

# News...

*...from the Illinois House of Representatives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Flider, American Legion Present 'Hero' Grant to Mt. Zion Veteran**

**DECATUR, IL** –State Rep. Bob Flider, D-Mt. Zion, on Tuesday joined Commander David Freyling of American Legion Post 105 and Mt. Zion Trustee Rick Bright in presenting Army Specialist Martin D. Smith of Mt. Zion with a \$500 grant from the American Legion's Coalition to Salute America's Heroes program.

Smith, a member of the U.S. Army's 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, was injured when a mortar round exploded on his post at a guard tower in Iraq. The grant is part of the American Legion's Heroes to Hometowns program, which assists veterans as they return to civilian life.

"We are very grateful for the sacrifice made by Specialist Smith," Flider said. "It is because of heroes like him that our nation remains free and safe. We must do more to honor their sacrifices and assist them when they return from active service."

"This grant helps give Martin Smith a head start and leg up as he returns to civilian life, this grant helps him continue his education or whatever he decides to use it for," Freyling said. "I'm glad the American Legion and the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes had the opportunity to present Mr. Smith with this grant."

The grant was made possible through a \$500,000 check from the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes to the American Legion. The Legion is dividing the contribution into \$500 grants to be awarded to disabled veterans returning from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes is a non-profit organization that was created to provide a way for those who are severely wounded and disabled in military conflicts to rebuild their lives.

The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism and patriotic youth programs. There are more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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