



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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Treasurer Frerichs Returns Purple Heart To Family of Vietnam Veteran Killed in Action *Medals Return Home to Brighten Holiday Season*

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs today returned a Purple Heart Medal to Bertha Richard, niece of late Vietnam Veteran, Private First Class Andrew Gust Richard, at a ceremony at the Illinois State Capitol.

The Purple Heart is one of the most recognized and respected medals awarded to a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. Frerichs also returned a National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, a Combat Action Ribbon, and a Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon earned by PFC Richard for his service. The items were discovered in a safe deposit box that was surrendered to the treasurer's office as unclaimed property.

“Returning this Purple Heart, along with the National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon is a humbling honor,” said Frerichs. “With the holiday season upon us, I cannot think of a better way to honor Andrew Richard, who, along with countless others, gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country.”

Born in Elkhart, Richard began his tour in Vietnam in February 1968, serving as a Rifleman in the 1st Battalion, 27th Regiment of the United States Marine Corps. While participating in Operation Allen Brook in June 1968, Richard was killed in ground combat by hostile fire at Bac Dong Ban, Go Noi Island in the Quang Nam Province of South Vietnam, for which he received his Purple Heart and other military honors. Richard is buried at Camp Butler National Cemetery in Springfield.

PFC Richard's original medals and ribbons were destroyed in a house fire in 1970. Replacement medals and ribbons were requested and received by Richard's late brother William, who later gave them to his daughters. The items were placed in a safe deposit box and subsequently surrendered to the treasurer's office as unclaimed property in 2016.

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Frerichs has returned 5 Purple Heart Medals along with other military medals since December 2016. The treasurer's office has more than 100 unclaimed military medals. Military medals are never auctioned and are kept until the owners or family members are found.

The treasurer's office is the custodian of unclaimed property, including lost bank accounts, insurance policy proceeds, and forgotten safe deposit boxes. Items are surrendered after private entities tried for at least five years to locate the owners. Because thousands of items are surrendered each year, residents should check I-Cash every six months. Visit www.illinoistreasurer.gov/ICASH for more information. **Frerichs' office never charges money to search for unclaimed property.**

About the Illinois Treasurer

The Illinois Treasurer is the state's chief investment officer and Frerichs is a Certified Public Finance Officer. He protects consumers by encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. As the state's Chief Investment Officer, he actively manages approximately \$25 billion. The portfolio includes \$13 billion in state funds, \$7 billion in college savings plans and \$5 billion on behalf of local and state governments. The investment approach is cautious to ensure the preservation of capital and returns \$28 to the state for every \$1 spent in operations. The Treasurer's Office predates Illinois incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

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