

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters 101st Airborne Division
APO San Francisco 96383

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 3229

7 July 1968

SECTION I

THE SILVER STAR MEDAL

1. TC 320. The following AWARDS are announced.

ARONOW, WILLIAM F FIRST LIEUTENANT INFANTRY Company D
2d Battalion (Airborne) 501st Infantry APO San Francisco 96383

Awarded: The Silver Star Medal

Date action: 15 February 1968

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For gallantry in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 15 February 1968. First Lieutenant Aronow distinguished himself while serving as Executive Officer of Company D, 2d Battalion (Airborne) 501st Infantry. Company D was on a combat patrol eight kilometers northwest of Hue, Republic of Vietnam, in search of enemy mortar positions when the lead element came under a withering hail of automatic weapons and small arms fire. Many men in the lead platoon were killed or wounded in the initial blast, and the forward elements were pinned down by a murderous fire. The company was operating with only two platoons and these were understrength. Thus there was only one platoon in reserve to relieve the pressure on the point platoon, and the enemy fire, coming from an estimated North Vietnamese company well entrenched and dug in, was seriously retarding the efforts to extricate these men from their exposed position. Attempts were also being made to evacuate the wounded, but a number of injured men were so close to the enemy lines that this seemed virtually impossible. At this time First Lieutenant Aronow arrived with a handful of reinforcements and, fully exposing himself to the deadly enemy fire, skillfully deployed these men in an effort to stabilize the situation. The platoon leader of the lead platoon had been killed, and First Lieutenant Aronow quickly seized control of the action in front, bringing up what reserves were left and distributing ammunition resupply. Still the heavy enemy fire was unabated, and men continued to fall, many of these in efforts to evacuate the dead and wounded. One man had been shot down almost directly beneath the enemy guns, and his body had lain there for a number of hours as any would be attempt to reach him appeared suicidal. However the platoon sergeant was about to make the effort when First Lieutenant Aronow ordered him to remain in position so as not to expose the senior man in the platoon to such excessive danger. Instead First Lieutenant Aronow went out himself, leading three volunteers, to reach the man. Immediately much enemy fire was concentrated on First Lieutenant Aronow as he moved across the open field in complete disregard for his own personal safety. On reaching the man he was found to be dead, and First Lieutenant Aronow ordered the men to put his body on a stretcher which had been brought out while he covered them. First Lieutenant Aronow

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then proceeded to shield the men with his own body and took a corner of the stretcher with one hand and, firing his rifle with the other, returned to the company lines. First Lieutenant Aronow then remained exposed while directing the evacuation of the remaining casualties, and once every wounded man had been moved to the rear the company began its withdrawal. First Lieutenant Aronow remained with the rear guard, firing as he moved and covering the withdrawal. Groups of enemy soldiers tried to turn the flank of the rear detachment and isolate it, but First Lieutenant Aronow fired on them and drove them back. The enemy repeated this action a number of times, but First Lieutenant Aronow, skillfully directing the security element, inflicted heavy casualties on the North Vietnamese in their vain efforts, and thus affected a safe withdrawal. In doing so he was not hesitant in exposing himself to the enemy fire in order to control his men. Without the calm, courageous leadership of First Lieutenant Aronow at a critical moment, the company very well might have suffered devastating results. His dedication to duty in the face of galling enemy fire was a lasting inspiration to every man in the company as well as a telling factor in the successful withdrawal of the company from a totally untenable position. First Lieutenant Aronow's exceptional and constant gallantry are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President of the United States under the provisions of the Act of Congress established 9 July 1918.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

W. P. TALLON, JR
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Chief of Staff

 M. K. LABAR
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