

Kirkwood – A Purple Heart Town

National Purple Heart Day is August 7. The Purple Heart medal is the oldest military award still presented to American service members. Originally this award was known as the Badge of Military Merit and was created by President George Washington in 1782. The first soldiers to receive this Badge were William Brown and Elima Churchill, Continental Army Soldiers during the Revolutionary War.

The Purple Heart was officially renamed in 1932 and given the look it has today due to the Army General Doug MacArthur who wanted to refresh and rename the award in time for the bicentennial of George Washington's birthday. Originally most military awards went to officers; however, this award is for all U.S. service members of any rank who have been wounded or killed in enemy action. The first service member to receive the modern-day Purple heart was Army General Douglas MacArthur for his service in the Philippines during World War II.

In May 2014, Broome County was one of 10 counties in the state to be recognized as a Purple Heart County. They put up 12 signs at locations along state highways entering Broome County, including a sign on Route 11 at the PA/NY border. The next year on September 1, 2015, Kirkwood honored its local Purple Heart Veterans and was officially designated a Purple Heart Town. In April 2016, the Town Board, under the direction of then Supervisor Gordie Kniffen, decided to put up more signs around the area acknowledging the honor. It was Councilman Lew Grubham (now Town Supervisor) who said "If it is important to do this, we should post a sign at all the entrances into the Town."

Kirkwood is proud to honor and remember our local service men and woman and the sacrifices they made and continue to make to protect this Country and our freedoms. These signs serve as a reminder to recognize those who have given so much for us.



As of last year, April 27, 2022, the NY State Senate finally passed legislation to officially declare NY State a Purple Heart State.