

upon him from the left and with similar skill and bravery he destroyed this also. Later, in company with another sergeant, he attacked a fourth machine-gun nest, being killed as he reached the parapet of the emplacement. His courageous action in destroying in turn four enemy machine-gun nests prevented many casualties among his company and very materially aided in achieving the objective.

**Pike, Emory J.**

Lieutenant Colonel, division machine-gun officer, 82nd Division; near Vandieres, France; September 15, 1918; Iowa residence: Columbus City.

*Citation:* Having gone forward to reconnoiter new machine-gun positions, Colonel Pike offered his assistance in reorganizing advance infantry units which had become disorganized during a heavy artillery shelling. He succeeded in locating only about 20 men, but with these he advanced and when later joined by several infantry platoons rendered inestimable service in establishing outposts, encouraging all by his cheeriness, in spite of the extreme danger of the situation. When a shell had wounded one of the men in the outpost, Colonel Pike immediately went to his aid and was severely wounded himself when another shell burst in the same place. While waiting to be brought to the rear, Colonel Pike continued in command, still retaining his jovial manner of encouragement, directing the reorganization until the position could be held. The entire operation was carried on under terrific bombardment, and the example of courage and devotion to duty as set by Colonel Pike, established the highest standard of morale and confidence to all under his charge.

*World War II*

**Beyer, Arthur O.**

Corporal, Company C, 603rd Tank Destroyer

Battalion; near Arloncourt, Belgium; January 15, 1945; Iowa residence: Mitchell County.

*Citation:* Corporal Beyer displayed conspicuous gallantry in action. His platoon, in which he was a tank-destroyer gunner, was held up by antitank, machine-gun, and rifle fire from enemy troops dug in along a ridge about 200 yards to the front. Noting a machine-gun position in this defense line, he fired upon it with his 76-mm. gun, killing one man and silencing the weapon. He dismounted from his vehicle and, under direct enemy observation, crossed open ground to capture the two remaining members of the crew. Another machine-gun, about 250 yards to the left, continued to fire on him. Through withering fire, he advanced on the position. Throwing a grenade into the emplacement, he killed one crew member and again captured the two survivors. He was subjected to concentrated small-arms fire but, with great bravery, he worked his way a quarter mile along the ridge, attacking hostile soldiers in their foxholes with his carbine and grenades. When he had completed his self-imposed mission against powerful German forces, he had destroyed two machine-gun positions, killed 8 of the enemy and captured 18 prisoners, including two bazooka teams. Corporal Beyer's intrepid action and unflinching determination to close with and destroy the enemy eliminated the German defense line and enabled his task force to gain its objective.

Arthur O. Beyer was found dead at his farm home near Buffalo, North Dakota, on February 17, 1965. He was 55 years old. In a ceremony at the White House on August 27, 1945, Beyer was one of 28 Army heroes from 18 states and Canada to receive the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman.

**Briles, Herschel F.**

Staff Sergeant, Company C, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion; near Scherpenseel, Germany; November 20, 1944; Iowa residence: Colfax.

*Citation:* Sergeant Briles was leading a platoon of destroyers across an exposed slope near Scherpenseel, Germany, on November 20, 1944, when they came under heavy enemy artillery fire. A direct hit was scored on one of the vehicles, killing one man, seriously wounding two others, and setting the destroyer afire. With a comrade, Sergeant Briles left the cover of his own armor and raced across ground raked by artillery and small-arms fire to the rescue of the men in the shattered destroyer. Without hesitation, he lowered himself into the burning turret, removed the wounded and then extinguished the fire. From a position he assumed the next morning, he observed hostile infantrymen advancing. With his machine-gun, he poured such deadly fire into the enemy ranks that an entire pocket of 55 Germans surrendered, clearing the way for a junction between American units which had been held up for 2 days. Later that day, when another of his destroyers was hit by a concealed enemy tank, he again left protection to give assistance. With the help of another soldier, he evacuated two wounded under heavy fire and, returning to the burning vehicle, braved death from exploding ammunition to put out the flames. By his heroic initiative and complete disregard for personal safety, Sergeant Briles was largely responsible for causing heavy enemy casualties, forcing the surrender of 55 Germans, making possible the salvage of 2 of our vehicles and saving the lives of wounded comrades.

On his return from service, Briles farmed near Ankeny for nine years. In 1954, he bought an in-

terest in the Colfax Sales Company, a livestock auction business. After 13½ years in that business, Briles sold his interest and is now living on and operating his own farm near Colfax.

**Christensen, Dale Eldon**

2nd Lieutenant, Troop E, 112th Cavalry Regiment; Driniumor River, New Guinea; July 16-19, 1944; Iowa residence: Audubon County.

*Citation:* Lieutenant Christensen repeatedly distinguished himself . . . in the continuous heavy fighting which occurred. On July 16 his platoon engaged in a savage fire fight in which much damage was caused by one enemy machine-gun effectively placed. Lieutenant Christensen ordered his men to remain under cover, crept forward under fire, and at a range of 15 yards put the gun out of action with hand grenades. Again on July 19, while attacking an enemy position strong in mortars and machine-guns, his platoon was pinned to the ground by intense fire. Ordering his men to remain under cover, he crept forward alone to locate definitely the enemy automatic weapons and the best direction from which to attack. Although his rifle was struck by enemy fire and knocked from his hands he continued his reconnaissance, located five enemy machine-guns, destroyed one with hand grenades, and rejoined his platoon. He then led his men to the point selected for launching the attack and, calling encouragement, led the charge. This assault was successful and the enemy was driven from the positions with a loss of four mortars and ten machine-guns and leaving many dead on the field. On August 4, 1944, near Afua, Dutch New Guinea, Lieutenant Christensen was killed in action about 2 yards from his objective while leading his platoon in an attack on an enemy machine-gun position.

The following letter was written by Lieutenant Christensen, about two months before he was killed, to his mother and father. It was mailed by his commanding officer:

"This is one letter which I hope you never get but I feel as though I must write it.

"In all probability we will go into action early tomorrow and while I cannot imagine that anything will happen to me, I have been in the army too long not to know that anything can happen.

"In case I am killed you will eventually get this and you will know I was thinking of you. As yet I'm not afraid and while I probably will be as nervous as the next person, I wouldn't back out of this if I had the chance. I want you to know that I have appreciated everything you have ever done for me and that I couldn't have had a better mother and father. The ways that you have taught me have always been for the good.

"I couldn't have asked for a better life because I feel like I have lived as I wished. The four years I have been in the army I do not feel have been wasted.

"I have a savings account at. . . . This, in addition to the bonds that you have, some bonds in Washington, D.C., and the six months gratuity which you will get if I am killed, will all go to you according to the will of mine that you have. If you do not need it, I wish you would use it to help Raymond, Doris, Nelson, and Carl [brothers and

sisters] to get a little more education than they can get in high school. I only wish it were more but it will be around \$2,000.

"There is little more that I can say . . ."

**Lindsey, Darrell R.**

Captain, United States Air Corps; Air Mission; August 9, 1944; Iowa residence: Jefferson.

*Citation:* On August 9, 1944, Captain Lindsey led a formation of 30 B-26 medium bombers in a hazardous mission to destroy the strategic enemy-held L'Isle Adam railroad bridge over the Seine in occupied France. With most of the bridges over the Seine destroyed, the heavily fortified L'Isle Adam bridge was of inestimable value to the enemy in moving troops, supplies, and equipment to Paris. Captain Lindsey was fully aware of the fierce resistance that would be encountered. Shortly after reaching enemy territory the formation was buffeted with heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire. By skillful evasive action, Captain Lindsey was able to elude much of the enemy flak, but just before entering the bombing run his B-26 was peppered with holes. During the bombing run the enemy fire was even more intense, and Captain Lindsey's right engine received a direct hit and burst into flames. Despite the fact that his ship was hurled out of formation by the violence of the concussion, Captain Lindsey brilliantly maneuvered back into the lead position without disrupting the flight. Fully aware that the gasoline tanks might explode at any moment, Captain Lindsey gallantly elected to continue the perilous bombing run. With fire streaming from his right engine and his right wing half enveloped in flames, he led his formation over the target upon which the bombs were dropped with telling effect. Immediately after the objective was attacked, Captain Lindsey gave the order for the

crew to parachute from the doomed aircraft. With magnificent coolness and superb pilotage and without regard for his own life, he held the swiftly descending airplane in a steady glide until the members of the crew could jump to safety. With the right wing completely enveloped in flames and an explosion of the gasoline tank imminent, Captain Lindsey still remained unperturbed. The last man to leave the stricken plane was the bombardier, who offered to lower the wheels so that Captain Lindsey might escape from the nose. Realizing that this might throw the aircraft into an uncontrollable spin and jeopardize the bombardier's chances to escape, Captain Lindsey refused the offer. Immediately after the bombardier had bailed out, and before Captain Lindsey was able to follow, the right gasoline tank exploded. The aircraft sheathed in fire, went into a steep dive and was seen to explode as it crashed. All who are living today from this plane owe their lives to the fact that Captain Lindsey remained cool and showed supreme courage in this emergency.

**Neppel, Ralph G.**

Sergeant, Company M, 329th Infantry, 83rd Infantry Division; Birgel, Germany; December 14, 1944; Iowa residence: Glidden.

*Citation:* Sergeant Neppel was leader of a machine-gun squad defending an approach to the village of Birgel, Germany, on December 14, 1944, when an enemy tank, supported by 20 infantrymen, counterattacked. He held his fire until the Germans were within 100 yards and then raked the foot soldiers beside the tank, killing several of them. The enemy armor continued to press forward, and, at the point-blank range of 30 yards, fired a high-velocity shell into the American emplacement, wounding the entire squad. Sergeant Neppel, blown 10 yards from his gun, had one leg severed below the knee and suffered other wounds.

Despite his injuries and the danger from the onrushing tank and infantry, he dragged himself back to his position on his elbows, remounted his gun and killed the remaining enemy riflemen. Stripped of its infantry protection, the tank was forced to withdraw. By his superb courage and indomitable fighting spirit, Sergeant Neppel inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy and broke a determined counter-attack.

Saul Pett and Jules Loh, Associated Press writers, covered Neppel's postwar years in an article which appeared in *The Cedar Rapids Gazette* of December 4, 1966. They wrote: "...A *Des Moines Register & Tribune* newspaper columnist suggested a 'Ralph Neppel Fund' and fellow Iowans responded generously, built a house in Carroll for Ralph and his bride, Jean. Ralph was grateful for the house but city life had no appeal. He tried selling appliances, then used cars, then decided to go to college. He got his degree and was halfway through his master's work when he discovered the expense of raising two children and decided to accept an offer to go to work for the Veterans Administration in Des Moines. Two more children were born before he was transferred to the VA office in Iowa City where he now lives." Neppel is still connected with the VA in Iowa City.

**Olson, Arlo L.**

Captain, 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division; crossing of the Volturno River, Italy; October 13, 1943; Iowa residence: Greenville.

*Citation:* Captain Olson and his company spearheaded the advance of the regiment through 30 miles of mountainous enemy territory in 13 days. Placing himself at the head of his men, Captain Olson waded into the chest-deep water of the raging Volturno River and despite point-blank machine-gun fire aimed directly at him made his way to the opposite bank and threw two hand grenades into the gun position, killing the crew. When an enemy machine-gun 150 yards distant opened fire on his company, Captain Olson advanced upon the position in a slow deliberate walk. Although five German soldiers threw hand grenades at him from a range of 5 yards, Captain Olson dispatched them all, picked up a machine pistol and continued toward the enemy. Advancing to within 15 yards of the position he shot it out with the foe, killing nine and seizing the post. Throughout the next 13 days Captain Olson led combat patrols, acted as company No. 1 scout and maintained unbroken contact with the enemy. On October 27, 1943, Captain Olson conducted a platoon in attack on a strongpoint, crawling to within 25 yards of the enemy and then charging the position. Despite continuous machine-gun fire which barely missed him, Captain Olson made his way to the gun and killed the crew with his pistol. When the men saw their leader make this desperate attack they followed him and overran the position. Continuing the advance, Captain Olson led his company to the next objective at the summit of Monte San Nicola. Although the company to his right was forced to take cover from the furious automatic and small-arms fire, which was directed upon him and his men with equal intensity, Captain Olson waved his company into a skirmish line and despite the fire of a machine-gun which singled him out as its sole target led the assault which drove the enemy away. While making a reconnaissance for defensive positions, Captain Olson was fatally wounded. Ignoring his severe pain, this

intrepid officer completed his reconnaissance, supervised the location of his men in the best defensive positions, refused medical aid until all his men had been cared for, and died as he was being carried down the mountain.

**Pierce, Francis Junior**

Pharmacist's Mate First Class, United States Navy; 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division; Iwo Jima, March 15-16, 1945; Iowa residence: Earlville.

*Citation:* Almost continuously under fire while carrying out the most dangerous volunteer assignments, Pierce gained valuable knowledge of the terrain and disposition of troops. Caught in heavy enemy rifle and machine-gun fire which wounded a corpsman and two of his eight stretcher bearers who were carrying two wounded marines to a forward aid station on March 15, Pierce quickly took charge of the party, carried the newly wounded men to a sheltered position, and rendered first aid. After directing the evacuation of three of the casualties, he stood in the open to draw the enemy's fire and, with his weapon blasting, enabled the litter bearers to reach cover. Turning his attention to the other two casualties, he was attempting to stop the profuse bleeding of one man when a Japanese fired from a cave less than 20 yards away and wounded his patient again. Risking his own life to save his patient, Pierce deliberately exposed himself to draw the attacker from the cave and destroyed him with the last of his ammunition. Then lifting the wounded man to his back, he advanced unarmed through deadly rifle fire across 200 feet of open terrain. Despite exhaustion and in the face of warnings against such a suicidal mission, he again traversed the same fire-swept path to rescue the remaining marine. On the following morning, he led a combat patrol to the

sniper nest and, while aiding a stricken marine, was seriously wounded. Refusing aid for himself, he directed treatment for the casualty, at the same time maintaining protective fire for his comrades. Completely fearless, completely devoted to the care of his patients, Pierce inspired the entire battalion.

Upon his discharge from the Marine Corps after World War II, Francis J. Pierce was accepted as a police officer with the Grand Rapids, Michigan, Police Department. At the present time he holds the rank of inspector, in charge of the Patrol Division. In addition to his regular duties he teaches and lectures on police patrol, riot control, explosives, drugs and drug abuse; is explosive disposal officer for areas of Western Michigan; and does riot control work in training units of the Michigan National Guard and Army Reserves. Since leaving the service he has attended Michigan State College, University of Louisville, Community College at Pontiac, Michigan, and is presently enrolled at Grand Rapids Junior College.

**Riordan, Paul F.**

2nd Lieutenant, 34th Infantry Division; near Cassino, Italy; February 3-8, 1944; Iowa residence: Charles City.

*Citation:* In the attack on the approaches to the city of Cassino on February 3, 1944, Lieutenant Riordan led one of the assault platoons. Attacking Hill 175, his command was pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire from the hill and from a pillbox about 45 yards to the right of the hill. In the face of intense fire, Lieutenant Riordan moved out

in full view of the enemy gunners to reach a position from where he could throw a hand grenade into the pillbox. Then, getting to his knees, he hurled the grenade approximately 45 yards, scoring a direct hit. The grenade killed one and wounded the other two Germans in the nest and silenced the gun. Another soldier then cleaned out the enemy pillboxes on the hill itself, and the company took its objective. Continuing the assault into Cassino itself on February 8, 1944, Lieutenant Riordan and his platoon were given the mission of taking the city jailhouse, one of the enemy's several strong points. Again Lieutenant Riordan took the lead and managed to get through the ring of enemy fire covering the approaches and reached the building. His platoon, however, could not get through the intense fire and was cut off. Lieutenant Riordan, aware that his men were unable to follow, determined to carry on single-handed, but the numerically superior enemy force was too much for him to overcome, and he was killed by enemy small-arms fire after disposing of at least two of the defenders. Lieutenant Riordan's bravery and extraordinary heroism in the face of almost certain death were an inspiration to his men and exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.

A street at Fort Benning, Georgia, has been named for Lieutenant Riordan, killed in action in Italy.

**Thorson, John F.**

Private First Class, Company G, 17th Infantry, 7th Infantry Division; Dagami, Leyte, Philippine Islands; October 28, 1944; Iowa residence: Armstrong.

*Citation:* Private Thorson was an automatic-rifleman on October 28, 1944, in the attack on Dagami, Leyte, Philip-