

# AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

## America's Purple Heart Trail



**This monument marks the beginning of the Purple Heart Trail. It is located just outside the entrance to Mt. Vernon, Virginia.**

(NAPSA)—One of the reasons that freedom thrives in America is because of brave men and women who endured the true pain of preserving the nation's ideals. Indeed, some have given their lives to uphold justice and liberty for all.

For these acts of individual bravery, the nation's government presents its oldest military decoration: the Purple Heart medal. The Purple Heart Trail was established in 1992 by the Military Order of the Purple Heart to create a visual and symbolic tribute to those brave men and women. The Purple Heart Trail originates at a monument in Mt. Vernon, Virginia. Mt. Vernon is the burial location of George Washington, the nation's first president, the commander in chief of the Revolutionary Army, and the father of the Purple Heart award. Currently, 45 states have enacted legislation to have some portion of their road sys-

tem dedicated to honor Purple Heart recipients, and other states are now working on dedicating sections of their road system. Montana and Kansas have dedicated their state's entire interstate system as the Purple Heart Trail. Currently, the longest part of the trail runs along I-80 from San Francisco to the Wyoming-Nebraska border, and Nebraska is trying to get its portion of I-80 so designated.

Signs have been placed in many locations across America indicating roads, highways and even bridges where states and localities have enacted legislation to mark their portion of the Purple Heart Trail. Guam and Puerto Rico have also acted to honor Purple Heart recipients this way. These signs present a visual reminder to those who travel freely through the nation that freedom is not without cost.