

Medal of Honor Historical Society of the United States Annual Report 2009

Background. The Medal of Honor Historical Society, a Medal of Honor research organization, was first founded by Edward Murphy in 1978. In 2001, Mr. Murphy resigned from the organization and it eventually fell into disrepair and ceased to exist. Our intent was to revitalize and reorganize the organization.

As such we renamed the organization the Medal of Honor Historical Society of the United States (MOHHSUS) and reincorporated thereby keeping the name similar to what it was previously so former members could join our efforts. The Articles of Incorporation were certified by the Idaho Secretary of State on January 20, 2009.

We applied for 501(c) (3) non-profit status on April 7, 2009 and it was approved on August 6, 2009 with an effective date of January 20, 2009. We are classified as a 501(c) (3) entity and donations are tax deductible.

Our newsletter is called *Above and Beyond* and is published quarterly although in 2009, there were seven editions published, partly in order to keep our new membership apprised of all the ongoing activities.

The Interim Board consisted of Gayle Alvarez, Interim President; Kent Kooi, Interim Secretary and Newsletter Editor; David Lotz, Interim Treasurer; Bill Sweeney, Interim Director; and Randy Wells, Interim Director.

Elections for a permanent Board were held on November 20, 2009. Those elected were: Gayle Alvarez, President; Bill Sweeney, Vice President; Randy Wells, Secretary; David Lotz, Treasurer; Ray Johnston, Director. Kent Kooi chose not to seek election to the permanent Board and also stepped down as editor. Sue Pittman Fox is now the Editor.

2009 Projects. We have been involved in a number of projects:

Medal of Honor Grave marker status: In 2009, nineteen 'Lost to History' recipients were located. Three 'In Memory Of' markers were ordered of which two have been installed. The third will be installed in early 2010. Six markers were installed on previously located graves. These markers are VA issued government markers which identify the person as a Medal of Honor recipient.

Former Slave Recipients: Working with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society (CMOHS), a listing of former slave recipients was compiled. There

are 25 known former slave recipients and at least one possible. A detailed listing is now available.

Actual Medal locations: Working with the CMOHS, a listing of actual Medal of Honor locations was begun. Part of this effort was to prove or disprove rumors and reported sightings. The list was expanded to include memorabilia including flags captured by a recipient during the Civil War when their location is known. Many of the Medal sightings have turned out to be replicas but to date there are close to 800 entries on the list. We are still waiting for confirmation on many others so this project is still a work in progress. We have begun publishing some of the known locations in our newsletter.

Donation: In April 2009, MOHHSUS member Charlie Chambers donated 18 bankers' boxes of research material to us. Many of these boxes contained files on individual recipients as well as cemetery files containing cemetery maps that he compiled over the years. The recipient files have now been scanned which resulted in over 1300 digital documents. Many of these documents contain more than one article. The cemetery maps were compared with information gathered by other MOHHSUS member's and we now have a cemetery map or directions to 99% of all known cemeteries in the United States that have a recipient interred there. In addition, a listing of cemeteries and grave numbers was compiled and is now available. We are awaiting confirmation on the grave numbers of those interred at Arlington National Cemetery as it appears that some sectional renumbering has occurred.

Medal of Honor Book Listings: In mid 2009, one of our members began compiling a list of books that were either authored by Medal of Honor recipients or were about Medal of Honor recipients. The list also includes a few video titles as well. This is also an ongoing project but at the close of December 2009, the list had 982 entries.

Finances.

The annual membership cost per member except for Medal of Honor Recipients themselves is \$20 annually for individual members and \$50 for corporations. Medal of Honor Recipients are extended honorary memberships with full privileges. During 2009, our first year of operation, we took in \$1640 in memberships (some members paid for more than one year) and \$395 in donations. Our 2009 membership total is 78 members. Our expenses for 2009 were \$72 for post office box rental, \$219 in postage, and \$27 in office supplies. The cost to incorporate and file for non-profit status with the IRS totaled \$330.

Ongoing projects.

We are working with the CMOHS to locate the graves of those still "Lost to History." Many of the recipient's names have turned out to be aliases which add even more challenge to the effort. The Archivist at the CMOHS has begun providing informational extracts from the files of those "Lost to History" which often includes last known locations and aliases. This has enabled our researcher's new avenues from which to seek information and has resulted in the large number of "Lost to History" recipients located in 2009. This is also enabling us to correct many inaccuracies in the various records.