



Staff Sergeant William F. Leonard
MEDAL OF HONOR
WORLD WAR II



Posthumous

Location of Action: St. Die, France

Date of Action: Nov. 7, 1944

Service Dates: Unknown

Hometown: Lockport, New York

Medal of Honor candidate Staff Sgt. William F. Leonard hailed from Lockport, N.J. and was born Aug. 9, 1913.

Then-Pfc. Leonard is being recognized for his valorous actions while serving as a squad leader, Company C, 30th Infantry on Nov. 7, 1944, near St. Die, France. Leonard's platoon was reduced to eight men by blistering artillery, mortar, machine-gun, and rifle power. Leonard led the survivors in an assault over a tree-and-shrub-covered hill, continuously swept by automatic fire. Killing two snipers at ranges of 50 and 75 yards, he disregarded bullets that pierced his back to engage and destroy a machine-gun with rifle grenades, killing its two-man crew. Stunned by an exploding bazooka shell, he continued his relentless advance to knock out a second a machine-gun and capture the roadblock objective.

Leonard returned from his service and worked in the automotive industry, as a butcher, and finally retired from a radiator company. He passed away five days before his 72nd birthday as he sat in the backyard listening to a New York Yankees game on the radio.

Patricia Kennedy will accept the Medal of Honor award from President Barack Obama on March 18, 2014 on behalf of her father.