

Medal of Honor: In Tribute

By SPC Keith Thompson

"OK, mortars, let me have it—right in this position!"

Those were the words heard by the men of 1st Plt, Co E, 39th Inf Reg, 9th Inf Div from their non-commissioned officer, TSGT **Peter J. Dalessandro**, just before the roar of mortar fire filled the early morning hours of Dec. 22, 1944. Dalessandro's platoon was holding an important road junction on high ground near Kallerherberg, Germany, at the height of World War II's European campaign.

According to Dalessandro's Medal of Honor citation (awarded on Aug. 30, 1945), when the enemy launched an all-out attack against his position and threatened to overrun the platoon, the courageous NCO braved enemy fire and moved among his men, encouraging them and adjusting mortar fire while shooting at the enemy with his rifle. Due in part to Dalessandro's actions, the platoon thwarted the German attack.

Later that day, the enemy moved in for a second attack and Dalessandro once again rushed to his fully-exposed position.

After exhausting his ammunition, he crawled 30 yards to secure a light machine gun and resumed firing. Then, with enemy soldiers almost at point-blank range, the gun jammed, but Dalessandro managed to get one more burst out of the gun, killing four German soldiers who were murdering three wounded soldiers in a nearby foxhole.

As the enemy swarmed around him, he started calling for the mortar barrage directly on his position. Somehow, he was able to emerge from the fire, leaving a trail of dead enemies behind him.

"I didn't know I caused that

much damage (to the Germans)," He later said. "When I found out I was getting the medal, I was surprised. I was just looking out for my guys."

Seven months before Dalessandro's brush with death, **Henry Schauer**, then a private first class with the 3rd Inf Div, was busy defending his own patrol and was on

his way to earning the Medal of Honor.

On May 23, 1944, Schauer left the cover of a ditch to engage German snipers who opened fire on his patrol from the rear.

"I had no choice," Schauer said. "They were firing wooden dum-dum rounds at us. Those things could really tear a man up. They made me mad, so I went after them."

Standing erect, Schauer deliberately walked 30 yards toward the enemy and killed them with four bursts from his Browning Automatic Rifle. Catching sight of a fifth sniper waiting for the patrol behind a house, he brought the assassin down with one burst.

Shortly after that, Schauer left cover again to engage two German machine-gunners. Shells exploded within 15 yards, showering Schauer with dirt. German tracer bullets whizzed past him at chest level. Schauer remained undaunted and, with a single burst from his BAR at 60 yards, he killed the two gunners and crumpled two other enemy soldiers who were running to man the guns.

The next morning, when shells from a German Mark VI tank and a machinegun forced the patrol to cover, Schauer again answered the challenge, Raising the BAR to his shoulder, he killed the four German gunners with one burst while enemy tank shells exploded within 20 yards of his position.

Schauer's actions earned him the nickname "Kraut-an-Hour Schauer" from his fellow soldiers. "They said I was supposed to have killed a German every hour," he later said.



Peter J. Dalessandro



Henry Schauer

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