

Major (Ret.) Dwight Steven Varner

Year of Commission: 1941

BS in Agriculture: 1941

MS in Animal Nutrition: 1947



Major Varner was in the 1st Armored Division and landed in North Africa in December 1942. In Africa, Varner was taken prisoner by the Germans, but three days later was able to escape and in an ironic turn of events, took 25 Axis soldier prisoners. He was awarded the nation's second highest award for valor, The Distinguished Service Cross, as a result of his actions. His other awards include The Silver Star and two Purple Hearts. After the war, Varner returned to the U of I to earn a graduate degree. For the next 27 years, Varner worked for the VioBin Corporation as an Original Research and Quality Control Head. During this time, he was also a successful small business owner. Varner operated the Illini Iris Nursery in Monticello, Illinois.

Year Inducted: 2013