

# Most decorated American headlines festival parade

By Keith Postler  
staff writer

Lt. Col. Matt Urban (U.S. Army, retired), the most decorated combat soldier in American history, will be this year's Grand Marshall at the "Star Spangled Southfield" Festival '89 Parade.

History has taught generations of Americans that the country's most decorated, revered and legendary military heroes are Audie Murphy and Sergeant York, Douglas MacArthur and Edward Rickenbacker, but history can be changed, and it was — nearly 10 years ago.

In 1980, Lt. Col. Matt Urban received a spate of medals from President Jimmy Carter in a tearful White House ceremony that ended 35 years of frustration, doubt and research. Two years before the ceremony, military researchers discovered a recommendation in Urban's name for the Medal of Honor — the nation's highest military award — that had been lost since the end of World War II in mountains of bureaucratic red tape. Soon afterward, recognition of Urban's battlefield heroics began to roll in.

AT THE WHITE HOUSE ceremony, Urban received the Medal of Honor, his seventh Purple Heart, a Croix de Guerre with a Silver Star and the Legion of Merit — all of which had been lost for more than three decades. With 29 medals awarded for bravery in 20 months of combat, Urban became America's most decorated combat soldier in history.

In 1944, Urban, then just a captain, distinguished himself on the battlefield while attached to an Army Infantry unit in France. Nicknamed the "Ghost" by German troops, Urban was wounded in battle seven times in six major battles — once while destroying two enemy tanks under heavy machine gunfire. Time and time again he returned to battle to lead U.S. Army troops to victory.

Today, Urban, 69, spends much of his time speaking at civic functions, high schools and VFW halls on the merits of bravery, courage and honesty — qualities he exemplified on and off the battlefield.

The FESTIVAL '89 PARADE will feature jet fly-overs, Shriners on parade, U.S. and Canadian marching bands, military units, historic units, Scottish bands, pipe and drum corps,



U.S. Army photograph

LTC Matt Urban, the most decorated American soldier, will star in the fourth annual festival parade.

The parade will begin on Civic Center Drive, just east of the Lodge Freeway, and continue east toward the Civic Center complex. Parade units will pass the reviewing stand while traveling north on Evergreen.

# Varsity dance group at LTU

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video screens for a multi-media presentation.

Then from 7-11 p.m. Thursday, July 6, at the civic center pavilion, Continental Cablevision is sponsoring a "Nostalgia Ball" with dancing to the Les Elgart Orchestra. Parking is free. Refreshments are available and door prizes will be given away.

Tickets are \$3 in advance or \$4 at the door. Call the Southfield Senior Center at 354-9362 for ticket information.

Finally closing up the 12-day festival is the Johnny Trudell Concert at 7 p.m. Sunday, July 9, at the Prudential Town Center Sun Bowl, Civic Center Drive between Evergreen and the Lodge. The concert is free.

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