



America's Heroes



Purple Heart Honors Military Service Of 1.5 Million Americans

(NAPSA)—Exactly 225 years ago in August, General George Washington created a medal for his brave Colonial soldiers. With very little to work with, he had his wife Martha cut out some purple velvet and sew the word “MERIT” on the middle of the heart-shaped cloth. That was the birth of the Purple Heart medal.

Three soldiers received the Badge of Military Merit, as Washington called the award. The ceremony took place in Newburgh, N.Y. on August 7, 1782. On that day, records show General Washington wrote the following:

“The road to glory in a patriot army and free country is thus open to all.”

During the ensuing years, records were misplaced in the archives until General Douglas MacArthur revived the medal and had it redesigned. In a huge celebration on Washington’s birthday, February 22, 1932, the newly designed Purple Heart was shown to the world.



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The original Purple Heart was sewn by Martha Washington, based on a suggestion from her husband.

With a bust of General Washington in gold surrounded by purple with a gold edge, the medal is one of the most attractive in existence today. The Purple Heart is also the oldest military decoration in present use in the world. Over 1.5 million Americans have been awarded the



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The current Purple Heart was created in 1932 by General Douglas MacArthur.

medal. An estimated 500,000 wear it proudly today across America.

The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the armed forces who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin, in the name of those killed in action or who die of wounds received in action. It is specifically a combat decoration.

An organization known as the Military Order of the Purple Heart was formed in 1932 for the protection and mutual interest of all those who have received the decoration. Composed exclusively of Purple Heart recipients, it is the only veterans service organization composed strictly of combat-wounded veterans.

Over 39,000 members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart participate in Chapters scattered around the United States. For more information about the MOPH, visit the Web site at www.purpleheart.org.