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20 June 1945

AWARD OF DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS. By direction of the President, under the provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1942, as amended, and under authority contained in Circular No 32, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, United States Army, 20 March 1944, as amended, the Distinguished-Service Cross is awarded to:

Technical Sergeant Benjamin T. Blanton, 20454942, Infantry, 119th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations in Germany on 16 November 1944. With complete unselfishness, Sergeant Blanton agreed to take a message to isolated elements of his company. Although enemy fire was so intense that he had to slash his way forward and so accurate that his clothing and part of his equipment was bullet riddled, he persevered until he reached the isolated group where he helped his comrades ward off enemy pressure until relief arrived. The extraordinary heroism and courageous action of Sergeant Blanton reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered military service from North Carolina.

Staff Sergeant Alvir G. Olson, 36228753, Infantry, 66th Armored Regiment, 2nd Armored Division, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations in Belgium on 12 January 1945. When enemy fire from an improvised basement fortress pinned down his section, Sergeant Olson and another soldier charged across an open courtyard to the basement. Their attack overwhelmed the enemy and resulted in the capture of an enemy battalion commander, his staff and eighty-three others, collapsing enemy resistance at this point. The extraordinary heroism and courageous action of Sergeant Olson reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered military service from Wisconsin.

Sergeant Salvatore Pope, 42016822, (then Private First Class), Infantry, 119th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations in Germany on 8 October 1944. Realizing that an enemy pillbox must be neutralized if his platoon was to continue its advance, Sergeant Pope crawled through a hail of enemy machine-gun fire and heavy concentrations of mortar and small arms fire to a position where he threw four grenades into the outer emplacements forcing the enemy to abandon them. Directing devastating rifle fire at the strongpoint, he kept the pillbox neutralized while his company moved forward and surrounded it. His heroic action resulted in the wounding of four and the capture of fifty-three of the enemy and the consequent advance of his company. The extraordinary heroism and courageous action of Sergeant Pope reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered military service from New Jersey.

Sergeant Joseph J. Wild, 32639082, (then Private First Class), Infantry, 405th Infantry Regiment, 102nd Infantry Division, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations in Germany on 23 November 1944. Although painfully wounded, Sergeant Wild cautiously crawled toward a haystack which concealed enemy snipers and despite an intense hail of fire, he fearlessly threw two incendiary grenades which ignited the stack and forced the enemy to flee. Sergeant Wild killed two of the fleeing enemy and captured a third. Later, Sergeant Wild left the comparative safety of a chateau,

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and despite heavy enemy fire, made his way to within thirty yards of enemy positions and tried to induce them to surrender. Unsuccessful in his endeavor, Sergeant Wild threw several grenades at the enemy, thus diverting the fire from our friendly positions and enabling his platoon to establish a more stable security on both flanks. The extraordinary heroism and courageous action of Sergeant Wild reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered military service from New York.

Corporal Robert L. Lathis, 34420560, Infantry, 44th Armored Regiment, 2nd Armored Division, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations in Belgium on 12 January 1945. When enemy fire from an improvised basement fortress pinned down his section, Corporal Lathis and his platoon sergeant charged across an open courtyard into the basement. This daring action resulted in the surrender of an enemy battalion commander, his staff and eighty-three other prisoners. The extraordinary heroism and courageous action of Corporal Lathis reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered military service from Florida.

Private First Class Kenneth C. Thayer, 32947767, Infantry, 119th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations in Germany on 10 October 1944. When a tank was inadvertently bombed by a friendly plane, it burst into flames. Private Thayer, who was nearby, ran thirty-five yards to the blazing tank and, despite fire from four enemy tanks and the exploding ammunition in the burning tank, climbed upon its turret. Reaching down through the smoke and flames, he grasped one of the wounded and critically burned men and lifted him from the tank and carried him to safety where he administered first aid. Private Thayer then returned to the blazing tank but was forced to withdraw due to the fierce flames. The extraordinary heroism and courageous action of Private Thayer reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered military service from New York.

By command of Lieutenant General SHIPSON:

J. E. MCCOY,
Major General, GSO, Chief of Staff.

