

Office of the Mayor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor Ortt Joins Members of Purple Heart Chapter 264 for Monument Dedication at Gratwick Riverside Park

NORTH TONAWANDA - Mayor Ortt, along with other Federal, State, and local officials, will be joining members of John Paul Bobo Chapter 264 for a dedication ceremony on Saturday, October 12th at 10am in Raymond Klimek Veteran's park in North Tonawanda. The local Purple Heart Chapter has been working to erect a monument in the area, similar to the one which is located at the Servicemen's and Naval Park in Buffalo to gain recognition for all wounded and killed veterans of all wars.

The Purple Heart Chapter 264 was originally chartered by an Act of the United States Congress on April, 22, 1947. The Chapter was re-chartered on June 10, 2010 to reflect the Chapter's renaming to include Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Bobo. "Our decision to have the monument placed in North Tonawanda was the result of a collaborative decision to have the monument in a very visible, well established, and appropriate location (located between the Marine Corps Memorial and the Seabees Memorial along the shores of the Niagara River). The fact that the mayors of both of the Tonawandas were combat veterans also played heavily in our location decision," stated Chapter Adjutant Ronald Krul.

Mayor Ortt stated, "It is always an honor to be able to recognize the sacrifice of our American warriors. This monument is a reminder and a testament to the courage of the men and women who have not only served in combat, but who have been wounded and, in some cases, died in defense of our way of life. I am proud that chapter 264 of the Order of the Purple Heart has chosen Raymond Klimek Veterans Park here in North Tonawanda as the location for this solemn memorial. The Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration still given to U.S. military personnel, so it is fitting that there be a memorial for it."

Mike Targon, Commander of the local chapter and wounded Viet Nam veteran states, "the mission of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is to foster an environment of goodwill and camaraderie among combat wounded veterans, promote patriotism, support necessary legislative initiatives, and most importantly, provide service to all veterans and their families. We are pleased to be able to advance our mission by placing this monument in North Tonawanda Veterans Park to provide the well deserved recognition for these veterans."

"Our Chapter has received national recognition for two unique features in our membership", stated Ron Krul, a wounded Viet Nam Veteran. "First is the membership of City of Tonawanda Mayor Ronald Pilozzi (wounded in Viet Nam) and his nephew Nicholas Pilozzi, (wounded in Afghanistan). And our Chapter is the only Chapter in the United States that has the honor of having a father and daughter membership. North Tonawanda Alderman-at-Large Robert Clark was wounded in Viet Nam and his daughter Elena was wounded in Afghanistan," stated Krul.

Since World War I to present, it is estimated over 1.7 million Purple Hearts have been awarded to veterans. "There are probably hundreds of Purple Hearts issued to veterans in Western New York, and we would like to invite the recipients to join our Chapter and also attend the unveiling of the monument on Saturday, October 12th. They deserve to be recognized for their service and sacrifice," stated Krul.

Additional information about the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor can be found on the following website <http://www.thepurpleheart.com/>.

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