

For Immediate Release: *January 7, 2010*

El Cajon – Due to efforts by U.S. Congressman Duncan Hunter, retired Navy civilian firefighter Lewis E. Meyer will receive two Purple Hearts and a Prisoner of War Medal in a ceremony tomorrow aboard the U.S.S. Midway Museum in San Diego. Meyer was held captive during the Vietnam War, from February 1968 to March 1973.

Congressman Hunter initiated an inquiry with the Department of Defense after learning Meyer was initially denied the Purple Heart and Prisoner of War Medals for service during Vietnam. After receiving an unfavorable response as a result of Meyer's status as a civilian, Congressman Hunter appealed directly to the Secretary of the Navy. In November 2009, it was announced that Meyer would be awarded two Purple Hearts and a Prisoner of War Medal.

"Even as a civilian firefighter, Lewis Meyer served in a combat zone during the Vietnam War and endured years of captivity and abuse," said Congressman Hunter. "The enemy did not care that he was a civilian and made no exceptions for his status. Lewis Meyer's experience as a prisoner of war was shared by many others who were rightly recognized for their service and sacrifice, and I'm pleased that he is finally receiving the recognition he deserves."

Lewis Meyer will be awarded the Purple Heart and Prisoner of War Medals on Friday, January 8, 2010, at 1 PM PT aboard the U.S.S. Midway Museum in San Diego. All interested media is encouraged to attend.

Note: Records indicate that this is the first ever award of these Medals to a civilian federal employee assigned to a hostile environment during wartime.