

# Understanding the Purple Heart: A Medal of Honor and Sacrifice

Have you ever heard of the Purple Heart? It's not just a colorful name—it's one of the oldest and most respected military awards in the United States. The Purple Heart is given to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are wounded or killed while serving their country. It is a symbol of bravery, sacrifice, and dedication.

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## A Brief History

The Purple Heart has a long and special history. It was first created by **George Washington** on **August 7, 1782**, during the American Revolutionary War. At that time, it was called the “Badge of Military Merit.” Only a few soldiers received it, and then the award was forgotten for many years.

In **1932**, on the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth, the Purple Heart was brought back and officially recognized again. Since then, it has been awarded to over **1.8 million service members**.

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## What Does the Medal Look Like?

The Purple Heart medal is easy to recognize. It's shaped like a **purple heart** (the symbol of love and courage) with a **gold border**. In the center, there is a picture of **George Washington**, and above it, there's a ribbon of **purple and white**. The medal is not just beautiful—it carries deep meaning and honor.

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## Who Receives the Purple Heart?

The Purple Heart is awarded to soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who are:

- **Wounded in battle**
- **Injured while serving during a war**
- **Killed in combat or from enemy action**

This medal is not given for winning battles or showing leadership. Instead, it is a **recognition of the personal cost** a service member has paid while protecting their country.

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## Why Is It Important?

The Purple Heart reminds us of the **bravery and sacrifices** made by people in the military. Every medal tells a story—of a soldier who faced danger, stood strong, and gave something up for others. It also reminds us to be **grateful** for our freedoms and the people who protect them.

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## Purple Heart Day

Every year on **August 7**, we observe **National Purple Heart Day**. It's a time to **honor and remember** those who have received the medal. Many communities hold ceremonies, raise flags, and share stories of local heroes who were awarded the Purple Heart.

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## In the Classroom

Learning about the Purple Heart is a great way to understand more about **U.S. history, military service**, and the values of **courage, honor, and sacrifice**. It also helps us connect with those who have served in our families or communities.

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## Conclusion

The Purple Heart is more than a medal—it's a powerful reminder of the cost of freedom. It honors those who have been hurt or lost while serving the United States, and it teaches all of us to be thankful, respectful, and proud of their courage.



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