

NAVY CROSS



ERNIE W. WALLACE

Lance Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps
Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines
Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam, 18 August 1965
Entered service at: Wayne, West Virginia
Born: 30 January 1944

Citation:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Lance Corporal Ernie W. Wallace (MCSN: 2034491), United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as a machine gunner with Company H, Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, during Operation STARLITE against insurgent communist (Viet Cong) forces in the Republic of Vietnam on 18 August 1965. While the platoon to which he was attached was temporarily pinned down by intense mortar, automatic weapons, and small arms fire, Corporal Wallace and one rifle squad took cover in a trench. Realizing that the enemy was closing in on the squad in the trench line, he fearlessly moved into an exposed position and, firing his machine gun from the offhand and assault positions at close range, delivered such devastating fire into the stunned adversary that he personally accounted for twenty-five dead enemy, allowing the squad he was with to maneuver to a more advantageous area. Throughout the rest of the day he was seemingly inexhaustible in his efforts. Time and again he fearlessly exposed himself, as he dashed out into the open to provide cover by fire for the evacuation of wounded Marines in exposed areas. On one such occasion the bipod was shot from his weapon; however, he was not deterred as he continued to fire, accounting for the killing of fifteen more of the enemy. His outstanding performance of duty undoubtedly saved many Marine lives and materially aided the company in turning the tide of battle into a virtual annihilation of a numerically superior foe. Corporal Wallace's extraordinary heroism and inspiring dedication to duty reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.