Heart Cane Project continues to evolve. 2020 marks the eighth consecutive year that canes will be distributed to Purple Heart veterans. More than 45 veterans are slated to be honored this year; to date, more than 300 custom canes have been donated since the project's inception.

"We joined forces with the Navy SEAL Museum after a meeting in 2013 with Community Outreach Representative Andy Brady and Dallis Jenkins, the Woodcarver Club's Vice President," said Lloyd Lasenby, who oversees the Purple

Heart Cane Project. "Since then it has grown and improved each year. Together we hope we have made this a memorable experience for these combat wounded soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen, thanking them for a job well done.

"I don't think there is any other place locally that is more appropriate for this type of presentation," Lasenby continued. "The Museum is dedicated to preserving our military history, and these recipients are living history. We have recipients from WW-II, Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan."

The ceremony will be held outdoors at the Museum's Memorial Wall beginning at 11:00 AM Saturday, January 18. Following opening remarks from Woodcarvers Club President Craig Holterman and Museum Executive Director Rick Kaiser, Congressman Brian Mast will serve as keynote speaker. Retired Staff Sergeant, Medal of Honor Recipient, Melvin Morris will also be in attendance. In anticipation of capacity seating, early arrival is suggested. The event is open to the public and free of charge.

About the Purple Heart Medal

Awarded in the name of the President, the Purple Heart Medal has a longstanding and noble heritage. The oldest award still given to combat-wounded veterans of the United States Military today, the Purple Heart Medal was established in 1782 by the then commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, George Washington. Originally called the Badge of Military Merit for its heart form cut from purple cloth, the Purple Heart Medal is awarded to recognize the sacrifices of combat-wounded veterans.

About the Indian River Woodcarvers Club

The Indian River Woodcarvers Club is based in Vero Beach, Florida. The club offers classes throughout the week to all levels of woodcarvers and wood burners. Of great emphasis is the Purple Heart Cane Project, a nonprofit organization for which club members carve eagle head walking canes to donate to Purple Heart Veterans. For more information, visit www.indianriverwoodcarvers.com.

About the Navy SEAL Museum

The National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the history of the U.S. Navy SEALs and their predecessors. Located in Fort Pierce, Florida, the Museum resides on the training grounds of the original Navy combat divers, the Frogmen. Built to honor the men who served with fortitude and ingenuity, the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum first opened its doors on Veterans Day in 1985. From humble beginnings, the facility has experienced tremendous growth, achieving national stature in 2007. The main objective of the Museum remains the promotion of public education by providing the opportunity to explore the history of the Navy SEALs through interactive exhibits, while honoring the fallen at the SEAL Memorial and caring for those warriors' families through Trident House Charities.

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The Navy SEAL Museum
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