

HEADQUARTERS  
I FIELD FORCE VIETNAM  
APO San Francisco 96350

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 736

11 September 1967

AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR  
(First Oak Leaf Cluster)

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

KOONTZ, LAWRENCE H PLATOON SERGEANT E7 United States Army Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, APO San Francisco 96347.

Awarded: Silver Star (First Oak Leaf Cluster)

Date action: 28 February 1966 to 1 March 1966

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: Gallantry in action: Platoon Sergeant Koontz, Platoon Sergeant of the "Recondo" platoon Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, was given the mission of securing a landing zone deep in Viet Cong infested jungle prior to a battalion size operation the following day. With a South Vietnamese Army platoon attached to his force late in the afternoon of 28 February 1966, Sergeant Koontz moved toward his objective 8000 meters away. After moving approximately 3000 meters, the two point squads suddenly came under hostile fire. Sergeant Koontz quickly and expertly led two squads from the rear around the embattled front squads in an effort to out-flank the enemy. Shortly after moving toward his new objective, his element came under a murderous hail of enemy fire. With his element and the point squads pinned down by automatic weapon and machine gun fire, Sergeant Koontz organized an assault on the entrenched enemy. When this failed and it became apparent that his whole force was surrounded, Sergeant Koontz grabbed an M60 machine gun and tried to infiltrate the enemy defenses. As he rose and ran for the tree line, he became the target of several enemy automatic weapons. Forced to crawl, Sergeant Koontz continued his daring assault and reached the enemy lines. His ammunition expended, and the enemy regrouping for a charge, Sergeant Koontz then returned to his platoon. He again started out by himself, with a fresh load of ammunition, this time assaulting a weaker portion of the enemy defenses. His men, inspired to great heights by this extraordinary act of gallantry, rushed forward and overran the bewildered Viet Cong. Sergeant Koontz, not satisfied with simply freeing his platoon from enemy fire, pursued the fleeing, disorganized enemy. Still carrying the machine gun, Sergeant Koontz killed three Viet Cong who tried to make a last ditch stand against the inspired, aggressive paratroopers.

After extraction of the wounded, the recondo platoon then reorganized and continued their mission toward the landing zone. Shortly before reaching the main objective, Sergeant Koontz inadvertently stepped on a punji stake. However, he told no one of his injury

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and refused medical aid. As the reconno platoon approached the landing zone, it again came under hostile fire from a small group of huts. Sergeant Koontz braved the withering fire to position himself close enough to effectively call artillery fire on the determined enemy. After the artillery was lifted, he again personally led an assault on the Viet Cong. Although limping quite noticeably and obviously in great pain, Sergeant Koontz was able to overrun the enemy and thus secure the landing zone for the forthcoming assault. Through his untiring efforts and conspicuous gallantry, the mission was accomplished, and the battalion was able to land without incident. Sergeant Koontz's avid professionalism and personal intrepidity were unparalleled. His actions are in keeping with the highest standards and traditions of the military service and reflect immeasurable credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of USARV Message 16695, 1 July 1966 and paragraph 27, AR 672-5-1.

FOR THE COMMANDER: *[Signature]*

OFFICIAL:

*[Signature]*

GERALD L. OVERSTREET  
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