Copyright 2017 by Ryan Niebuhr @ 2ndbde.org or as attributed.

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 968127
By NARA Date 5/10/05

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS TASK FORCE OREGON (PROVISIONAL)
APO San Francisco 96374

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 57

26 June 1967

AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced posthumously.

THORNTON, LEON SPECIALIST FOUR E4, United States Army, Company A, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 502nd Infantry, APO 96347

Awarded: Silver Star
Date action: 18 May 1967
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Reason: For gallantry in action against an armed hostile force on 18 May 1967 near Duc Pho, Republic of Vietnam. While serving as radio telephone operator, Specialist Thornton was moving along a jungle trail with the company headquarters group. The lead squad was suddenly taken under a tremendous volume of enemy fire from an estimated platoon size element. The lead squad immediately began to maneuver against the enemy element but was immediately pinned down and found that they were surrounded. The company commander along with Specialist Thornton, his radio telephone operator, upon learning of the precarious position of the squad, quickly moved forward to the beleaguered squad. As the company commander and Specialist Thornton approached the position they were brought under a tremendous hail of enemy fire as two enemy soldiers assaulted them. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Specialist Thornton threw himself in front of his company commander and at the same time returned the enemy fire. Specialist Thornton succeeded in killing both of the enemy soldiers but was mortally wounded. As a result of Specialist Thornton's gallantry and courageous actions two enemy soldiers were killed, two weapons were captured and the life of his company commander was saved through his supreme sacrifice. Specialist Thornton's outstanding display of gallantry in action and his devotion to duty even at the cost of his life are in keeping with the highest military traditions and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.
Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918.