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HEADQUARTERS 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO #36, U. S. Army

TAG
ORIGINAL ORDER
BLK.

GENERAL ORDERS

22 May 1944

NO. 150

Posthumous Award of Silver Star..... I
Award of Silver Star..... II
Award of Oak Leaf Cluster..... III

SECTION I -- POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF SILVER STAR

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, a Silver Star is posthumously awarded each of the following named individuals:

OSCAR C. BRATCHER, 38036008, Private First Class, Company G, 141st Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 15 December 1943 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Private First Class Bratcher was company runner during an attack against strongly fortified enemy positions. During the initial stages of the attack, all communications between the different units of the company were destroyed by the heavy mortar and artillery fire. To establish and maintain contact between the assault and the support elements, he made four trips across the exposed terrain separating the units braving the fury of intense enemy shelling. Although wounded, Private First Class Bratcher refused to be evacuated and continued his important work until he was killed by fragments from an enemy mortar shell. By his determined courage and devotion to duty, he kept the company units in contact and enabled the company commander to maintain control during the critical stages of the attack. Next of kin: Mrs Stella Bratcher (mother), 515 Water Street, Waxahachie, Texas.

LOUIS J. KNIGHT, 32221648, Private First Class, Company I, 141st Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 23 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. With his company in a hazardous defensive position along the *** River, Private First Class Knight volunteered to occupy a forward outpost position which was under constant enemy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. Exposed to the heavy fire sweeping the area, he daringly moved forward to the vital position and successfully occupied it. When an artillery barrage was directed at the outpost, he bravely ordered his comrades to take cover while he maintained the guard alone. While determinedly carrying on in the face of the deadly barrage, he was killed by an artillery shell which exploded near him. Private First Class Knight's magnificent courage and exemplary devotion to duty inspired the successful holding of the company's position and undoubtedly saved the lives of the other soldiers at the outpost. Next of kin: Miss Agnes A. Knight (Sister), 165 Park Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

JOHN (NMI) STERNER, 33237409, Private First Class, Company I, 141st Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 25 December 1943, in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Private First Class Sterner volunteered to go on a patrol whose mission was to ambush an enemy machine gun crew, and destroy the position. Working their way forward, under cover of darkness, the patrol reached the position before the enemy had sent men to occupy it and concealed themselves in the vicinity. Private First Class Sterner, volunteered to take a forward position on the exposed terrain facing the most likely avenue of enemy approach, while the other men took cover behind a stone wall. While the patrol was thus waiting the approach of the enemy, a heavy artillery barrage was directed on their positions. With utter disregard for his own safety, Private First Class Sterner continued to hold his forward position, and

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while so doing was killed. By his great fortitude and unselfish devotion to duty in voluntarily assuming the most dangerous position, he enabled the other men of the patrol to return in safety. Next of kin: Mrs Maggie M. Mohr (Mother), Route Number 1, Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

RUSSELL L. WEBER, 36454545, Private First Class, Company C, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 12 February 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Assigned to maintain a defensive position during frequent enemy counter-attacks, Private First Class Weber, a machine gunner, steadfastly remained with his weapon during an intense concentration of hostile artillery and mortar fire. Displaying superlative calmness and outstanding initiative when the tripod of his gun was knocked out; he courageously propped the weapon up on some rocks and directed accurate deadly fire against the enemy when they advanced within range. His determined defense was an important factor in repulsing the attack and successfully maintaining that sector. Private First Class Weber was fatally wounded shortly afterward by a direct hit of a mortar shell on his position. His magnificent courage and exemplary devotion to duty inspired all who witnessed his deed. Next of kin: Mrs Margaret Weber (Mother), 152 Atlantic Street, NW, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

ARTHUR E. STARK, 34714046, Private, Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 21 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Private Stark, assigned the task of helping to carry the battalion switchboard across the *** River during an assault on enemy positions, crossed the river in the face of deadly mortar, artillery and small arms fire, and set up the switchboard. When it became necessary to send all available men back to the friendly side of the river for wire to replace the shattered battalion communication lines, he volunteered to remain and continue operating the switchboard. Although painfully wounded, he determinedly maintained his position amidst the inferno of furious shelling. Unaware that fierce enemy resistance had forced the battalion to withdraw, Private Stark stayed at his switchboard, constantly testing his lines even after the maintenance of communication seemed impossible. Two days later his comrades found him dead. He had been wounded four times, but was still at his post. Next of kin: Mrs Wadge Stark, (Mother), Nashville, Tennessee.

SECTION II -- AWARD OF SILVER STAR

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, a Silver Star is awarded each of the following named individuals:

JOHN W. UPCHURCH, 01308026, First Lieutenant, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 21-22 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. During an assault on furiously defended enemy positions, across the treacherous *** River, Lieutenant Upchurch assumed command of Company A when the company commander was wounded and evacuated to an aid station. Although painfully wounded himself, he continued to lead his men in the attack, displaying qualities of extraordinary courage and splendid leadership under heavy enemy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. Realizing the futility of attempting to press further, Lieutenant Upchurch speedily reorganized his company and, with consummate skill, directed the preparation of defensive positions. Entered the Service from Chicago, Illinois.

CLYDE (NMI) WALKER, 20809319, Technical Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant), Company K, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 21 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Encouraging and leading his men during the utterly contested crossing of the *** River, Sergeant Walker assumed command of the entire platoon when the platoon leader and other non-commissioned officers became casualties as a result of the intense enemy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. Reorganizing the men into a compact fighting unit, he repeatedly exposed himself

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to the continued heavy fire while skillfully directing the assault against the hostile emplacements. His aggressive leadership materially contributed to the advance in his sector. Entered the Service from Waco, Texas.

JOHNY M. GILREATH, 35789345, Staff Sergeant (then Private First Class), Company L, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 21-22 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Acting as squad leader during the bitterly contested crossing of the *** River, Private First Class Gilreath skillfully led his men across the treacherous waters under intense hostile artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. Reorganizing them on the other side, he courageously moved forward over heavily mined terrain leading an assault on his assigned objective and maintaining the position against repeated enemy counter attacks. His aggressive leadership contributed materially to the accomplishment of the company's mission. Entered the service from Holly Hill, Kentucky.

LEO E. HESS, 37318978, Staff Sergeant, Company A, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 21-22 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Encouraging and leading his men during two bitterly contested crossings of the *** River, Sergeant Hess repeatedly exposed himself to the intense artillery, mortar and machine gun fire while maintaining unity within his platoon. Pushing forward courageously over heavily mined terrain despite the continued heavy barrage, he successfully led an assault which overcame his objective and resulted in many casualties suffered by the enemy. His aggressive leadership materially contributed to the advance in his sector. Entered the Service from Eagle Bend, Minnesota.

GARRETT T. DALTON, 32649687, Private First Class, Company F, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 22 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. Private First Class Dalton crossed the *** River with his unit in an attempt to establish a bridgehead on the hostile bank. Attacking in the face of intense artillery and mortar fire, he advanced with his squad until stopped by barbed wire entanglements covered with machine gun fire. Crawling forward to the barbed wire, he assisted in cutting it, thus permitting the troops to proceed with the assault. Private First Class Dalton continued dauntlessly forward, constantly exposed to the enemy shelling and machine gun fire, firing his own weapon with great effectiveness against the strongly fortified and well concealed enemy emplacements, until he was wounded and ordered to return to the friendly bank of the river for medical attention. Entered the Service from Brooklyn, New York.

ALFRED (NLI) DILEO, 32918823, Private, Company F, 143d Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 22 January 1944 in the vicinity of ***, Italy. After crossing the *** River with his unit in an assault on enemy positions on the farther bank, Private Dileo continued to advance in the face of continuous artillery and mortar shelling and intense machine gun fire. He made his way across the shell blasted terrain toward an enemy machine gun emplacement until he was struck by shrapnel. When the enemy launched a furious counterattack, Private Dileo, ignoring his painful wound, seized an automatic rifle and opened fire on the approaching enemy, successfully repelling the attack in his sector. Entered the Service from Branswick, New Jersey.

SECTION III -- AWARD OF OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, an Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a second Silver Star is awarded to the following named individual:

JOHN P. DOWNS, 35206971, Private First Class, Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion
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lion, 141st Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 19 January 1944 in the vicinity of Mount ***, Italy. Returning from Company F, to the battalion command post, Private First Class Downs and a comrade detected enemy minefield markings on the trail. Voluntarily determining to clear the area of mines, they moved forward cautiously, found the first mine, and carefully removed it. As they did, a heavy concentration of artillery fire began to fall near them. When the fury of the barrage slackened, they continued to search the trail, discovering and removing two more mines. Their work was both hazardous and tedious; before removing a mine they had to carefully check it for booby-trap attachments, then exercise extreme caution in neutralizing and removing it from the ground. Not until they were certain that the trail was clear of all mines did they return to their company. By retaining their calmness under enemy fire and by the skill and caution they exercised in clearing the mines, Private First Class Down and his companion made an important route safe for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Entered the Service from Bathany, West Virginia.

By command of Major General WALKER:

STEWART T. VINCENT
Colonel, General Staff Corps
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

VINCENT M. LOCKHART
Captain, Adjutant General's Department
Assistant Adjutant General

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