



Legislative Alert #113-7: SUPPORT H.R. 833 & S. 470, Legislation Honoring the Purple Heart & Bronze Star above new Distinguished Warfare Medal VETERANS

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Issue Background: On 13 February 2013, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta approved the Distinguished Warfare Medal which will provide recognition for achievements that do not necessarily involve acts of valor but directly impact combat operations. The Distinguished Warfare Medal was created to recognize direct impacts on combat operations and has been rated above the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

The Purple Heart is one of the nation's oldest and prestigious medals. Originally established by George Washington in 1782, the "Badge of Military Merit" was awarded to soldiers that exhibited "unusual gallantry" during combat. The awarding of the medal was not awarded for nearly 150 years before it was reestablished on 22 February, 1932. The reestablishment brought new criteria for the awarding of the medal to include those that had been wounded or killed during combat. It is important that this historical honor and recognition not be reduced in significance and AUSN is happy to join other Veteran Service Organization's (VSO's) such as the VFW, the American Legion and the Military Order of the Purple Heart in this endeavor to not undermine prestigious service awards.

Action Required: Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to support and cosponsor H.R. 833, introduced by Representative Duncan Hunter (R-CA-50), and S. 470, introduced by Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), which would amend title 10, United States Code, to require that the Purple Heart occupy a position of precedence above the new Distinguished Warfare Medal.

Details (To Be Put Into Letter):

The courage and sacrifice of those serving on the front lines of combat should not be relegated to a diminished level of importance and respect. Although it is important to recognize the contributions of those that serve away from the battlefield, it is imperative to show the utmost respect for those that put their lives on the line. Those who serve on the front lines are at greater risk than those that serve away from the battlefield, and those risks should carry the appropriate honor they deserve. The sacrifices of those directly in harm's way should be held in the highest regard and such combat valor awards should not be diminished in any way.

H.R. 833 and S. 470 are commendable pieces of legislation which honor those who have served in theaters of combat. The bills assist in ensuring that the sacrifices of our service members are held in the highest possible regard and will not be reduced to a position of lesser recognition. The ranking of awards should take into account the personal risk involved in the actions. There are many great concerns with the decision to rank the new Distinguished Warfare Medal above traditional combat valor medals such as the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, which should and must rank above the Distinguished Warfare Medal. This questionable ranking blurs the line between the risk that is taken by those who are serving directly under enemy fire and those who are not.

Take Action: Click the “Take Action” link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators and Representatives. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the ‘Details’ section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN’s website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org.