

After Leonard DeWitt fought the battle that earned him 2 recommendations for the Medal of Honor, he went on for 3 more years of fighting in the Pacific, without a break, while his recommendation sat in MacArthur's office for 2 years. After the war was over, he went home, the farthest thing on his mind was to ask for a review. His first concern was to find work to support himself, and his 2nd goal was to find a wife and have a family. His own family was scattered in various places. In a few short years, he was recalled to Korea, where he earned a Purple Heart. He subsequently trained for Intelligence work in Europe, where he spent 4 years; went on to serve 4 years with SACLANT at NATO Hdqtrs., and ended his long career with 1st Army, in charge of Operations and Training of troops going to Vietnam.

When I met Leonard, he was retired from the Military. After we were married 37 years ago, I opened an old Army trunk that had a lot of little boxes with medals in them, and stacks of military files. I felt that these were a treasure that should be proudly displayed. I proceeded to mount his many medals in a frame, and sorted his important paperwork in chronological order, and put them in a scrapbook. I was surprised to see that he had been recommended for the Medal of Honor, and felt it was a shame, for whatever reason, that he didn't get it, but I knew that the Distinguished Service Cross was also a very important Medal, and something to be very proud of. I gave no further thought to that Medal of Honor, until 2 years ago. At that time, the Historical Foundation was searching for one of the heroes from the 41st War in the Pacific, to coincide with the new addition to Camp Withycombe. Leonard is the last remaining recipient of the DSC from that war. There were only 25 from those thousands of fighting men! I started studying about the 41st, and was astounded to learn what they went through. They fought the longest (4 years in the Pacific), captured and killed more of the enemy, went through untold hardships, often going for days without food, and after being considered the finest group of fighting men in the country at the time, they not only got fewer medals than any other outfit, they also did not get ONE Medal of Honor. I found this to be an insult to our own Oregon National Guard, and the 41st in general. Oregon deserves better! Leonard DeWitt is their last chance. I'm proud of the 41st Infantry's achievements in the Pacific. I'm proud of our National Guard. You have the opportunity to change their history. I deem it unpatriotic not to help in this cause.

Leonard is 92. I will soon be 84. We are not asking for this Medal for personal reasons. As the next of kin, I knew that the job of seeking this Medal would be up to me. I knew it would be a lot of work, and a lot of hassle, and I wasn't sure I wanted to do it, but our young people need better heroes to inspire them, and our National Guard deserve that honor. I felt it is something we have to do. We are quiet people, who do not seek the limelight. We are the kind of people in the background, getting a job done. On July 28, 1943. Leonard DeWitt saw a job that had to be done, and he did it, saving his entire outfit from an enemy 5 yards away.