

GENERAL ORDERS }  
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NO. 2017-32

HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON, DC, 11 September 2017**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS**

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 9 July 1918, and amended 25 July 1963, the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action is awarded to:

**First Lieutenant Joseph V. LaFleur** for extraordinary heroism from 30 December 1941 through 7 September 1944. While evading capture aboard the *S.S. Mayon*, Chaplain LaFleur was instrumental in saving three men who jumped overboard during an attack from a Japanese bomber. After the three men were rescued, he then assisted Soldiers into lifeboats until he was the last man on the ship, denying his own chance to escape to Australia. As a prisoner of war after 1 January 1942, Chaplain LaFleur constructed a chapel at the prison camp to minister to men of all faiths. He continuously advocated for food and medicine for the prisoners often intervening on their behalf, resulting in beatings at the hands of his captors. Later, while aboard the "hell ship" *Shinyo Maru* bound for Japan, he organized distribution of the meagre rations allotted to approximately 400 prisoners and was observed giving his rations to others. On 7 September 1944, the submarine *U.S.S. Paddle*, believing the ship was transporting Japanese Soldiers, sank the *Shinyo Maru*. Chaplain LaFleur was last seen aiding prisoners to escape in spite of Japanese guards firing small arms weapons and throwing hand grenades into the ship's hold. Chaplain LaFleur's personal valor and self-sacrifice in the face of grave danger are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect the great credit upon himself and the Army of the United States.

**First Lieutenant Melvin M. Spruiell** for extraordinary heroism from 10 to 11 June 1944, during an attack against an enemy position in the vicinity of Carentan, France. As a Forward Artillery Observer with the 377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, First Lieutenant Spruiell was at bridge number four with the lead platoon of Company G, 3d Battalion, 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment, to relay fire ranging to his artillery battalion by means of radio. The company was attempting to cross the causeway over the Douve River, bypass Carentan and seize Hill 30 along the railway west of the city. However, the bridge was blocked causing the platoon to maneuver single-file around the obstructions. The enemy opened fire from a nearby farmhouse and hedgerow stopping the platoon's movement altogether. When his radio became inoperable, First Lieutenant Spruiell exposed himself to the withering enemy fire in order to locate an operable radio on the bridge. Once locating an operable radio within Company G, he resumed calling out accurate fire in order to suppress and dislodge the enemy from their embedded defensive positions. Without this crucial fire support, Company G would not have lasted until the cover of darkness when they were able to advance around the bridge obstruction. On 11 June, First Lieutenant Spruiell, unable to contact his battalion and recognizing he could no longer serve effectively as a Forward Artillery Observer, volunteered to act instead as an infantryman. While leading a charge across an open field towards the farmhouse and hedgerow where the enemy had repositioned its machine gun nests to escape the artillery fire from the previous day, First Lieutenant Spruiell was killed. His actions are in keeping with the highest traditions of military

service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 101st Airborne Division and the Army of the United States.

**Sergeant First Class William T. Miles Jr.** distinguished himself in combat operations in North Korea between 18 June 1951 and 6 July 1951. Sergeant First Class Miles and a small group of Rangers volunteered for Operation Spitfire, a classified mission designed to locate, strengthen and guide a number of partisan groups operating in and around Wonson, North Korea. Sergeant First Class Miles and four other Soldiers parachuted into North Korea late on the evening of 18 June 1951. They were soon reinforced with additional Soldiers. For the next few weeks, the men energetically pursued their mission objective. Sergeant First Class Miles successfully discovered and destroyed two camouflaged resting bases which the Chinese used to launch surprise assaults. However, supply troubles and poor communications with friendly forces began to take a toll on the Soldiers. On 6 July 1951, friendly aircraft mistakenly dropped supply bundles in broad daylight, allowing Chinese forces to track the group's location. The group immediately resolved to retreat. However, Sergeant First Class Miles and South Korean Lieutenant Ho Young Chang volunteered to stay behind and delay the enemy's advance, thus allowing the other members of Operation Spitfire to escape. Neither was ever seen again. Sergeant First Class Miles' actions saved his fellow team member from death or capture. His heroism, valor and leadership are in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Eighth United States Army, and the United States Army.

**Specialist Four Henry F. Beck Jr.** for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam while serving as assistant recon team leader with Hawk-14, 2d Battalion, 327th Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. On 25 February 1967, Specialist Four Beck's team came under heavy enemy small arms fire as they dismounted their helicopter. After the team assembled and began to move to cover, Specialist Four Beck observed a partially concealed two-man sniper team twenty meters away. To protect his team, Specialist Four Beck exposed himself to enemy fire to throw a smoke grenade and call for suppressive fire while he ran across the open terrain to the spider hole. He then eliminated the sniper team with rifle fire and hand grenades. Upon returning to his team, he noticed an enemy machine gun crew firing upon them. Again without regard to his personal safety and at extreme personal risk, Specialist Four Beck turned and charged the gun position alone and succeeded in killing the surprised five-man gun crew. Specialist Four Beck threw hand grenades into the enemy positions, and then called in air strikes to destroy the Viet-Cong complex. Through his courage and personal engagement with the enemy, Specialist Four Beck prevented the remainder of his patrol from being overrun and directly prevented the loss of American lives. Specialist Four Beck's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflects great credit upon himself, the 101st Airborne Division, and the United States Army.

[AHRC-PDP-A]

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

**MARK A. MILLEY**  
*General, United States Army*  
*Chief of Staff*

Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald B. O'Keefe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a distinct "O'Keefe" ending.

**GERALD B. O'KEEFE**  
*Administrative Assistant to the*  
*Secretary of the Army*

DISTRIBUTION: This publication is available in electronic media only and is intended for Active Army, the Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States, and the U.S. Army Reserve.