

NCO Stories

A selection of Valor



Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams

Citation to award the Medal of Honor

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on October 28, 1944, near St. Die, France.

When Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams' company was stopped in its effort to drive through the Mortagne Forest to reopen the supply line to the isolated third battalion, Adams braved the concentrated fire of machineguns in a lone assault on a force of German troops. Although his company had progressed less than 10 yards, three were killed and six wounded.

Adams charged forward dodging from tree to tree firing a borrowed BAR [Browning automatic rifle] from the hip. Despite intense machinegun fire which the enemy directed at him and rifle grenades which struck the trees over his head showering him with broken twigs and branches, Adams made his way to within 10 yards of the closest machinegun and killed the gunner with a hand grenade.

An enemy soldier threw hand grenades at him from a position only 10 yards distant; however, Adams dispatched him with a single burst of BAR fire. Charging into the vortex of the enemy fire, he killed another machine gunner at 15 yards range with a hand grenade and forced the two supporting infantrymen to surrender.

Although the remainder of the German group concentrated the full force of its automatic weapons fire in a desperate effort to knock him out, he proceeded through the woods to find and exterminate five more of the enemy.

Finally, when the third German machinegun opened up on him at a range of 20 yards, Adams killed the gunner with BAR fire.

In the course of the action, he personally killed nine Germans; eliminated three enemy machineguns; vanquished a specialized force, which was armed with automatic weapons and grenade launchers; cleared the woods of hostile elements; and reopened the severed supply lines to the assault companies of his battalion.

"I'm no hero ... just an ex-Soldier"

By **Stephanie Sanchez**

To his dying day, Lucian Adams told everyone he was not a hero but a former Soldier who fought in World War II.

Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not agree.

In 1945, the president ordered Adams home from deployment to be awarded the Medal of Honor. Roosevelt, however, died before giving the medal to the then staff sergeant, and the award was presented that same year by Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch, commander of the 7th Army in Nuremberg, Germany.

According to his award citation, Adams single-handedly destroyed enemy machine gun emplacements to re-establish supply lines to U.S. Army companies.

During their mission, the company was blocked by German troops in a forest near Saint-Die, France on Oct. 28, 1944. The company progressed less than 10 yards, suffering three dead and six wounded, when Adams charged forward, dodging from tree to tree.

Firing a Browning automatic rifle while enemy machine-gun fire flew and broken branches fell, Adams pressed forward. He got to the closest machine-gunner and killed him with a hand grenade. He then killed another German soldier who threw hand grenades at him from 10 yards away.

Adams continued charging into enemy fire, killed another machine-gunner with a hand grenade and forced two German soldiers to surrender. The remainder of the German force continued to direct their fire at him, but he made his way through the wooded area and killed five more Germans and another machine-gunner.

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Courtesy photo

Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, 7th Army Commander, conferred the Medal of Honor on five 3rd Division officers and noncommissioned officers on April 22, 1945. Left to right: Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware, Lt. John J. Tominac, Tech. Sgt. Russell E. Dunham, Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams and Pfc. Wilburn K. Ross.

the assault companies of his battalion," according to his citation.

In an interview with the *Dallas Morning News* in 1993, Adams said, "I'd seen all my buddies go down and calling for medics, and I didn't want to go down with any ammunition still on me, so I just kept firing. Lucky for me, I got them before they got me."

He then told the *San Antonio Express-News* in 2002 that he was not afraid during the battle. He said it was not until once the events were over that he realized how serious and dangerous the situation was.

Adams, a Port Arthur, Texas, native, joined the Army in 1943 and left the service the same year he received the Medal of Honor. He had also been awarded a

Bronze Star for his military efforts in Italy.

He worked as a benefits counselor for the Veterans Administration in San Antonio for 40 years.

"I never brought up the fact that I'd been in combat myself and had been awarded the Medal of Honor," Adams told the *San Antonio Express-News* about his years as a benefits counselor. "I'm no hero. I'm just an ex-Soldier."

Adams, who had suffered from diabetes and heart problems, died in 2003 in San Antonio. Shortly before his death, he was featured in, "Hispanics and the Medal of Honor," a History Channel documentary. 🇺🇸