

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

AGN. NO.
July 15, 2025

Proclaiming August 7, 2025, as Purple Heart Day in Los Angeles County

The Purple Heart is one of the oldest and most distinguished military decorations in the United States, awarded to members of the Armed Forces who have been wounded or killed in action. Its origins date back to August 7, 1782, when General George Washington, unable to promote soldiers based on merit due to restrictions from the Continental Congress, created the Badge of Military Merit [1]. In his order he authorized the badge, a purple heart-shaped cloth symbol, to recognize soldiers who performed “singularly meritorious action”.¹

After falling out of use following the Revolutionary War, the award was revived in 1932 by General Douglas MacArthur on the 200th anniversary of Washington’s birth. The Purple Heart was reestablished to honor Washington’s legacy and military ideals. That same year, 136 World War I veterans were formally awarded the newly reissued medal at Temple Hill in New Windsor, New York, the site of final encampment of the Continental Army in the winter of 1782-1783.²

¹ National Purple Heart Hall of Honor. (n.d.). *History*. Retrieved from <https://www.thepurpleheart.com/history/>

² U.S. Department of Defense. (2018). *The Purple Heart: America’s Oldest Military Medal*. Retrieved from <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/1650949>

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Since then, the Purple Heart has become a lasting symbol of sacrifice and service. An estimated 1.8 million American service members have received the award,³ and it remains the oldest military decoration still conferred by the United States government. Today, Purple Heart Day is observed annually on August 7 in recognition of its founding and the individuals who have borne the physical cost of war.⁴

Our region has a proud and enduring tradition of honoring our veterans. The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum was commissioned in 1921 as a memorial to veterans of World War I and was rededicated to all United States veterans of the war in 1968.⁵ It stands as a monument honoring veterans and remains one of the few sports venues in the country with this designation.

In 1926, the County opened what is now Bob Hope Patriotic Hall in downtown Los Angeles, a prominent and historic civic building dedicated to the service and support of veterans.⁶ For nearly a century, the Hall has provided a central location for services, ceremonies, and the preservation of military artifacts, serving as a testament to the County's commitment to its veteran community.

California recognized the legacy of the Purple Heart in 2012, when it became the first Purple Heart State. Through Assembly Concurrent Resolution 111, the Legislature formally recognized the contributions of Purple Heart recipients and encouraged cities and counties across California to do the same.⁷

³ Congressional Research Service. (2024). *R42704: Military Decorations and Awards*. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R42704>

⁴ National Day Calendar. (n.d.). *Purple Heart Day – August 7*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/national-day/purple-heart-day-august-7/>

⁵ Los Angeles Conservancy (n.d.). *Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum*. Retrieved from <https://www.laconservancy.org/learn/historic-places/los-angeles-memorial-coliseum/>

⁶ LA County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. (n.d.). *Bob Hope Patriotic Hall*. Retrieved from <https://mva.lacounty.gov/bob-hope-patriotic-hall/>

⁷ California Legislature. (2012). *ACR 111 – Purple Heart State*. Retrieved from <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/ACR111/id/635339>

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

Proclaim August 7, 2025, as Purple Heart Day in Los Angeles County, in honor of the brave men and women who have been wounded or killed in combat while serving in the United States Armed Forces; recognizing the importance of celebrating and remembering veterans' sacrifices and preserving their legacy.

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