

A Survivor's Heart

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Sgt. Morton C. Warnow and fellow members of 2nd Lieutenant Jack L. Frederick's crew in front of their B-17 during combat crew training at Alexandria, Louisiana, April 1944. Front, from left: Lt. Frederick, pilot; 2nd Lt. John W. Kirkbride, copilot; Lt. Fred H. Sherriff, navigator (transferred before July 20 mission); 2nd Lt. Raymond L. Nagle, bombardier. Back: Staff Sgt. Kenneth H. Fritts, engineer/top turret gunner; Sgt. Walter H. Jenkins, ball turret gunner; Warnow, waist gunner; Sgt. Robert V. Norris (did not fly July 20); Cpl. Edgar E. Pierson, tail gunner. Not pictured, but present and taken as POWs July 20: Staff Sgt. Emerson R. Roberts, radio operator; 1st Lt. John P. Szungyi. Photo provided by Kimmen Sjölander, Ph.D. Crewmen identified by Donald Byers, historian, 401st Bomb Group (H) Association: www.401bg.org/Main.

Fritts and Jenkins went to Stalag Luft I. Warnow's group began the "Black March" from Gross Tychow on Feb. 6, 1945 during Europe's coldest months of the 20th century. They trudged 20 miles daily for nearly three months. Hundreds died.

Separated yet again, the entire crew survived somehow until re-

lease, though life proved difficult for many afterward. Research has documented a lingering impact not just on Holocaust survivors and soldiers – but on their children and grandchildren. "Preoccupied with mourning their immense loss, some parents had difficulties in responding to their children with adequate



Morton C. Warnow on the right. "He was a brilliant, brilliant man," said Lafayette resident, Kimmen Sjölander, Ph.D., of her father, Morton C. Warnow. Photo provided by Kimmen Sjölander, Ph.D.

History of the Purple Heart

Second only to the bronze star in prominence, the Purple Heart is also the nation's oldest military decoration, dating back to the time of George Washington. On Aug. 7, 1782, he wrote:

"The General ever desirous to cherish virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military merit, directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over the left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth, or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding. Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with a due reward."

Washington's award, however, was only ever conferred upon three men from Connecticut regiments of the Continental Army. It was not until General George McArthur became Army Chief of Staff in the late 1920s that the Purple Heart truly became the tribute it is today.

Initially, the medal was to be issued only for a "wound which necessitates treatment by a medical officer and which is received in action with an enemy" if the soldier's commander determined the wound to have resulted "from a singularly meritorious act of essential service." But, during a 20-year period, three American presidents raised the medal's profile even higher.

Franklin Roosevelt decreed that wounded from all military branches – not just those in the Army – were eligible retroactively from Dec. 7, 1941. Harry Truman pushed that eligibility date back to April 5, 1917 to honor World War I's injured. And John F. Kennedy ensured that "any civilian national of the United States, who while serving under competent authority in any capacity with an armed force... has been, or may hereafter be, wounded' and authorized posthumous award of the medal."

Source: Celebrating America's Freedoms: The Purple Heart, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

affect," wrote Natan P.F. Kellermann, Ph.D. in the "Israel Journal of Psychiatry" in 2001. For many, "economic safety was considered more important than emotional well-being." While a fair number were unaffected, he said, still others were left with a "vague sense of fear, sadness and vulnerability."

Warnow graduated from Cornell, married in 1955, had three chil-

dren, and wrote the 1962 novel, "Forced March" in just a few days. "He loved the written word; it was one of his great gifts," said Sjölander. An inventor, he designed face-to-face communications technology in the 1970s and founded Modern Deaf Communication. He passed away in 2006.

Looking at the medal she had been safekeeping for her dad – the

Purple Heart that actually had made it into his hands, Sjölander realized his name had also been misspelled on that one – as "Norton Warnow." PHR is now obtaining a corrected medal for her.

"He had a tremendous capacity for optimism and appreciation of beauty in the world. He never stopped being enthusiastic about life."

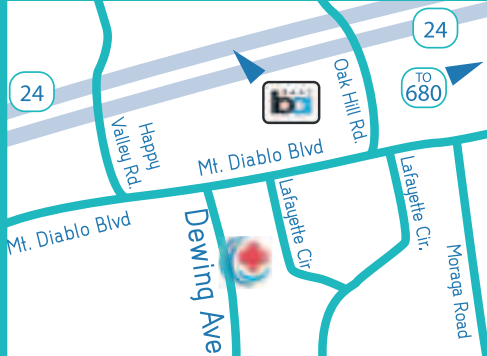
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