

PBS special tells stories of 4 Pueblo war heroes

**By Mark Wolf, Rocky Mountain News
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They were heroes on battlefields from Italy to Korea to Vietnam. Though the specifics are distinct, their stories share the common ground of bravery and courage.

And they have two things in common. Each is a recipient of the Medal of Honor, and each is from Pueblo.

The stories of Drew Dix, Jerry Murphy, Carl Sitter and William Crawford are well known in their hometown, where statues of the four are part of the city's Home of Heroes monument.

When Brad Padula was growing up on the east side of town he used to play in Drew Dix Park. As a student at the University of Southern Colorado, he lived on Jerry Murphy Road.

Those names came back into his life four years ago when Padula began work on *Beyond the Medal of Honor*, a moving two-hour documentary on Pueblo's four Medal of Honor recipients that airs Thursday at 7 p.m. on KRMA-Channel 6 and nationally on PBS.

Padula's company, Capture It Productions, was hired to cover the 2000 Medal of Honor Society convention in Pueblo. Pete Lemon, a Medal of Honor recipient who lived in Colorado Springs and is a client of Padula's, suggested a documentary on the quartet.

Not long after that, Crawford died; a week and a half later, Sitter passed away.

"Carl Sitter's funeral was at Arlington. We went to the funeral to film and that was the time I realized this was an incredible story," said Padula, who wrote, directed and was co-executive producer.

"One of the hardest things was access to the recipients, building trust. Pete made a lot of those inroads for us because of his relationship with fellow recipients."

Beyond the Medal of Honor was eventually underwritten by the Perot Foundation, which will distribute more than 17,000 copies of an expanded five-disc DVD (the PBS program and separate one-hour shows on each recipient) to public and private high schools.

The soldiers' stories come alive through new and archival interviews with the four honorees, men who served with them, family members, and military historians. Vintage newsreel and military footage puts the battles into context.

William Crawford's story is the stuff of couldn't-make-it-up heroism.

"He was a private in the Army, a scout. He was out in front of the platoon, encountered three German machine gun emplacements that had opened fire. He methodically maneuvered, crawled and took all three of them out. He went down to aid a wounded buddy, was captured and in a Nazi prisoner of war camp for 19 months," said Padula.

"Everybody thought he'd been killed. His medal was awarded posthumously to his father. Later in life he took a job as a custodian at the Air Force Academy. That's what's amazing. He did so much silent mentoring to those cadets. What a great hero he was. He would never tell anybody what he'd done."

What links the four stories, Padula said, is that "all four have that belief in right and wrong. There's a character trait with these four and all the Medal of Honor recipients I've come across. They're very humble, very confident, they have a drive to do the right thing.

"Every one of them will tell you that somebody deserved the medal more than they do. They feel it represents the whole group they were with, not just this one particular action. They say it's the guys who were left on the battlefield who are the true heroes."