



**JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER
AND FORT POLK
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*Press Release***



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Fort Polk to hold a Purple Heart Ceremony

FORT POLK, LA. —A Purple Heart Ceremony will be held Friday, September 2nd, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. at Fort Polk's Bayou Theater. Media must meet at the Public Affairs Office building 411 no later than 12:30 p.m. on Thursday.

The Purple Heart is the first U.S. military decoration instituted by General George Washington in 1782 and awarded for bravery in action. The records show that only three men received it during the American Revolutionary War, Sgts. Elijah Churchill, William Brown, and Daniel Bissell Jr. on May 3rd, 1783. Two of these coveted badges still exist.

The original medal, sewn onto the coat, was simply a purple heart-shaped piece of cloth edged with silver braid. Although this was the medal of honor of the Revolution, it seems to have been forgotten for about 150 years. The 200th anniversary of Washington's birth marked the revival of the award on February 22nd, 1932.

The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of an Armed Force or any civilian national of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after 5 April 1917, has been wounded or killed, or who has died or may

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Purple heart 2/2/2

hereafter die after being wounded:

- (1) In any action against an enemy of the United States.**
- (2) In any action with an opposing armed force of a foreign country in which the Armed Forces of the United States are or have been engaged.**
- (3) While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.**
- (4) As a result of an act of any such enemy of opposing armed forces.**
- (5) As the result of an act of any hostile foreign force.**
- (6) After 28 March 1973, as a result of an international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation friendly to the United States, recognized as such an attack by the Secretary of the Army, or jointly by the Secretaries of the separate armed services concerned if persons from more than one service are wounded in the attack.**
- (7) After 28 March 1973, as a result of military operations while serving outside the territory of the United States as part of a peacekeeping force.**

While clearly an individual decoration, the Purple Heart differs from all other decorations in that an individual is not "recommended" for the decoration; rather, he or she is entitled to it upon meeting the specified criteria for its award.

What Washington wrote in his orderly book on August 7, 1782 still stands today:

"The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus open to all. This order is also to have retrospect to the earliest stages of the war, and to be considered a permanent one."

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Media wishing to cover the ceremony should contact Major Ron Elliott at (337) 531-1418 or Samantha Bingham at (337) 531-4630.