

Free essay on sgt leo j powers

Government, Army



The paper provides information about SGT. Leo J. Powers' attainment of The Medal of Honor. This research done from three different online sources, mentions the history of the World War II, SGT. Leo J. Powers' conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in the war. After researching on his act of bravery I came to the conclusion that as a Private First Class in the 34th Infantry Division was a very courageous soldier in his unit. He individually destroyed the enemies' stations even at the risk of being killed if spotted by them. This research done on Powers can help us in understanding the acts of bravery of the soldiers who work towards protecting their country from invasion of enemies, and also gives us knowledge of the importance of The Medal of Honor in a soldier's life.

SGT. Leo J. Powers

Leo J. Powers was born on April 5th, 1909 in the city of Anselmo, Nebraska. At the age of 23 Powers made bombs with the intention to explode snow banks. The police raided his house and found explosives, shot guns and a pistol for which he was charged, and accused for committing a crime. At that time Powers was only a washing machine mechanic and to defend himself said that the gunpowder that he had purchased was legal and he did not have any intention to commit a crime. In his thirties he developed acute foot problems and he was trained to become an army mechanic. Later on, he was sent to the frontlines of Italy, during World War II.

In September 1942 he became part of the Army of the United States from Alder Gulch, Montana, and within two years he became part of the 133rd

Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division by February 3rd, 1944. At that time he was a private first class in that unit. Powers was among the recipients who received the Medal of Honor, which was rewarded to military officials who characterized themselves by evident heroism and audaciousness in performing their (in the line of) duty.

During the time of World War II, Powers as a Private First Class in the 34th Infantry Division, along with his unit were designated on the main enemy point the Northwest of Cassino, Italy to incarcerate the Hill 175 that was occupied by the Germans. It was anticipated that the enemy could be at the minimum of 50 soldiers with the power of machine guns. They were located in three pill boxes and mortar fire stationed behind the hill. Their power of fire helped them to undermine the attackers and cause eight deaths. Powers' unit was in a position that they could not precede, however, Powers initiated singly amidst terrible fire. He crept forward to attack one of the enemies' pill boxes that he had witnessed. With great courage he stood up within 15 yards of the enemies' reach and attempted to throw one of the two grenades he had into the pill box. Though he anticipated death if spotted by the enemy, he got successful in his goal to destroy the pill box. This attempt killed two of his enemies, wounded a few, while others fled from the position.

The company now got the opportunity to move forward towards the enemy. Machine guns started to shower fire from the left, which enabled Powers to locate another pill box. He immediately crawled towards it and again stood up within 15 feet of the enemies reach. He successfully threw the last

grenade and killed another German. Three of the four enemy soldiers were wounded, however, the others fled from the site.

After this attempt Powers had gone ahead of his company therefore he had to return and rejoin his squad. On his way he caught sight of a third enemy pill box on the right front. Powers' prompt decision and initiative action was extraordinary- he took two hand grenades from his wounded comrade and crawled towards the third enemy pill box. This time the enemy machine gun fire was even stronger. While reaching about 10 yards distance from the pill box he daringly stood up; though fully exposed to the enemy gunners, threw the two grenades on the pill box. This chivalrous action of the soldier killed two Germans while the four wounded enemy surrendered before Powers, who was unarmed himself. This heroic action which he handled individually brought him and his unit great achievement in their aim to protect the city of Cassino from the enemy's annex.

The Medal of Honor was presented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 3rd, 1944 to be awarded to the members of armed forces by the US government. It is as a representation of appreciation and acknowledgment of the people whose exceptional act of bravery makes them stand out from others. The action should be one from valor or selflessness so palpable that it undoubtedly characterizes the individual among other companions and last but not the least it should include hazard to one's life. This medal has been awarded to 2, 373 army associates among whom Sgt. Leo J. Powers was a recipient.

It is a matter of pride that the Medal of Honor was given to Sgt. Leo J. Powers, the great hero, by the President Franklin D. Roosevelt who asked him, Why he had performed such an incredible feat? Sgt. Leo Powers, the gallant recipient replied, “ I was just mad, I guess.” This became one of the standard quotes in the history of military. Leo J. Powers achieved the position of sergeant, a rank in the US Army which is higher than specialist and corporal, before he left the Army. He died at the age of 58 on July 14th, 1967 and buried in Holy Cross Cemetery, Butte, Montana.

In order to remember and recognize the courageous act of Powers his portrait along with his biography is displayed in the Hall of Fame located in the US Army Transportation School building 2300. Moreover, gallant soldiers like him were privileged with everlasting enshrinement in the Hall of Fame. The bravery and patriotism of such personalities sets a virtuous example for the forthcoming generations out of which quite a few idealize them. This may create such personalities or even better in the future era.

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