

# World War I veteran awarded Purple Heart

By Spc. V. Michelle Woods  
1st Sustainment Brigade

In April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson called on Americans to face the freezing, muddy trenches and deadly chemical weapons of the Great War in an effort to make the world safe for democracy. With courage and bravery, American citizens left the peaceful U.S. soil to engage an enemy thousands of miles away.

Cpl. Gus Bishop, then a 20-year-old Kentucky native, chose to fight beside his fellow countrymen. He was severely injured by gunfire during the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, also known as the Battle of Argonne Forest, on Sept. 26, 1918.

Through the efforts of his grandson nine decades later, Bishop was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries he sustained in the largest American-led offense of World War I.

His grandson, Maj. Donald Bishop, an officer in charge of communications, 1st Sustainment Brigade, said he began searching for his grandfather's military records in an effort to find out about his military history.

"A couple years back, I started digging around trying to find his records," he said. "I didn't get them for the purpose of getting him a Purple Heart. It was something I wanted just to dig and try to find some stuff about him."

Through the help of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, the major said he was able to obtain his grandfather's records.

The records stated Gus Bishop enlisted in the Army in September 1917 and arrived in France in May 1918. He was attached to the 39th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, and Company E, 318th Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division.

He was credited with serving in the Fort-le-Fere engagement, Battle of Saint-Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne Campaign. He left France in May 1919, and was honorably discharged in June 1919.

Donald Bishop, also a Kentucky native, said while going through his grandfather's records, he realized he had not been awarded the Purple Heart for his injuries.

The Purple Heart is awarded to service members who are wounded while conducting combat operations. The award wasn't created until after World War I. However, all military service-members who were wounded after April 5, 1917 are eligible to receive the award.

After doing research, the major said he learned his grandfather qualified to receive the Purple Heart and, regardless of how long ago his service was, felt he deserved it.

"I think you ought to take care of Soldiers regardless of how long it's been," he said. "The fact that [I] could do it, I thought was a pretty big honor."

Donald Bishop said he doesn't remember much about his grandfather because he died when he was 8 years old.

"He was pretty quiet," he said. "My mom says he was always a really nice man and good to everybody. I just remember him always being pretty calm, sitting back, enjoying life."

"I can remember him talking about being shot but not any of the details," he said.

Donald Bishop said his grandfather was known for telling stories and embellishing, so he wasn't sure if his World War I story was exaggerated.

"Until a few years ago, I never knew if he was just telling tall tales or not," he said.

He said he was happy once he verified his grandfather's story by reviewing his military records.

Although his grandfather wasn't boastful, Donald Bishop said he believes he was proud of his service during World War I.

"I know he kept all of his stuff," he said. "I can remember seeing his uniform and even his little doughboy helmet. The fact that he kept it hanging in the closet makes me think he, obviously, had some pride."

After pursuing the award for two and a half years, Donald

Bishop was notified by his wife that his grandfather's certificate, orders and Purple Heart had arrived at their Fort Leavenworth, Kan., home on June 18.

Donald Bishop said he would like to put the medal with the rest of his grandfather's Army-issued gear from World War I and frame the certificate. He is considering donating it to a museum. He said he wants his grandfather to get recognition for his service and wants to make sure his grandfather isn't forgotten.

"I would hate, after my generation, for it to just be stuck in a locker in an attic somewhere," he said. "There's a World War I museum in Kansas City. I would like to get it put in there."

"It makes me proud that I could do that for him. It makes me happy to do it for my grandfather this many years later. It is pretty special."



Photo by Spc. V. Michelle Woods

Maj. Donald Bishop, with the 1st Sustainment Brigade, holds a picture of his grandfather, Cpl. Gus Bishop, who was severely injured at the Battle of Argonne Forest in World War I.