



# First Lieutenant Orville Munson



*1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Orville "Bill" Munson in Germany shortly after V-E Day.*

During the first week of January 1944, the 48<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion struggled to convert a severely damaged railroad into a highway, in support of operations to capture Mount Porchia, Italy. For several days, the Engineers worked on the highway during the day, then were placed into the line as infantry each night.

On the night of January 6<sup>th</sup>, the 48<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion was directed to capture Mount Porchia. First Lieutenant Orville Munson, Commander of Company A, led his company across several miles of "no-man's-land" and through the battle to capture the hill. For his actions that night, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Munson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. His citation reads, "*1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Munson led his company in darkness through mined and shelled areas to the foot of Mt. Porchia, Italy. He acted as point of the column and was often far in advance and alone in enemy territory. He encountered two enemy machine gun nests from which he drew fire, but he extricated his company by leading his men in a circular path around the enemy positions. During this action, he killed one German at close range with his submachine gun. Later, he encountered an enemy patrol and was captured. With a gun at his back, he shouted a warning to his men and prevented their walking into an ambush. At this time, a hand grenade exploded nearby, a fragment striking 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Munson in the shoulder. He fell to the ground and feigned death. His captors took his submachine*

*gun and left the area. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Munson rose, picked up a carbine and captured two prisoners before returning to his company. The courage displayed by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Munson prevented the ambush of his company and also enabled his men to capture six of the enemy patrol."*

By placing the welfare of his subordinates above his own personal safety and leading his Company through the extremely violent battle, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Munson exhibited the Army Value of Selfless Service.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Munson remained in the Army, completing over 20 years of service. In addition to the Distinguished Service Cross earned on Mount Porchia, Munson earned a Silver Star Medal, two Bronze Star Medals and four Purple Heart Medals.



*Munson serving as Operations Officer for the 48<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion in France.*