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**American Military Who Continued to Save Lives in Death Through
Organ, Tissue and Eye Donations to Be Honored With Special Memorials**

***Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe to Dedicate Fallen Soldier Donor Memorial in Richmond
Companion Plaque to Be Hung at the U.S. Military Hospital in Germany***

(LOS ANGELES – November 10, 2016) — A unique memorial honoring United States service men and women who unselfishly became organ, tissue and eye donors so they could continue to save lives even after their own deaths will be dedicated today in dual ceremonies in Richmond, Virginia, and Landstuhl Military Hospital in Germany.

“This Fallen Soldier Donor Memorial honors members of our military, both present and past, who made organ and tissue donation their last courageous act of service so that others may live long and healthy lives in a free and safe world,” said Tom Mone, chief executive officer of the OneLegacy Foundation. The memorial was conceived and made possible through the OneLegacy Foundation and its contributors.

The impetus for this special memorial began when lung recipient Gary Foxen met Jill Stephenson while her son, Corporal Benjamin Kopp, was being honored on the Tournament of Roses Donate Life float in 2011. A member of the 75th Army Ranger Regiment, Corporal Kopp saved six of his comrades when his unit came under small arms attack by insurgents in Afghanistan. Although mortally wounded he saved four more lives back in the United States through his selfless gift of organ donation.

“Corporal Kopp’s actions saved a total of ten lives, and he is one of nearly 100 soldiers who has been mortally injured while on duty on the Middle East and, along with their families’ and the U.S. Military’s support, were able to save lives in their deaths as they did in life,” reflects Mone. “We felt it important to salute the generosity of these incredible Americans, and we are proud to be part of honoring their heroic deeds.”

(More)

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The memorial has been nearly four years in the making. Sculptor Ann Walsh said she wanted the memorial to be “abstract and ethereal,” so she decided to make the statue hollow and see-through. “The lines echo the natural growth in the garden,” she added.

The dual locations of the memorial have special meaning as well. In the United States the Fallen Soldier Donor Memorial statue will be unveiled at the National Donor Memorial at the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) campus in Richmond, Virginia. UNOS serves as the nation’s Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network and matches lifesaving organs with people awaiting transplants nationwide. It also manages the national database of medical information about transplant candidates, recipients and donors.

The U.S. Military hospital at Landstuhl was chosen because that is where severely injured soldiers are taken from battlefields in the Middle East, thus making the gift of life all the more powerful because their donations saved the lives of desperately waiting patients in Germany and nearby countries.

Speakers at the ceremony in Richmond will include Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, UNOS CEO Brian Shepard, OneLegacy Foundation CEO Thomas Mone; Corporal Benjamin Kopp’s mother, Jill Stephenson; Gary Foxen’s widow, Lois; and Dr. Guenter Kirste from Landstuhl. Due to space constraints the ceremony is by invitation only, but the public is invited to watch the ceremony via livestream on UNOS’ Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNetworkForOrganSharing/?fref=ts>.

As the largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization in the country, OneLegacy enables 1,400 organ transplants and nearly a quarter million tissue transplants each year by serving more than 200 hospitals, 11 transplant centers, and a diverse population of nearly 20 million people throughout seven counties in Southern California. More information on OneLegacy or on becoming a donor is available at www.onelegacy.org.

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