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Article Summary: This article profiles a few of the Nebraska heroes of World War II.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Robert Dawes Stabler, Robert A Moose, Hollis Dorion Stabler, Aubrey S Hurren, Don O Woods, Robert Devoe, Robert D Booker. V P Schroeder, Elmer F Hurren, Merlin L Hurren, Aubrey S Hurren, Carl Spatz, L K Truscott Jr, George Stabler, Eunice Stabler, John B Anderson

Photographs / Images: Pvt Robert Dawes Stabler, Lt Robert A Moose, Pfc Hollis Dorion Stabler, Lt Col Aubrey S Hurren, Don O Woods H-A 1/c, Sgt Robert Devoe, Robert D Booker, Murlin Spencer (Correspondent Associated Press)



NEBRASKA'S HEROES: ANOTHER TYPICAL GROUP

Upper (Left to Right): Pvt. Robert Dawes Stabler, Lt. Robert A. Moose, Pfc. Hollis Dorion Stabler.

Lower: Lt. Col. Aubrey S. Hurren, Don O. Woods, H-A 1/c, Sgt. Robert Devoe

Nebraska's Heroes - II

Their Deeds of Valor

PVT. ROBERT D. BOOKER of Callaway was one of the men whose "Deeds of Valor" were described briefly in the first number

of this series. The citation "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty in action," was read during presentation of the Distinguished Service Cross on January 26th last, and may be found on page 19 of that issue.



On April 29th the childhood sweetheart of Private Booker, now his widow, witnessed another and even more memorable recognition of her husband's service — presentation of the Congressional Medal of Honor. This was awarded by Major General John B. Anderson, commanding

officer of the 16th Corps at Fort Riley, Kansas. His address was given in part in the *Loup Valley Queen* of May 4th, and deserves repetition here:

"It is an honor and a privilege to have been designated by the War Department as its representative to come to the home of Robert D. Booker today. . . .

"During all the years of our existence as a nation the number of citizens who have been awarded this decoration is but a mere handful, a few hundred of our bravest men. The honor has been awarded only to those having the highest order of courage, of self-sacrifice, of devotion to duty, and a willingness to sacrifice even life for their country and the cause for which their nation was fighting. Robert Booker has joined that

select group of outstanding American heroes whose names will forever be carried on our Nation's highest roll of honor. . . . There can be no doubt that he truly represents our ideal of the best of our American young manhood who today are fighting our battles in the four corners of the earth in order that we, as a Nation, may survive."

Rev. V. P. Schroeder, pastor of the Evangelical Church of which the family have long been members, added a significant tribute:

"When Glenn, an older brother, left to enter the army, Bob said, 'I wish I were going in his stead.' Such consideration for others was apparent in his early life. In the home, the school and the church, his dependability, loyalty, reverence and cooperation were always evident. . . . Whatever he did, he did wholeheartedly, never content with 'just enough,' but only content when he had done the most."

The brother Glenn was killed in action June 25th on Saipan, one of the Japanese islands taken by the Army and Navy that month. He had been in service for more than two years, most of that time in the Pacific zone.

Thus the Nation has bestowed upon Private Booker, son of a pioneer Nebraska farm family, its highest honors for heroic sacrifice in battle. Likewise the State will honor him and his brother in grateful recognition of what it took to make such sacrifices.

THE HURREN BOYS: There is a little man in College View who is father of three stalwart fighting sons — Captain Elmer F., serving with the U. S. Air Force in England; Merlin L. in Iceland; and Lt. Col. Aubrey S. who was reported killed in action over Italy on May 14th. And that is what his distraught father still refuses to believe. "Not even yet! He was a trained pilot and mechanic; he has been flying twelve to fourteen years and made many forced landings, even in the night. I don't know if the plane and all bodies were burned, or if his identification tag was found, or anything. Nor can I locate anyone who can tell me how to get the information. I want to *know!*" And that state of suspense, month after month, is one of the heavy burdens war lays upon the human heart.

Colonel Hurren was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross on July 15, 1943, from the hand of Lt. Gen. Carl Spaatz.

He was one of twelve officers who led great fleets of troop transport planes to Sicily during early stages of the invasion. Since then he has been awarded the Air Medal. He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1930, and was editor of the *Alumnus* magazine.

PVT. ROBERT DAWES STABLER, member of the Omaha Tribe of Indians residing in Thurston County, won distinguished honors while serving in the Third Reconnaissance Troop of the Fifth Army in Italy. His wounds were received while landing in North Africa in November 1942, more than two years after he volunteered for service. He took part in the Tunisian campaign, and in Sicily had been under command of General George Patton of the Seventh Army. But it was in the Fifth, in November 1943, that he had an inch-long escape from instant death when, riding on patrol, his horse stepped on a mine and was blown to bits. Stabler too was blown fifty feet but picked himself up unscathed. The next January, however, on the front in Italy, he received the wounds that caused his death. The Purple Heart was given to his parents—who prize equally a commendation received in August 1943 when their son had volunteered for special duty with the Scout and Raider Unit working under Navy supervision in cooperation with amphibious movements of the Third Infantry Division. His commanding officer wrote:

It has been brought to my attention that you landed in advance of the assault wave on the morning of 10 July, 1943, at Licata, Sicily; and although under fire from enemy installations, successfully reached shore, where you marked the beaches to insure landing of infantry craft at the proper points.

Your gallantry in volunteering for this hazardous assignment, your heroism and lofty courage in executing your mission in face of enemy fire, and your devotion to duty reflect the finest traditions of this Division and of the Army of the United States. Your acts are worthy of the highest praise.

It is with deep pride and sincere appreciation of your outstanding services to your country and to the Division that I extend my personal commendation and congratulations.

The document bore the signature of L. K. Truscott, Jr., Major General.

This hero's parents, George and Eunice W. Stabler, also

cherish a letter written by "Private Bob" just before going to the front for the last time, when his platoon was making the initial attack on Cisterna. "There is no place in the world that can compare with the smallest town in the States. America is the only place," he wrote, and his mother (author of a moving book, "How Beautiful is the Land of My Fathers,") adds:

"Only twenty-four, full of hope for the future, Bob laid down his life for human freedom—true democracy for all of us. How precious is youth!"

PFC. HOLLIS DORION STABLER, who volunteered in 1939, also took an active part in the drive on Tunisia and again in Sicily. He was a technician with the Fourth Rangers Battalion, Signal Corps Division, and received five wounds in March 1944. Happily, the brothers had met in January for the first time in over three years. Just before his discharge from the hospital he donated a pint of blood to a wounded comrade. He too was awarded the Purple Heart.



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