



727 Atlantic Avenue, Third Floor
Boston, MA 02111
888-909-HERO ~ Fax: 617-542-0547
www.massmilitaryheroes.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Christie Coombs
781/982-1608
617/909-5768
mccoombs@comcast.net

MASSACHUSETTS MILITARY HEROES FUND LAUNCHED TO HELP FAMILIES OF FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS

MA 9/11 FAMILIES JOIN IN SUPPORTING MA MILITARY FAMILIES

BOSTON, MA; *May 21, 2009* -- Senator Edward M. Kennedy and some local 9/11 families today announced the launch of the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund (MMHF), a private non-profit organization dedicated to providing support, programs and services to the Massachusetts families of military service personnel who have fallen in service to the United States after September 11th. Kennedy and many Massachusetts 9/11 families worked together to create the new Fund.

“Since September 11th, 140 men and women with Massachusetts ties have made the ultimate sacrifice serving our nation,” said Senator Kennedy. “They were patriots, who put themselves in harm’s way to protect us all, and we must support the families they left behind in every way possible. I’ve been blessed to have had the opportunity to talk with many of their loved ones. I understand their burden and their grief, and I’ve also learned from many of them about the challenges that they face. The extraordinary task of putting their affairs in order and obtaining the support and benefits that they need, is almost too much to bear. I heard similar stories from the September 11th families in the days, weeks and months after that tragic day. The need for assistance is often overwhelming, and we hope this new Fund will ease some of the burdens.”

Currently 48 Massachusetts families who have lost a loved one in these wars are registered with the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund as it officially launches today.

- more -

“As a collective group of families who had experienced the outpouring of support from Senator Kennedy and numerous organizations and individuals after 9/11, we wanted very much to help the families of the military men and women who gave their own lives because of what happened to our loved ones,” said Cindy McGinty, a 9/11 widow and a Board Member of the new Fund. “So many parents of these young men and women have told me that their sons and daughters signed up for military service as a direct result of the 9/11 attacks on our country. Drawing from Senator Kennedy’s compassion for us and his leadership in the aftermath of 9/11, we wanted to be there as a source of strength, guidance and support for the Massachusetts military heroes’ families.”

Financial support for the organization will come from private donations and a percentage of revenue from the United We Stand License plates. The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles began issuing the license plates in 2002. A percentage of the revenue from the plates was designated for the Massachusetts 9/11 Memorial at the Boston Public Garden, and a larger portion benefitted programs and services that supported initial gaps in the families’ financial needs and healing. In 2008, this memorial was completed and endowed. Many 9/11 families from Massachusetts, who have a personal understanding of the overwhelming public loss, felt strongly that the Memorial revenue should be redirected to help the military families who have suffered a loss because of the recent conflicts. The percentage of funds designated to assist the 9/11 families with programs and services continues to benefit the Mass 9/11 Fund.

State Senator Steven Baddour and State Representative Joseph Wagner, after meeting with some Mass 9/11 families, were vital in passing the legislation to redirect this funding. It is estimated that approximately \$100,000 a year will now go to the new Fund. “The Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund is an absolutely outstanding organization. Redirecting the funding from the license plates is the least we can do to help support the families of the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country,” said Senator Baddour. The plates can be obtained at any Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles office or through the RMV website:

<https://secure.rmv.state.ma.us/ITS/Transaction/Plaform.aspx>

The Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund consists of an executive director/social worker and administrative manager, as well as a Board of Directors who will oversee programs, expenses, fundraisers and special events for the families. A Family Advisory Committee, which includes parents of several fallen service members, works closely with the Board to ensure that family needs are being met. The MMHF is located at 727 Atlantic Avenue in Boston.

"To all of us, our fallen servicemembers are heroes," said Steve Kerrigan, President of the MMHF Board of Directors. "To their families, they are, and will always be, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers. These families deserve more than simply our gratitude and our sympathy. They deserve our help and support. This fund represents an effort by the people of Massachusetts to reach out with aid and comfort to those military families in the Commonwealth whose loved ones have given what Lincoln called 'the last full measure of devotion' to their country. It is, very simply, the least that we can do for them."

Alma Hart, the mother of PFC John Hart who died in Iraq in 2003, said “I’m very grateful for the concern and compassion that the 9/11 families are showing the Gold Star families. The United We Stand license plates perfectly illustrate the admirable way that they are reaching out to us. Clearly, the 9/11 families are still dealing with their own losses and their compassion and strong support for us reveal the best of Americans’ caring, understanding, and unity.”

More details on the Fund and its programs and services for local military families are available on the web site, www.massmilitaryheroes.org.

###