

**2018 Purple Heart Truck Run**  
**Truckee Meadows Community College**  
**Reno, Nevada**

**0900 Hours (9:00 AM)**  
**July 17, 2018**

***“Mobility is Freedom”***

**Sponsored jointly by:**  
**The Military Order of the Purple Heart**  
**&**  
**Wounded Warriors Family Support**





# ***“Mobility is Freedom”***

July 17, 2018

Welcome – MC Zack Totans

Posting of the Colors – VVA Chapter 989 Color Guard

Pledge of Allegiance & Progressive Order Arms

Retire the Colors

Introduction of Guests & Dignitaries

Executive Proclamation

Our Purpose Today

Introduction of our Drivers

&

Demonstration of the Purple Heart Truck



This year we celebrate the 242nd anniversary of our American Independence. We Americans think of July 4, 1776 as the date the colonies declared their independence, giving birth to the United States of America as an independent nation. But did you know that the Declaration wasn't actually signed until August 2, 1776? So, what did happen on July 4th? That was the date that the Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence, and that date was included on both the draft document and the fancy handwritten copy that the fifty-six colonial representatives signed when they came together on August 2, 1776.

The signing of the Declaration of Independence was an act of great courage. It was noted at the time that the signers "pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honors; and that was more than just rhetoric. Each of those men knew the penalty for high treason to the Crown." At the time, Benjamin Franklin said, "We must all hang together, or, assuredly, we will all hang separately."

These were incredibly brave men and they stayed brave through all the bloodshed of the coming revolution. Their courage created a nation built on a universal claim to human dignity, on the proposition that every man, woman, and child had a right to a future of freedom. It is worth reminding ourselves of the words our forefathers wrote as they took this historical stand: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

Through the years since 1776, generations of Americans have gone to war to defend the rights of ourselves and others to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our motives have been just; we have never sought to dominate or occupy the lands of others; only to help guarantee these same principles of human rights for all. We are the successors to the brave men who fought for the freedoms all Americans enjoy. Our young men and women in uniform today, as were their parents and grandparents, are just as willing, just as brave, and just as ready to lay down their lives to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

On this Independence Day, we are reminded of the words of President Ronald Reagan, who asked that we "celebrate the things that unite us -- America's past of which we're so proud, our hopes and aspirations for the future of the world and this much-beloved country -- these things far outweigh what little divides us. And so, we reaffirm that Jew and gentile, we are one nation under God; that black and white, we are one nation indivisible; that Republican and Democrat, we are all Americans. With heart and hand, through whatever trial and travail, we pledge ourselves to each other and to the cause of human freedom, the cause that has given light to this land and hope to the world."

May God Bless America, May God Bless our Troops, and may God Bless our Brothers and Sisters in Purple!

Neil Van Ess  
National Commander – The Military Order of the Purple Heart

## **2018 Purple Heart Truck on 7,800 Miles odyssey to Raise Awareness of Mobility Needs of Combat Wounded Veterans to stop in Reno, Nevada**

On Tuesday July 17, 2018 at 9:00AM, Reno Chapter 719 of The Military Order of the Purple Heart will host a ceremony to welcome the **2018 Purple Heart Truck Run to Reno** as it continues its 7,800 mile odyssey across America. MOPH Chapter 719 will host the event at TMCC (Truckee Meadows Community College Main Campus). Ceremonies will begin with a formal presentation of colors by the Vietnam Veterans Chapter 989 Color Guard. Followed by an introduction of guests and presentation of proclamation. Then a demonstration of the truck and introduction of the drivers, and participants will be invited to sign the truck. The media and the public are invited to attend this special ceremony.

There are an estimated 1.8 million Purple Heart recipients that were either killed in action or were wounded in combat or by an act of international terrorism. Those combat wounded service members who have transitioned back into civilian life have made great sacrifices to ensure our freedoms, but they often go unrecognized. The road to recovery and reintegration into their communities can be a long and difficult struggle for both the wounded warriors and their families.

**The focus of the 2018 “Purple Heart Run” will be “Mobility is Freedom.”** Sponsored jointly by the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) and Wounded Warriors Family Support (WWFS), the **Purple Heart Run** features a mobility-equipped, 2016 Ford F-150 truck, adapted to accommodate combat-wounded veterans who are paralyzed or have lost legs and/or arms. Our belief is that, given the right vehicle for mobility, a combat-wounded veteran will have the freedom to live a productive and quality life with his or her family.

Driven exclusively by amputee Veterans, the **Purple Heart Run** will make its way from coast-to-coast on a 7,800 mile odyssey, rallying communities across America to thank our Nation’s military veterans and support this great mission. The Purple Heart Run will begin in Springfield, VA on June 17, 2018, traverse the nation to California and end in Spokane, Washington on 30 July 2018 at the MOPH National Convention. On its way across America, the truck, provided by the Wounded Warriors Family Support Foundation, will stop at MOPH Chapters to demonstrate the capabilities of the truck and to distribute special parking signs that mark spaces to be used exclusively for Purple Heart recipients.

At the conclusion of the Purple Heart Run, the keys to the truck will be presented to U.S. Army Sergeant (Ret.) Justin Burdette, a Purple Heart recipient from Palm Bay, Florida, who was chosen from a nation-wide search of eligible and deserving nominees. On June 9, 2013, Patriot Burdette was three months into his third deployment to Afghanistan when his platoon received incoming mortar and rocket fire while on a dismounted patrol in Wardak province. Justin was hit with a 107 mm rocket, and the blast caused him to lose both legs below the knees. For his injuries he was awarded the Purple Heart medal.

The mission of ***Wounded Warrior Family Support (WWFS)*** is to provide support to the families of those who have been wounded, injured or killed during combat operations. The families of our casualties suffer in many ways: some financially, some psychologically, and the overwhelming stress of the recovery process can threaten to tear a family apart. Programs include: A Family Retreat program to provide vacation retreats, free of charge; a Caregiver Respite Program provides respite and supplemental services nationwide to the caregivers and families of wounded war veterans; and the “Mobility is Freedom” program provides grants to qualified combat-wounded veterans for the purchase of a Ford vehicle, specially adapted to suit veterans who are paralyzed or have lost legs or arms

The "***Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A. Inc.,***" (MOPH) was formed in 1932 for the protection and mutual interest of all combat wounded veterans and active duty men and women who have received the decoration. Chartered by the Congress, The MOPH is unique among Veteran Service Organizations in that all its members were wounded in combat or by an act of International Terrorism. For this sacrifice, they were awarded the Purple Heart Medal. With grants from the MOPH Service Foundation, the MOPH and its Ladies Auxiliary promote Patriotism, Fraternalism, and the Preservation of America's military history. Most importantly, through veteran service, they provide comfort and assistance to all Veterans and their families, especially those requiring claims assistance with the VA. Programs of the MOPH include VA Volunteer Service, Suicide Awareness, Homeless Veteran Assistance, JROTC Leadership Awards, Scholarships, Americanism, Purple Heart Trail and Cities, Welfare, and numerous community service programs, all with the objective of service to Veterans and their families. To learn more or to make a donation, go online to [www.purpleheart.org](http://www.purpleheart.org) and [www.wwfs.org](http://www.wwfs.org).

#### Contacts

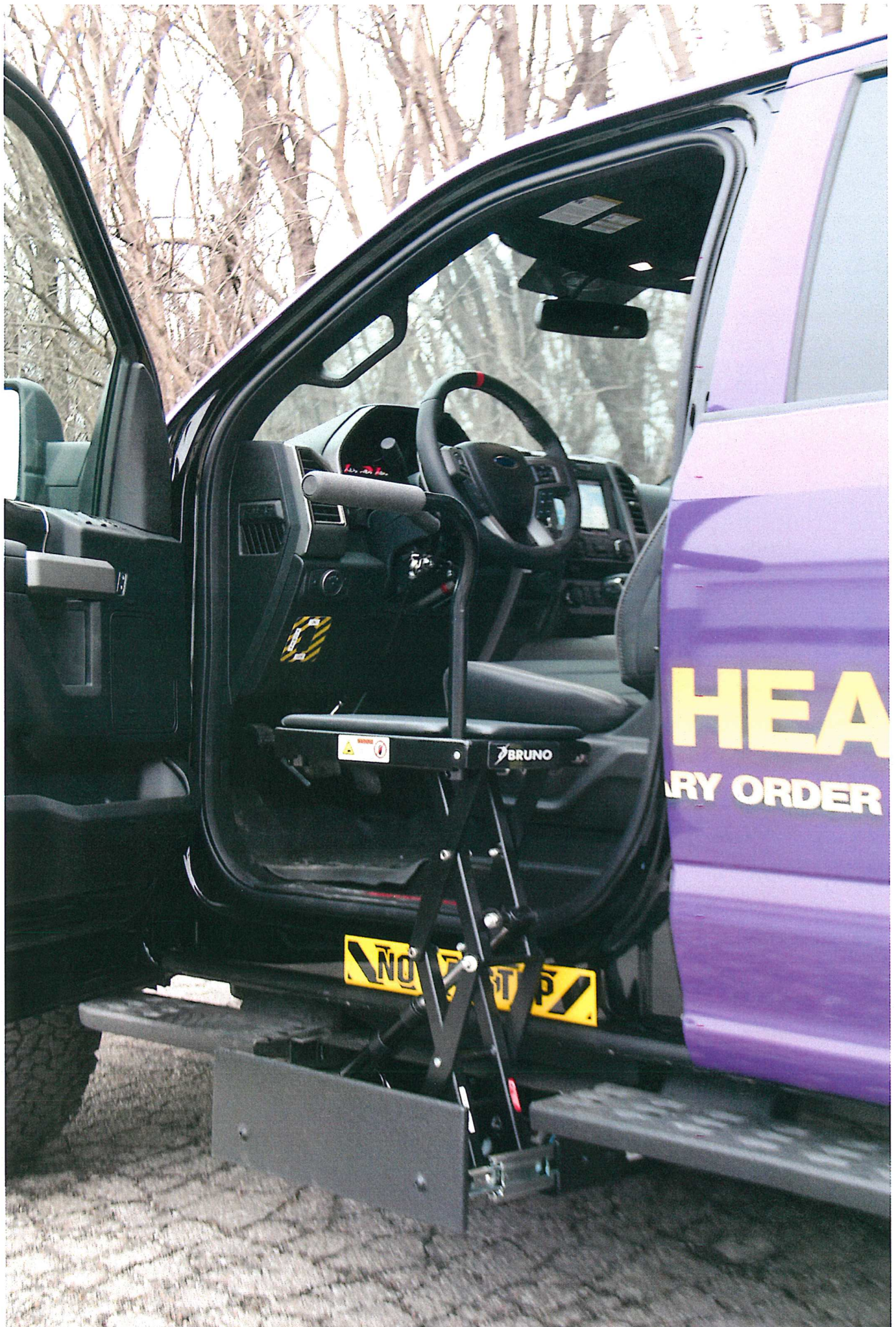
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## Sgt. Justin Burdette Palm Bay, Florida

Justin Burdette joined the Army in March 2006. He had three combat deployments - the first to Iraq and the other two to Afghanistan. Three months into his third deployment, on Saturday, June 9, 2013, Justin and his platoon were on patrol on a mountain top in Maidan Wardak province when they received incoming fire. Justin was hit with a 107 mm rocket. His soldiers had to carry him off of the mountain to the waiting helicopter, not knowing if he was even going to make it. He was the only one that received a serious injury. The blast caused him to lose both legs below the knees.

After being awarded the Purple Heart medal, he was flown to Germany to begin the long process of healing . . . Physically, mentally and emotionally.

Within a week, he was transported to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD where he received both inpatient and outpatient treatment and rehabilitation for approximately 18 months, retiring from the Army in December 2014.

An ardent sports fisherman who began fishing at a young age with his grandfather, Patriot Burdette took up fly fishing while at Walter Reed and now has a number of tournament trophies under his belt. According to Burdette, "I've had a lot more opportunities to go fishing since retiring, and usually go off shore, often in my boat. Thanks to a number of Veteran Charities, I've been salmon fishing in Alaska and tuna fishing in the Florida Keys and a whole lot in between. Sometimes I fish in the river, but I prefer off shore because you never know what you're going to catch."



In 2017 for one week, and again in 2018 for two weeks, Justin volunteered to drive the Purple Heart Truck on its journey across the nation. In typical humility, when asked whether he needed a truck himself, he replied "I would love to have it, but wouldn't want to deprive anyone who needs it more from getting the truck."

Justin Burdette now resides in Palm Bay, Florida with his wife Beth and son Corey....