

HEADQUARTERS  
162nd Infantry  
APO 41

H/o  
9 March 1944

Z10.5

Subject: Recommendation for Award of Decoration.

To : The Commanding General, 41st Infantry Division, APO 41.

1. Under the provisions of AR 600-45, and USAFFE Regulation 10-50, 17 August 1943, I recommend that Sergeant LEONARD C. DeWITT, 20933467, Company I, 162nd Infantry, be awarded the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty at Scout Track Ridge, Boise, New Guinea, 28 July 1943, as evidenced by his actions described below.

2. On 28 July 1943, Company I, 162nd Infantry, moving forward on Scout Track Ridge near Boise, New Guinea, encountered a large enemy force in a well organized perimeter. Not being able to proceed, the company dug in to hold the ground gained until reinforcements arrived. The defensive position prepared by Company I was approximately 250 yards distant from the enemy, on the top of a ridge. The ridge top was almost bare of cover with only a few trees. Before the position was entirely organized, at about 1800 hours the Japanese opened up on the position with artillery fire. This continued for approximately 15 minutes until just at dusk the fire was lifted to burst in the tree tops and an attack was launched, covered by machine gun fire. The attack was concentrated entirely on the front of the perimeter facing the enemy position. Since the company carried only one unit of fire per man, the quarters bearing the brunt of the attack was soon dangerously low of ammunition and grenades. Sergeant DeWitt, the communications sergeant, realized this precarious situation and voluntarily left his fox hole to carry ammunition and grenades from other positions. This act in itself was entirely beyond the call of duty since the entire perimeter was being swept with machine gun and mortar fire. Upon reaching the sector under the heaviest fire, he found that one man had become panicky and was firing blindly into the air. He directed that this man be removed, then checked the adjoining fox holes and found two men to be wounded. With the help of another soldier Sergeant DeWitt removed these two men to a place of safety and immediately returned to the weakened position to prevent a possible enemy break through. Upon his return he found that the enemy had massed in a gully about 5 yards to his front in an attempt to break into the perimeter at that point. Unarmed up until this time, he picked up a Browning Automatic Rifle which was left by one of the wounded men, and fired into the massed enemy who were attempting to swarm through the vacated positions. When the ammunition for the BAR was exhausted he picked up a Thompson Sub-machine Gun and stood fully exposed on the brink of the gully, firing this weapon until it was empty, then throwing all his remaining grenades. Out of ammunition, Sergeant DeWitt slipped over the edge of the gully hitting one