

Chronicles of COURAGE

★ ORVILLE “BILL” MUNSON ★

by
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Several years ago, I had the honor of meeting a very interesting man and a great engineer. Orville “Bill” Munson had been on Mount Porchia, Italy, the night SGT Joe Specker earned his Medal of Honor. This was the reason I had initially contacted Bill Munson. During the next four years, I developed a friendship with Bill, and, each time I talked or visited with him, I learned more about the 48th Engineers and the man I was

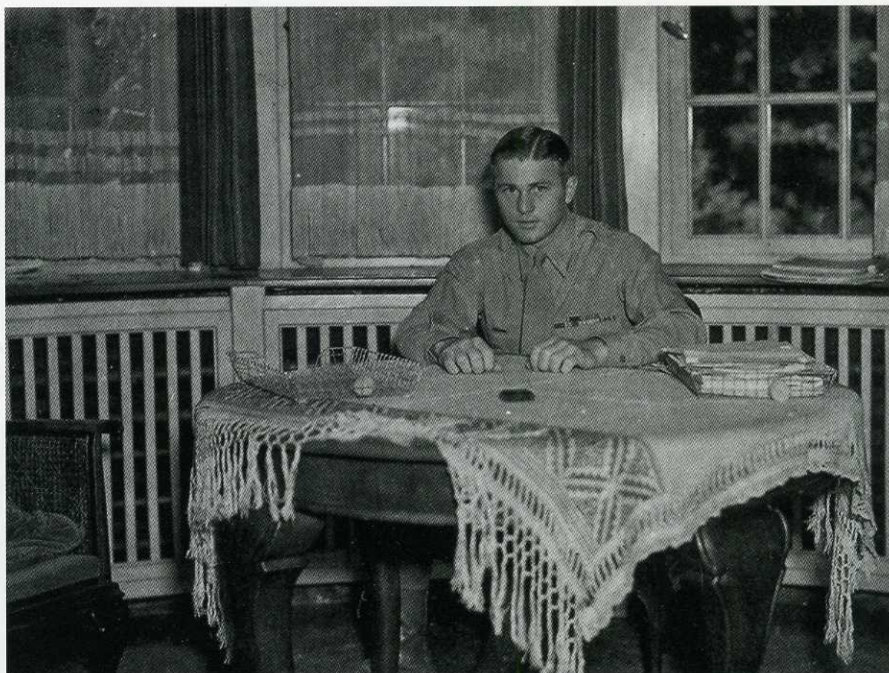
honored to call my friend. Bill passed away on June 14, so I thought it fitting to make him the focus of this issue’s *Chronicles of Courage*. In Bill’s twenty-three years of Army service he earned many valorous medals; this column focuses on the Distinguished Service Cross he earned 6 January 1944.

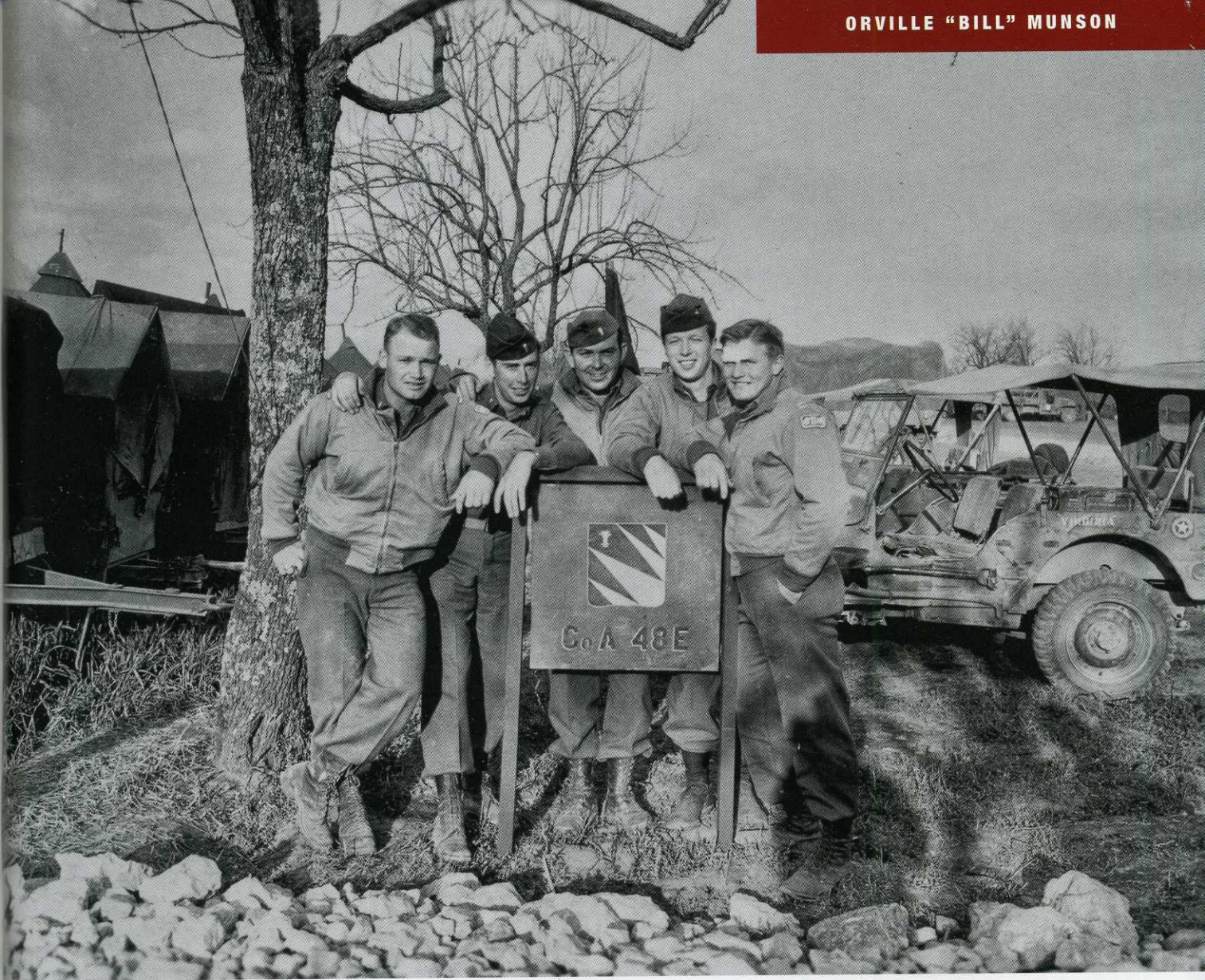
Between 6 and 9 January 1944,

the 48th Engineer Battalion earned an abundance of valorous awards. During the assault on Mount Porchia, Italy, the 48th Engineers earned one Medal of Honor, three Distinguished Service Crosses, and 22 Silver Star Medals. CPT Orville “Bill” Munson earned one of those Distinguished Service Crosses while commanding Company A. **AE**

RIGHT: MAJ Bill Munson in Germany while serving as the Executive Office for the 48th Engineer Battalion.

FACING PAGE: Officers of Company A, 48th Engineers, at Mignano, Italy: LT Snyder, LT Finnegan, LT Carter, LT Hollar, and CPT Munson.





Munson's Distinguished Service Cross citation reads:

“ The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Orville O. Munson, First Lieutenant (Corps of Engineers), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in action on 6 January 1944. 1st Lt. Munson led his company in darkness through mined and shelled areas to the foot of Mt. Porchia, Italy. He acted as a 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 1st Lt. Munson in the shoulder. He

fell to the ground and feigned death. His captors took his submachine gun and left the area. 1st Lt. Munson rose, picked up a carbine, and captured two prisoners before returning to his company. The courage displayed by 1st Lt. Munson prevented the ambush of his company and also enabled his men to capture six of the enemy patrol. His performance reflects the heroic traditions of the Corps of Engineers. ”