

# Columbia, South Carolina's Purple Heart Bus

by John Bircher, MOPH Public Relations

**I**F YOU'RE WALKING DOWN the street in Columbia, S.C., some time in the next three years, chances are you won't believe your own eyes when you see a specially wrapped COMET Purple Heart Bus go rolling by, bearing the images of nine veterans spanning from World War II to Iraq and Afghanistan. The project was the brainchild of Bill Dukes, South Carolina's civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, and was brought to fruition with the aid and support of the MOPH Department of South Carolina. According to Dukes, "This was a great opportunity to demonstrate our appreciation for what the military means to the Midlands." The bus is being sponsored by Columbia, Lexington County, Richland County and the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority.



The Purple Heart bus debuted on February 26 to coincide with the Army's Community Meeting on possible drastic cuts at nearby Fort Jackson. More than 2,000 people attended the rollout, which featured a host of public figures headed by Governor Nikki Haley. Also, in attendance were the Purple Heart veterans portrayed on the bus, including Lou Fowler, Lewis Monroe, Andrew McMahon and Harry Boswell, all from World War II; Donald D. Hotz from the Korean War; Henry J. Geathers and Theodore Jenkins from the Vietnam War; and Ramon Guitard Jr. and Halsey Lynn Hinson from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.

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Halsey Hinson, one of the post-911 veterans whose image is featured on the bus, said, "Every service member has a different wartime experience and the bus is a reflection of that." Excited for her 10-year-old daughter to see the bus, Hinson explained, "To me it's very important that she knows what my mark in history was, so when she gets to that in school, and she is studying this part of history, she can say, 'My mom was there, my mom had a part in that.'"

World War II veteran Harry Boswell is also among the faces on the bus for his valor in May 1945. Thankful that he's still alive to tell his story, Boswell said, "A rifle bullet went through my right knee but, fortunately, it did not damage the knee. Many of my friends from high school went to the Pacific and they did not come back," said Boswell.

So, the next time you're in Columbia, S.C., take the time to wait for the next bus. Hopefully, you will see someone you know roll by.

## Donations for Veterans

FOR MANY YEARS NOW MOPH Chapter 8, Department of Minnesota, has stayed true to its mission of supporting veterans with the least of mobility by sponsoring recreation activities within the Veterans Homes of Minneapolis and Hastings and the V.A. Hospital in Minneapolis on a monthly basis. Continuing and expanding their efforts for these veterans, when new fund raising efforts bring in new dollars, has been their goal. Using the list provided by the above-named veterans facilities the chapter has been able to make donations of personal care items to them, so daily living needs of the patients can be met and improved. Chapter 8 Commander William Lilledahl and Welfare Officer Joe Kovar are pictured here with part of the \$825.00 donation of personal care items delivered to the Minneapolis Veterans Home in March 2015.

