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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Soldier injured in Afghanistan among speakers at PBCC Veterans Day program

In Service of America will be held Nov. 6

(Lake Worth, Fla. – Oct. 24, 2008) Palm Beach Community College will hold its annual celebration Nov. 6 honoring the nation's veterans and first responders who risk their lives every day to protect the citizens of this country.

"In Service of America – Lest We Forget" will be held at 11 a.m. in the Duncan Theatre at the Lake Worth campus, 4200 Congress Ave. Among the speakers are Capt. Raymond O'Donnell of Hawaii, a 28-year-old Army soldier who was critically injured in Afghanistan last year, and Dr. Steven Scott, a Tampa physician who helped nurse him back to health.

U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, a Medal of Honor recipient and World War II veteran who lost his right arm in battle, will bring greetings via a videotaped message. He served as an infantryman in the 100th Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which became one of the most decorated units in military history.

Following the hour-long program, a meet-and-greet reception will be held in the Humanities Building Lobby from noon to 1 p.m. A question-and-answer session will be held in the Duncan Theatre from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The events are free and open to the public.

O'Donnell was serving in Afghanistan, assigned to the Task Force Phoenix as an advisor to the Afghan National Police, when he was injured Aug. 24, 2007 in a Humvee rollover that killed two soldiers. He suffered severe injuries including facial fractures, head injuries and spinal damage that caused some paralysis on his left side.

He was treated at several military hospitals, including the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, where Scott serves as director of the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center for veterans and service members with multiple injuries and wounds.

"He does a miraculous job of taking care of the seriously injured who need intensive

(more)

physical therapy. I can't speak highly enough of Dr. Scott," said O'Donnell, who joined the military in 2001 after graduating from the ROTC program at the University of Hawaii. O'Donnell also served in Iraq in 2005-2006 in the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry, the same unit that Inouye served in during WWII. O'Donnell volunteered to be assigned to that unit when it received orders to go to Iraq.

O'Donnell says his recovery is going well, and he plans to remain in the Army.

Palm Beach Community College, Florida's first public community college, is celebrating its 75th anniversary throughout 2008. The largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, PBCC serves more than 45,000 students annually through its associate degrees, professional certificates, career and customized training and lifelong learning. The College offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.

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