

## Speaking Points for Committee

Exhibit No. 1  
Date 2-13-13  
Bill No. SB 242

1. Our role:
  - a. I am a Army Survivor Outreach Coordinators who worked with all the Gold Star Families to include other branches of the service.
  - b. Assisting them with a variety of request such as , head marker, events we or other organizations are sponsoring, bereavement counseling, education benefits, Survivor Benefit Plan, DIC, networking, requesting reports, military ID card, keeping them connected to the military way of life, supply them with a variety of resources to assist them with their loss, we keep them abreast on important legislature that may affect their benefits and bills such as this one.
  - c. Sometimes we are just there because they need someone to talk with.
  - d. Their most important request is that we never forget them or their loved one.
2. We are here today to support SB 242 – to establish a MT Military Service Award to honor Montana’s fallen heroes.
3. We started working on this project two years ago:
  - a. Each branch of the service award Federal medals to the NOK of the deceased to honor them for their bravery.
  - b. We believe it is important for us to recognize these brave soldiers and airman with a special state medal.
  - c. Senate Joint Resolution 25, 2007, recognized the families with a certificate of recognition, and further recommended the DMA create an appropriate medal honoring MT military personnel killed in action.
  - d. Currently only three states who have a state medal – HI, AK, and NH. All three states use Medal of Honor. Cost of the medal and shadow box between \$120 and \$160.
  - e. We recommend the medal be given a name that is significant to their sacrifice such as MT Medal of Honor, or MT Medal of Heroism, or MT Medal of Valor. We have created a medal with a graphic designer as a starting point.

f. Currently, we have 44 military members that have died in Iraq or Afghanistan that would be eligible for such a medal. We have all the data available regarding the NOK.

4. Other past wars:

a. World War I: 584

b. World War II: 931

c. Korean War: 153

d. Vietnam: 270

e. Gulf War: 1



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MONTANA MILITARY SERVICE MEDAL

*David J. Williams*

## SYMBOLISM OF THE MONTANA MEDAL OF HONOR

**Cross:** Represents the ultimate sacrifice one gives for their country in defense of freedom.

**Circle of Stars in Blue:** Symbolic of the flag presented to Families of all military deaths.

**Gold Star:** Established by an Act of Congress on 1 August 1947 to identify widow(er)s, parents, and next of kin whose loved one lost their lives while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing force.

**Mountain Ridge:** The state name of Montana is Spanish for mountain or mountainous country of which the state has 77 named ranges of the Rocky Mountains.

**Sun and Rays:** The irradiant sun and rays are symbolic of the new era.

**Eagle Feather:** The golden eagle feather was a prized mark of a honored warrior in Native American cultures. It is earned through hardship, loyalty and strength. It represents Montana's seven American Indian Reservations.

**Shovel and Pick:** A series of major mining discoveries in the western third of the state starting in 1862 found gold, silver, copper lead, and coal.

**Green and Blue:** The green represents the agricultural history in Montana. Blue depicts the many rivers in the state that feed the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Hudson Bay.

**Neck Drape:** The neck drape is golden yellow and blue in color. The color of golden yellow symbolizes justice, power, strength and perfection. The color blue represents one of Montana's nicknames of Big Sky Country.

**Service Ribbon and Attachment:** The service ribbon represents distinguished service. Its colors are identical to the colors of the neck drape. The attachment device in the middle of the ribbon recognizes Montana as the 4<sup>th</sup> largest state in the US, and the 41<sup>st</sup> state admitted into the union in 1889.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 25

INTRODUCED BY J. PETERSON, RYAN, BLACK, HAWKS, KITZENBERG, MCGEE, STORY

BY REQUEST OF THE SENATE EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR THE MILITARY PERSONNEL KILLED IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN AND EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR THE FAMILIES OF THOSE MILITARY PERSONNEL; AND REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS TO CONSIDER, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE ABOUT, CREATING AN APPROPRIATE MEDAL HONORING MONTANA MILITARY PERSONNEL KILLED IN ACTION.

WHEREAS, more than a dozen Montana military personnel have been killed in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature recognizes and honors these heroic military personnel and the ultimate sacrifice they made on behalf of the United States of America and the freedom its citizens enjoy; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature expresses its sympathy and gratitude to the families of the military personnel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That an individual certificate of recognition and honor signed by members of the 60th Legislature be prepared, signed, and delivered to the next of kin of all Montana military personnel killed in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan before the adjournment of the 60th Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Military Affairs be requested to consider, and make recommendations to the Legislature about, creating an appropriate medal honoring Montana military personnel killed in action.



**Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States**  
**Department of Montana**

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8 May, 2012

Carla Lott  
Survivor Services Coordinator -SOS  
MPSC Contractor  
Ft Harrison, MT

Carla,

The Department of Montana Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the effort to authorize the proposed Montana Medal of Honor to be given to the family members of those fallen in combat.

We would further support a resolution to be introduced in the Montana Legislature authorizing the proposed Montana Medal of Honor.

Sincerely

TIMOTHY C. PETERS  
State Adjutant/Quartermaster