

SB

216

Alaska State Legislature

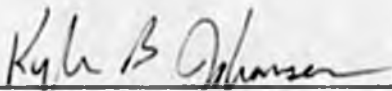



HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

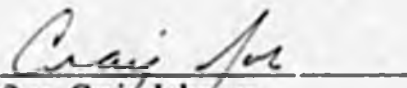
Representative Kyle Johansen, Chair

March 17, 2008

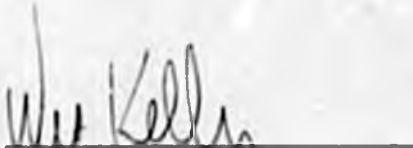
We the undersigned agree to waive CSSB 216, *An Act designating the Alaska Highway and portion of the Richardson Highway as the Purple Heart Trail*, from the House Transportation Committee onto the next committee of referral. Signature and agreement to waive does not constitute support or opposition to the bill, nor obligate the member to a specific vote on the House Floor.

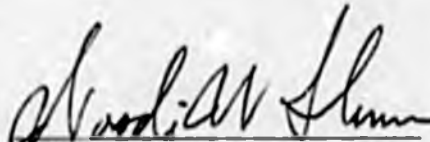

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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 19, 2008

TO: Representative Kyle Johansen, Chair
House Transportation Committee

FROM: Senator Johnny Ellis

RE: Hearing Request for SB 216 – Purple Heart Trail

I am requesting that Senate Bill 216, "An Act Designating the Alaska Highway and part of the Richardson Highway as the Purple Heart Trail," be scheduled for a hearing in the House Transportation Committee at your earliest convenience.

The Purple Heart Trail is a nation-wide network of interstate highways which honors the sacrifices of Americans who have been killed or wounded in combat. Alaska has over 100,000 active duty military personnel, National Guard members, and veterans, and our participation in this effort is long overdue.

Included in this packet:

- A current version of CS SB 216 (TRA) 25-LS1280\C
- Sponsor Statement
- Explanation of Changes
- Fiscal Note
- Backup Information
- Letters of support

If necessary, other backup will be forthcoming. Please contact my staffer Max Hensley at 465-3704 or Max_Hensley@legis.state.ak.us with any questions.

Thank you.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

Sponsor Statement **SB 216: Purple Heart Trail**

The Purple Heart medal is a United States military decoration awarded in the name of the President to those who have been wounded or killed in service to their country. SB 216 seeks to recognize and honor recipients by establishing a Purple Heart Trail in Alaska.

The Purple Heart Trail is a national project to designate portions of the interstate highway system as "The Purple Heart Trail System", reminding Americans of the sacrifices made by their men and women in uniform. The original Purple Heart Trail was established in the Commonwealth of Virginia at Mt. Vernon and runs the length of the Virginia Highway.

Today, the Purple Heart Trail extends across the nation. Signage drawing attention to the designation is placed at appropriate intervals along the highways to stimulate thought and discussion among adults and children alike in contemplating the history of this nation, and those who have sacrificed for it.

Alaska's participation in this national effort is long overdue. We have a strong military tradition; an estimated 73,000 resident veterans, approximately 25,000 active duty military, and more serving in the National Guard. In recent months, many returning Alaskan soldiers have been honored with the Purple Heart Medal.

The Alaska Highway, completed during World War II by the US Army to serve as a supply route, is an apt choice for the designation as "Purple Heart Trail System". Signs designating the Purple Heart Trail will be seen by both visitors and residents and will demonstrate that Alaska recognizes and honors the sacrifices made by our wounded and fallen soldiers.

Please join me in supporting the establishment of a Purple Heart Trail in Alaska.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate Labor and Commerce
Committee, Chair

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SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 10, 2008

TO: Representative Kyle Johansen
House Transportation Committee

FROM: Senator Johnny Ellis

RE: Explanation of changes to SB 216 - Purple Heart Trail

These changes were made in consultation with the Department of Transportation.

SB 216
25-LS1280A

- Sets minimum sign size at 20" X 30"
- Requires signs to be placed at terminus of highway and every 50 miles throughout

CS SB 216 (TRA)
25-LS1280C

- Allows DOT to determine the most appropriate sign size
- Designates Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Tok Junction, and the Canadian border for large signs with smaller signs at the midpoints
- Specifies content of informational pullout displays

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
Bill Version: CSSB 216(TRA)
(S) Publish Date: 2/8/08

Identifier (file name): SB 216-DOT-NDE-02-06-06 Dept. Affected: DOT&PF
Title: Act Designating AK Hwy/Richardson Hwy as the Purple Heart RDU: Highways and Aviation
Component: Northern Region Hwys and Aviation
Sponsor: Senator Ellis
Requester: Senate Transportation Component Number: 2068

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

| | Appropriation Required | Information | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 | FY 2011 | FY 2012 | FY 2013 | FY 2014 |
| OPERATING EXPENDITURES | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Services | | | | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | | | | |
| Contractual | 150.0 | | | | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | | | | |
| Land & Structures | | | | | | | | |
| Grants & Claims | | | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL OPERATING | 150.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| CAPITAL EXPENDITURES | | | | | | | | |
| CHANGE IN REVENUES () | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

| | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 | FY 2011 | FY 2012 | FY 2013 | FY 2014 |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts | | | | | | | |
| 1003 GF Match | | | | | | | |
| 1004 GF | 150.0 | | | | | | |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts | | | | | | | |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health | | | | | | | |
| Other Interagency Receipts | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 150.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Estimate of any current year (FY2008) cost: _____

POSITIONS

| | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 | FY 2011 | FY 2012 | FY 2013 | FY 2014 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Full-time | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Part-time | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Temporary | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Installation of six (6) major signs (approx 5'x12'), six (6) minor signs (4.5'x3'), and three (3) informational kiosks along locations on the Richardson and Alaska Highways. The cost for initial installation includes the concrete foundations and crash supports that breakway in an accident. A contractor will install these signs under the direction of the Department.

Prepared by: Mary Siroky
Division: DOT&PF, Commissioner's Office
Approved by: Nancy Stagle
Director of Division of Administration

Phone: 465-4772
Date/Time: 2/8/08 2:00 PM
Date: 2/8/2008



Legend: White
 Background: Green
 Route Plaque: Black on White

Make symbol proportional
 to graphic shown.

| Road Class | Dimensions (inches) | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------------|-------|-------|----|------|----|----|----|-------|--|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | J | |
| Expressway | 108 | 72 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | |
| | K | L | M | N | P | R | S | T | U* | |
| | 6.75 | 138.5 | 13.25 | 24 | 49.5 | 10 | 30 | 18 | 11.75 | |

* Proportionally scale Purple Heart Emblem to 38" wide



Border and Legend: White
 Background: Green
 Marker: Black on White

* See Appendix B-4 for
 Standard Arrow Details.

Make symbol proportional to graphic shown

| Letter Size (Inches) | Dimensions (Inches) | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----|------|------|------|---|----|---|---|-----|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | J | K |
| 6 | 36 | 64 | 0.75 | 2.25 | 19.2 | 4 | 24 | 3 | 6 | 2.5 |

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Purple Heart recipients

Anchorage Daily News

Published: October 17, 2007

Last Modified: October 17, 2007 at 12:55 PM

20 soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division Fort Richardson, Alaska

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The Purple Heart is awarded to any member of the United States armed forces who is wounded or killed in action against the enemy. Its origins date to General George Washington in 1782. It fell into disuse after the Revolutionary War until 1932 when President Herbert Hoover officially re-established it to honor the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth.

Spc. Timothy E. Holmgren is from Foley, Minn. He is assigned to HHT 1-40th CAV. Pfc. Holmgren was a crew member for a 120mm mortar system. On April 30, 2007, Pfc. Holmgren's vehicle was struck by 300-plus pounds of homemade explosives. The vehicle flipped and was thrown 25'. Pfc. Holmgren sustained a broken arm, leg, and three lacerations in his back and lost his spleen.

Cpl. Derek Davison is from St. Louis, Mo. He is assigned to D Co 3-509 IN ABN. Cpl. Davison was struck by an IED on April 22, 2007 while conducting patrols in Samarra, Iraq. He suffered shrapnel wounds to the left side of his body.

Sgt. Jason Brown is from Phoenix, Ariz. He is assigned to A-Troop 1-40th CAV. Sgt. Brown was a team leader in First Platoon of A-Troop. While on dismounted patrol on Aug. 4, 2007, his team was ambushed with small arms fire. Sgt. Brown sustained gunshot wounds in the leg.

Staff Sgt. Sean Reed is from San Diego, Calif. He is assigned to HHT, 1-40th CAV. Sgt. Reed was the gunner on a mounted patrol in Hawr Rajab on Aug. 4, 2007 when his truck hit a pressure plate IED and flipped over. Sgt. Reed received wounds to his face, arms, and lost part of a finger. He was joined at the ceremony by friends and family.

Sgt. Jesse Forte is from Greenville, Ohio. He is assigned to C-Troop, 1-40th CAV as a designated marksman in the sniper section. Sgt. Forte's dismounted patrol was struck by an IED while returning to FOB Falcon. Sgt. Forte received shrapnel to his right forearm. He was joined at the ceremony by friends and family.

Sgt 1st Class Kenneth R. Franco is from Queens, N.Y.. He is assigned to A-Troop 1-40th CAV. While on dismounted patrol on May 28, 2007, his platoon was ambushed with small arms fire. Sgt. Franco received gunshot wounds to his left calf during the engagement. He was joined for the ceremony by friends and family.

Spc. Ruben Aguilar is from Riverside, Calif. He is assigned to Delaware CO 1- 501st ABN. During a mounted combat patrol, his vehicle was struck by an EFP in the town of Mussaiyib. Spc. Aguilar suffered shrapnel injuries to all four extremities. He was joined at the ceremony by his wife, Annette.

Spc. Michael Dolce is from Sacramento, Calif. He is assigned to Delaware CO 1- 501st ABN. On June 25, 2007, while on a patrol; one of the vehicles was struck by an EFP in the town of Mussaiyib. Spc. Dolce suffered shrapnel injuries to his left knee and right wrist. He was joined at the ceremony by his wife; Amanda.

Spc. John Kegley is from Verona, Va. He is assigned to Delaware CO 1- 501st ABN. On 21 July, 2007, while conducting a mounted patrol in Mussaiyib, his vehicle was struck by an IED. He received shrapnel injuries to his right leg. He was joined today by his friends and fellow soldiers.

Staff Sgt. David Moore is from Tracy, Calif. He is assigned to Blackfoot CO 1-501st ABN. In April, 2007, while pulling security, the OP came under mortar attack. Moore sustained a head wound as a result of the attack. He was joined at the ceremony by his wife, Jessica.

Spc. William Swalls is from Rockingham, N.C. He is assigned to Delaware CO 1-501st ABN. On July 21, 2007, while conducting a mounted patrol in Mussaiyib, his vehicle was struck by an IED. He received shrapnel injuries to his right hand and left forearm. He was joined at the ceremony by his wife, Chasity and son, Conner.

Cpl. John Smith is from Apollo, Pa. He is assigned to Comanche CO 1-501st ABN. CPL Smith was in an over watch position on Dec. 12, 2006 when his unit came under mortar attack. Cpl. Smith received a severe head injury as a result of the attack. He was joined at the ceremony by his wife, Lauren and her grandfather, Ralph Cargo, who is a Purple Heart recipient from the Korean War.

SGT Casey Wright is from Tucson, Ariz. He is assigned to Delaware CO 1 501st ABN. While on mounted patrol, SGT Wright's vehicle was struck by an EFP in the town of Mussaiyib. Sgt. Wright suffered shrapnel injuries to his left thigh. He was joined for the ceremony by his wife, Amberle.

Spc. Lenwood Stewart is from Springfield, Mass. He is assigned to C CO 3/509 IN ABN. On May 31, 2007, as a result of an enemy attack on his dismounted patrol, Spc. Stewart suffered third-degree burns to the left side of his body and shrapnel to his right leg as a result of an enemy attack on his dismounted patrol.

Spc. Justin Taurialnen is from Anchorage. He is assigned as an engineer in Alpha Company, 425th BSTB. On May 21, 2007, while conducting route clearance operations, his up-armored engineer vehicle was struck by multiple IEDs. He sustained shrapnel injuries to his head, back, hand and legs. He was joined at the ceremony by his mom, dad and extended family.

Sgt. Richard Johnson is from Houston, Texas. He is the lead crew served weapon operator assigned to the Brigade Personal Security Detachment. He was wounded on Aug. 14, 2007 while traveling in the lead up-armored HMMWV. The convoy was hit by a six-array EFP. Sgt. Johnson sustained injuries to his backside and groin area. He was joined at the ceremony by friends and

family.

Staff Sgt. Chad Leblanc is from Anchorage. He is assigned to Military Transition Team 820, 425th BSTB. He sustained severe shrapnel wounds and third-degree burns on March 13, 2007 during a mortar attack on Combat Outpost REO in Al Hillah, Iraq. Leblanc was joined at the ceremony by friends and family.

Sgt. 1st class Joshua Ferguson is from Minneapolis, Minn. He is assigned to Military Transition Team 820, 425th BSTB. He was wounded in an EFP attack on April 22, 2007, while on a combined combat patrol with the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army in Al Hillah, Iraq. Ferguson sustained severe injuries to both of his legs. He was joined at the ceremony by friends and family.

Spc. Jose Collazo is from New York, N.Y.. He is an engineer assigned to Alpha Company 425th BSTB at Camp Falcon. He was wounded Aug. 4, 2007, when the convoy he was traveling in was hit by an IED. He sustained blast injuries to his hand and head. He was joined at the ceremony by friends and family.

Spc. Ramsey Rahe is from San Francisco, Calif. He is assigned to HMB Battery 2-377 PFAR. Spc. Rahe was a forward observer for Headquarters Battery. On July 31, 2007, he was wounded in an indirect rocket attack at FOB Kalsu. Spc Rahe sustained shrapnel wounds to his back, stomach and arms. He was joined at the ceremony by friends and family.

Comments

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1 Wednesday, October 17, 2007 - 12:27pm | dennissmoy

The Arctic Warriors

God Speed to them all!!!

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<http://www.purpleheart.org/purple-heart-trail.html>

Purple Heart Trail was initially established in the Commonwealth of Virginia from its start point at Mt. Vernon, VA. Through positive legislative support of the Virginia General Assembly and through the leadership of two of its governors, The Honorable George Allen (now U.S. Senator) and incumbent Governor James Gilmore the trail now extends down Virginia highway 235 (the Mt. Vernon Parkway) to US Route #1, thence to I-95. All of I-95 is designated the Purple Heart Trail from the Potomac River in Alexandria, on the Maryland border, down to the State of North Carolina. It branches off at Fredericksburg on Virginia Highway 3 (the Kings Highway) to Stafford County and thence to the George Washington Birthplace National Monument in Westmoreland County, VA. Another leg goes eastward on I-64 at Richmond, the state capital, to the city of Norfolk. The Virginia Department of Transportation has placed Purple Heart Trail signs at all rest stops on I-95 and I-64 and at other special points along the total trail.



Current Purple Heart Trail

Ultimately, the Purple Heart Trail will be extended from Virginia to all other states and major cities of the United States. Historically, the Purple Heart Trail concept was inspired by the George Washington Chapter #1732 of Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania, VA, in 1992. In convention of the Order, the delegates voted to approve a resolution establishing a symbolic Purple Heart Trail throughout the 50 states. With the Commonwealth of Virginia being the home of the two distinguished general officers involved in the development of the Purple Heart, Generals Washington and MacArthur, the Department of Virginia members of the Order took the lead to institute The Purple Heart Trail in Virginia, with a memorial marker to be erected and dedicated at Mt. Vernon as the start point of the trail.

In 1996, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth approved the first step in establishing the Purple Heart Trail parallel to I-95 and that portion of Virginia Route 3 from Washington's birthplace in Westmoreland County, VA, to his boyhood home at

<http://www.purpleheart.org/purple-heart-trail.html>

Ferry Farm in Stafford County, VA. In 1998, through subsequently legislative fiat, the trail was extended to Norfolk, VA, ending at the tomb of General Douglas MacArthur on Interstate 64 from Richmond (I-95) to Norfolk and to Mt. Vernon. The purpose of the Purple Heart Trail is to commemorate the patriotic American heritage given to us by George Washington and General MacArthur and for the people of Virginia, and ultimately all the states, to memorialize those service persons who have had the Purple Heart medal bestowed on them or their next of kin for wounds received in combat in defense of our nation.



By marking these trails with appropriate signage, it was conceived that the automobile and the Interstate Highway System represent very tangible symbols of our freedom; the ability to get up and go anywhere anytime. While taken for granted by so many, this and so many other freedoms we enjoy as Americans have been earned through the sacrifice of millions of Americans who have shed their blood and the many who have died in defense of freedom and liberty. The signage was intended as a reminder that freedom is not free and would stimulate thought and discussion among adults and children alike in contemplating the bountiful heritage enjoyed by all Americans as part of their legacy.

Major highways are the ideal setting for this virtual trail, and ultimately, the Military Order of the Purple Heart would like to see the entire Interstate Highway System, conceived by General Dwight D. Eisenhower during his tenure as President of the United States, designated as major portions of the Purple Heart Trail. Instructional kits have been developed and are in the hands of all Department Commanders on how to initiate necessary legislation in their respective states to implement the continued growth of the Purple Heart Trail System.

National Commander Louie Spinelli has accepted expansion of the trail as a major thrust of his leadership during his term of office. We who are on the forefront of this great effort, can take great pride in establishing this system as a most noble and patriotic endeavor of the Military Order of the Purple Heart that will become an indelible part of our continuing service to this great nation. If your state is not yet on board, we encourage all local chapters to take this up within the scope of their Americanism projects. Most legislatures have been found to be most receptive in support of legislative initiatives required to implement the program. The mood of the country is also such that many salons would welcome the opportunity to offer the necessary legislative language to make it happen. God Bless America, our home, sweet home!

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20 wounded soldiers receive Purple Heart

Twenty with combat injuries honored for 'warrior spirit'

By GEORGE BRYSON
gbryson@adn.com

Published: October 17, 2007

Last Modified: October 17, 2007 at 12:55 PM

Twenty Purple Heart medals rested in the serving tray Tuesday while 19 Fort Richardson-based soldiers wounded in Iraq stood at attention as best they could -- some leaning on canes, one missing a leg, a few with injuries to the head.



Click to enlarge

One by one the medals were pinned on their chests by Maj. Gen. Stephen Layfield, the senior Army commander in Alaska, who sternly told about 200 onlookers to "never ever miss the chance to say thank you" to the men -- all of whom are members of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

The ways they were injured were as varied as their wounds. Some were riding in vehicles that were blasted apart by projectiles. Some were hit by roadside bombs. Some were walking on patrols and shot by

unseen snipers.

But Staff Sgt. Chad LeBlanc, of Anchorage, may have had the most unusual tale to tell. He was stationed at an outpost south of Baghdad and was just preparing to lie down for the night inside his "can" -- a small mobile trailer just large enough for two bunks -- when he heard the sound of mortar fire outside.

Sticking his head out the door, LeBlanc just had time to see a mortar round blast into a



ERIK MILL / Anchorage Daily News

enlarge

Staff Sgt. Chad LeBlanc of Anchorage receives his Purple Heart medal from Maj. Gen. Stephen Layfield, senior Army commander in Alaska, as 19 soldiers assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division received their medals Tuesday at Fort Richardson.

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neighboring trailer -- one that was usually occupied by his buddy, Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Ferguson, who just then was away on leave in Alaska.

Shrapnel from the blast hit LeBlanc in the stomach and limbs and burnt his face and arms. Before falling into shock, he managed to find help.

"I ran about 25 meters to where the medics were and laid down on the ground and told them what happened," he recalled. "Then they put me on a helicopter, I went to Baghdad -- and that was it."

In an operating room, doctors removed 14 pieces of shrapnel from LeBlanc's arm and a big chunk from his side. The shrapnel that entered his stomach had to be removed through his back -- an operation that has since made the 32-year-old Alaskan less mobile.

He knows it could have been worse. He could have been inside the trailer that took the direct hit -- Ferguson's trailer. As it happened, however, his buddy didn't make it through their deployment unscathed either.

Returning to their unit -- a team within the 425th Brigade Special Troops Battalion that trains Iraqi army forces -- Ferguson was badly wounded about five weeks later when his vehicle was struck by an armor-piercing projectile.

The blast tore up his lower legs and shattered his left knee. Ultimately the leg would have to be amputated. On Tuesday, Ferguson was standing in the ranks with the other Purple Heart recipients, supported by a cane and a prosthetic leg.

"I set a record getting out of Walter Reed (Medical Center) for an amputee," Ferguson said, noting how anxious he was to return to Fort Richardson and his family. Now he's hoping to remain in the military -- he's served 11 years so far -- and in Alaska.

"If I could stay here until I retire in nine years, that would be perfect," he said.

Spc. William Swalls, a native of Rockingham, N.C. -- who received his second Purple Heart on Tuesday after suffering shrapnel wounds to his hand and arm -- is hoping to remain on active duty in Alaska too. His wife, Chastity, is currently enrolled in the nursing program at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Spc. Justin Taurialinen, who grew up in Anchorage -- and returned by motor home to a large throng of friends and family greeting him at the Muldoon overpass last week -- received a Purple Heart as well.

On May 21, his armored engineer vehicle was struck by "multiple IEDS," the improvised explosive devices his unit was charged with removing. Taurialinen, 23, sustained shrapnel wounds to his head, back, hands and legs.

Before pinning the medals on the assembled soldiers -- Sgt. Casey Wright of Tucson, Ariz., was unable to attend the ceremony -- Layfield emphasized their collective bravery.

"We're forever in your debt," he said. "We acknowledge your sacrifice and we acknowledge your warrior spirit and we acknowledge what you did for our country."

Find George Bryson online at adn.com/contact/gbryson or call 257-4318.

STATE OF ALASKA

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND PUBLIC FACILITIES**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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FAX: (907) 586-8365
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March 10, 2008

The Honorable Johnny Ellis
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Ellis:

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities supports the concept of designating the Alaska Highway and parts of the Richardson Highway as the Purple Heart Highway. The automobile and the Interstate Highway System represent symbols of America's freedom to get up and go anywhere anytime; that, combined with the fact that the Alaska Highway was completed by the army during World War II, make it an appropriate choice.

My staff are working with your office to determine the appropriate signage and locations as well as the cost of installation of Purple Heart Trail signs and maintenance. I look forward to passage to the installation of the first Purple Heart sign.

Sincerely,



Leo von Scheben, P.E., L.S., M.B.A.
Commissioner

cc: Mary Siroky, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Commissioner



Municipality of Anchorage

P.O. Box 100680 • Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0680 • Telephone: (907) 343-4431 • Fax: (907) 343-4430 <http://www.muni.org>

Mayor Mark Begich

Office of the Mayor

February 29, 2008

The Honorable Johnny Ellis
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Berta Gardner
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Ellis and Representative Gardner:

Please find enclosed a copy of Anchorage Municipal Assembly Resolution 2008-23 supporting your respective bills that would designate part of the Alaska Highway System as the "Purple Heart Trail."

I was proud to support this measure and am glad to know that you are both endeavoring to honor the brave men and women who have been wounded in our nation's service. This measure received the unanimous support of the Municipal Military and Veterans Affairs Commission and, ultimately, the Anchorage Assembly.

Thanks for your hard work on behalf of our deserving veterans.

Sincerely,

Mark Begich,
Mayor

Enclosure

cc: Ron Siebels, Military Order of the Purple Heart

Community, Security, Prosperity

Submitted by: Chair of the Assembly at
the Request of the Mayor

Prepared by: Office of the Mayor

For reading: February 12, 2008

CLERK'S OFFICE

APPROVED

Date: 2-12-08

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

AR 2008-23

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY AND MAYOR MARK BEGICH
SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 283/SENATE BILL 216 - DESIGNATION OF THE ALASKA
HIGHWAY AND A PORTION OF THE RICHARDSON HIGHWAY AS THE "PURPLE
HEART TRAIL."**

WHEREAS, Alaska House Bill (HB) 283 and Senate Bill (SB) 216 would designate the Alaska Highway from the Alaska-Canada border to Delta Junction and the Richardson Highway between Delta Junction and Fairbanks as the Purple Heart Trail; and

WHEREAS, HB 283 and SB 216 would required the Alaska Department of Transportation to erect and maintain appropriate signs at visitors centers, the terminus of the highways, pullouts, and at least one sign every 50 miles; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart presented this matter to the Municipal Military and Veterans Affairs Commission at its January 2008 meeting and the commission subsequently passed a resolution supporting this proposal; and

WHEREAS, the Military Order of the Purple Heart is a congressionally chartered military organization and the nation's oldest military decoration; and

WHEREAS, over 1,800,000 men and women in the history of our nation have born the scars of our nation's conflicts and earned the Purple Heart medal; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia established the original Purple Heart Trail at Mt. Vernon and it runs the length of the Virginia Highway; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart Trail now extends across the nation, drawing attention to the accomplishments of the brave men and women who have served our nation and won this medal by stimulating conversations of travelers; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Highway was completed during World War II by the US Army to serve as a supply route for the war effort is appropriate to be designated as part of the "Purple Heart Trail;" and

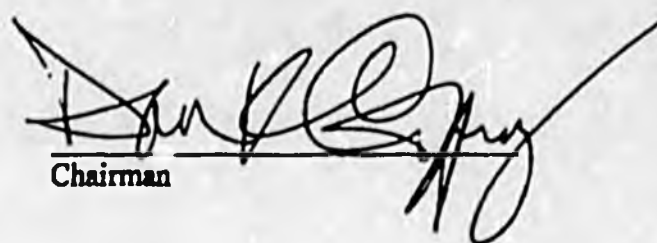
WHEREAS, the Alaska Highway serves as a gateway to the State of Alaska and serves thousands of visitors to our state each summer and would well serve the educational mission of the Purple Heart Trail.

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NOW, THEREFORE, THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:

to support speedy passage of Alaska House Bill 283/Senate Bill 216 which would designate the Alaska Highway and a portion of the Richardson Highway as part of the "Purple Heart Trail."

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Municipal Assembly this _____ day of _____, 2008.


Chairman

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk

**Municipality
of
Anchorage**



P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650
Telephone: (907) 343-4431
Fax: (907) 343-4409
<http://www.muni.org>

Mark Begich, Mayor

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

January 4, 2008

Senator Johnny Ellis
State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Letter of Support

Dear Senator Ellis:

The purpose of this letter is to express our unconditional support of the initiative of Chapter 593 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart to secure Alaska's participation in the National Purple Heart Trail System. The idea of designating major highways as portions of a National Purple Heart Trail originated in Virginia in 1992. Since that time, the trail has extended with designations across much of the Lower 48.

The Interstate Highway System, seen as a tangible symbol of our freedom -- the ability to get up and go anywhere, anytime -- provides an opportunity for a visible and poignant reminder of the sacrifices of Americans who have shed blood to protect our freedom. For those states that participate in this trail system, a simple highway designation with appropriate signage does just that.

Given the significant military population in our Great State and the many thousands of veterans who make Alaska home, we see our participation in this program as both a fitting tribute to serving military and our veterans and as an important reminder of their service and sacrifice. To all who travel Alaska's stretch of the Purple Heart Trail, our participation in this designation program says we recognize the sacrifice, we care about those who do and have served our country and we remember freedom is not free.

We strongly encourage your support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,


Col. Gregory Miller (Ret)
Chairman
Anchorage Military & Veterans Commission



Tok Chamber of Commerce
"Main Street Alaska"
PO Box 389
Tok, Alaska 99780
907 883-5775

Fax: 907-883-5774
<http://www.tokalaska.info.com>

**TO: State of Alaska
Senator Ted Stevens
Senator Johnny Ellis
Representative Don Young
Representative Berta Gardner**

We are proud to offer our strong support for Alaska to be a part of the "Purple Heart Trail". We think its simple visible message is well deserved by those who bravely gave so much of themselves in defending this nation.

This worthy project can be of great benefit to our community and the State of Alaska. We believe that those who see the signs will have a better understanding of the sacrifices made by those who wear the Purple Heart. We believe that the traveling public, whether Alaskans or visitors, will realize that we care about our wounded veterans. We further believe that the signs will bear witness that we in Alaska not only care about our wounded veterans, but we are willing to put forth the effort to visibly display our deepest fondness for their sacrifice.

Many who travel our roads will surely know or be related to a wounded veteran or a veteran who lost their life in defense of our nation. The warm feeling they obtain will certainly be in their minds as they traverse the roads of our great state. By showing them we care we can instill a kind Alaskan memory of their travels, and hopefully we will see them again.

Be it known to all that the community of TOK Alaska will be proud to be part of the Purple Heart Trail. We support it and we encourage all Alaskans to support it as well.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Rusyniak, President
Home 883-3124; Cell 206-724-4501; E: Fax 905-425-7901
Email: john@rusyniak.com



RESOLUTION 2008-05

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE STATE OF ALASKA DESIGNATE THE ALASKA HIGHWAY AS A "PURPLE HEART TRAIL" WITHIN THE ALASKA ROAD SYSTEM

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to never forget those who have given their lives and shed their blood in defense of this great nation; and

WHEREAS, a Purple Heart Trail system has been established throughout the major road system of the lower 48 states; and

WHEREAS, Alaska is geographically located at the far northwest reaches of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of Alaska's citizens, Alaska's veterans, and Alaska's tourism industry to be part of the Purple Heart Trail system; and

WHEREAS, Alaska is proud to join this worthy effort in providing America with the ability to establish this Purple Heart Trail all across America; and

WHEREAS, the placement of signs indicating "Purple Heart Trail" will simply indicate a part of a nationally existing system; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of the Purple Heart Trail within Alaska will in no way change the name or numerical designation of any existing road; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Highway has a well established historical military significance since it was built during the WWII era for military purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Highway is the best choice to establish and continue the Purple Heart Trail into the confines of the Alaska Road System.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The City Council for the City of Delta Junction by this resolution hereby requests the State of Alaska provide for the signage and placement of the Purple Heart Trail signs at approximately 50 mile intervals along the corridor of the Alaska Highway system within Alaska beginning at Beaver Creek and extending on to Delta Junction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: In order to inform all travelers, a sign designating the purpose for the Purple Heart Trail also be placed with the Purple Heart Trail signs at strategic locations such as entering or leaving the vicinities of Beaver Creek, Northway, Tok, Dot Lake, and Delta Junction; that explains the reason for the Purple Heart Trail; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The designated note of purpose signs read as follows:

***IN HONOR OF THOSE BRAVE PATRIOTS
WHO SHED THEIR BLOOD
WHILE ENGAGED IN THE SELFLESS ACT OF
DEFENDING OUR NATIONS FREEDOM***

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the Delta Junction City Council this 4th day of December 2007.



CITY OF DELTA JUNCTION

Maury Leith-Dowling
Maury Leith-Dowling, Mayor

ATTEST

Pat White

Pat White, City Clerk

Senate President Lyda Green
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

House Speaker John Harris
State Capitol, Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

February 19, 2008

Speaker Harris and President Green,

I am writing to express my support for Alaska House Bill 283, the Purple Heart Trail Act and the version introduced into the Alaska State Senate, SB 216 and to urge the legislature pass this bill and create a Purple Heart Trail in our state.

Over 20 states have seen fit to designate some portion of their road system as the Purple Heart Trail and place signs with replica Purple Hearts along the roads. These signs would honor those veterans who have earned a Purple Heart and would help to bring their heroic actions and sacrifices to the attention of Alaskans.

Alaska has the highest number of veterans per capita of any state, with an estimated 73,000 veterans that call our state home. Those veterans, along with the active duty military that serve in our state and the members of the Alaska National Guard deserve all the recognition they can get. Designating the Alaska Highway and a portion of the Richardson Highway as the Purple Heart Trail would be an appropriate way to honor the many Alaskans that have earned a Purple Heart and the many others that have served our country in the Military.

Please consider passing either HB 283 or SB 216 this session and honoring those who have done so much for our country.

Sincerely,

DON YOUNG
Congressman for All Alaska

DY:tr