

A Purple Heart Remembered and Returned; A Lost Buddy Identified.



Principles at the Purple Heart ceremony on the campus of the College of Lake County included Col. Paul J. Hettich, left, an Antioch resident and neighbor of John Trinca, Tom McAvoy, who found the Bateman Purple Heart in Chicago in the 1950s, SSgt. John G. Trinca, who stood next to Pvt. Thomas Bateman when he was shot and killed, Thomas Bateman, Jr. of Memphis, Tenn., the son of Pvt. Bateman, and Cpt. Zachariah Fike, who is the spearhead behind the Purple Heart reunion project. The frame contains the medals awarded Pvt. Bateman.

Sunday, August 3, 2014, was a day of remembrance and closure for the son of a World War II veteran killed in battle a few months before the end of the war and another veteran who was standing next to the soldier at the time of his death. Present at the ceremony was Thomas Bateman, Jr. of Memphis, Tenn., who never knew his father, Pvt. Thomas Bateman of Chicago.

The senior Bateman died in battle in the Philippines in June of 1945 at the age of 25.

Also in attendance was SSgt. John G. Trinca of Antioch, IL, who was standing next to Pvt. Bateman when he was killed.

Pvt. Bateman was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart but the medal was somehow lost.

It was later discovered in Chicago in the 1950s by Tom McAvoy, who was also present at the ceremony. McAvoy contacted the Purple Hearts Reunited organization to assist in finding the true owner of the medal. It was that organization,



World War II veteran and Antioch resident, SSgt. John G. Trinca, wipes tears from his eyes during the Purple Heart ceremony at the Lake County Veterans Memorial on the campus of the College of Lake County on Sunday, August 3. Seated next to Trinca is Thomas Bateman, Jr. of Memphis, Tenn. who received the lost Purple Heart medal posthumously awarded to his father, Pvt. Thomas Bateman, who died in battle in the Philippines during the Second World War. Bateman also lost his great-grandfather in battle, the first Thomas Bateman, killed in 1862 during the Battle of Shiloh in the Civil War.

along with the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), which hosted the joint ceremony at the Lake County Veterans Memorial on the campus of the College of Lake County, 19351 W. Washington St., Grayslake.

During the discovery process, SSgt. Trinca was located. It was Trinca who was able to supply details of the soldier's death to the Bateman family.

Keynote speakers at CLC included Col. Paul J. Hettich, also an Antioch resident and a neighbor of John Trinca, and Cpt. Zachariah Fike, who is the spearhead behind the Purple Heart reunion project which he founded. The ceremony included a 21-gun salute, the playing of Taps, and the 13 folds of two flags which were presented to the Bateman family and John Trinca.

Thomas Bateman, Jr., is the fourth in a line of five Thomas Batemans. The first of these, Bateman's great-grandfather, also died in battle. It happened at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862 during the Civil War. ###



Photo left: Thomas Bateman, Jr., left, veteran and Antioch resident SSgt. John G. Trinca, and Chicago resident Tom McAvoy stand before the medals of Pvt. Thomas Bateman during the Purple Hearts Reunited and the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) joint ceremony at the Lake County Veterans Memorial on the campus of the College of Lake County, 19351 W. Washington St., Grayslake on Sunday, Aug 3.