Written by Andrew Mason
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Annual Observance Will Honor and Remember Illinois Servicemembers Wounded or Killed in Action

CHICAGO – August 5, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today signed legislation establishing Aug. 7 as Purple Heart Day in Illinois. House Bill 1537 designates Aug. 7 as an annual day to honor and remember those in the military who have been wounded or killed in battle and honored with a Purple Heart. Since the legislation will not take effect until 2012, Governor Quinn also issued a proclamation to ensure that observance of Purple Heart Day will begin in 2011.

“Men and women of the U.S. military, especially those that sacrificed life or limb, deserve the honor and respect of all Americans,” Governor Quinn said. “I am proud to remember our Veterans by adding this ceremonial day for those who bravely served and protected the United States.”

“The Purple Heart is an honor available to all, but desired by none,” Daniel Finn said, State Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

The Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration still awarded to members of the United States military. It was established by General George Washington on August 7, 1782. Initially called the Badge of Military Merit, the Purple Heart is a decoration awarded to any member of the Armed Services who has been wounded or killed in action. Since World War I, nearly two million Purple Hearts have been awarded to combat veterans, including at least 42,000 from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

House Bill 1537 was sponsored by Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia (D-Aurora) and Sen. Linda Holmes (D-Aurora). It takes effect Jan 1.

A copy of the proclamation is attached.

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