

Unsung Hero to Be Bearer of Unknown's Body; Sergeant Woodfill Is Selected by Pershing

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 31.—Sergeant Samuel Woodfill, a soldier whose heroism is practically unknown to the people of the United States, but who has been officially rated by General Pershing as being first among the many American heroes in the World War, has arrived in Washington from Fort Thomas, Kentucky, to serve as the Infantry's body-bearer on the occasion of the burial of the American unknown soldier at Arlington on Nov. 11.

When a search of the World War records was made recently in the War Department for the purpose of selecting a soldier from the Infantry branch of the service to act as body-bearer for the unknown dead, Sergeant Woodfill was selected by the department as the hero most entitled to that exceptional honor.

Although now rated as a Sergeant, Woodfill served as a First Lieutenant in the Sixtieth Infantry during the war and was promoted during the war to be a Captain of Infantry in addition to being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. He killed nineteen of the enemy and captured three.

It now develops that General Pershing recently completed a search of the war records of the officers and soldiers who served during the World War, and decided that the outstanding heroism of Sergeant Woodfill entitled him to special mention in the "Report of the Commanding General, First Army, American Expeditionary Forces, on the Organizations of the First Army, A. E. F., which is soon to be submitted to the Secretary of War.

Sergeant Woodfill's citation read:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy at Cunel, France, Oct. 12, 1918. While he was leading his company against the enemy his line came under heavy machine-gun fire which threatened to hold up the

advance. Followed by two soldiers at twenty-five yards, this officer went out ahead of his first line toward a machine-gun nest and worked his way around its flank, leaving two soldiers in front. When he got within ten yards of the gun it ceased firing, and four of the enemy appeared, three of whom were shot by Sergeant Woodfill. The fourth, an officer, rushed at Sergeant Woodfill, who attempted to club the officer with his rifle. After a hand-to-hand struggle Sergeant Woodfill killed the officer with his pistol. His company thereupon continued to advance, until shortly afterward another machine-gun nest was encountered.

"Calling on his men to follow Sergeant Woodfill rushed ahead of his line in the face of heavy fire from the nest, and when several of the enemy appeared above the nest he shot them, capturing three other members of the crew and silencing the gun. A few minutes later this officer, for the third time demonstrated conspicuous daring by charging another machine gun position, killing five men in one machine gun pit with his rifle. He then drew his revolver and started to jump into the pit when two other gunners, only a few yards away, turned their gun on him.

"Failing to kill them with his revolver he grabbed a pick lying near by and killed both of them. Inspired by the exceptional courage displayed by this officer, his men pressed on to their objective under severe shell and machine gun fire."

Sergeant Woodfill's promotion to a Captaincy was the result of this exploit. He also received, in addition to the Congressional Medal, the Legion of Honor (Cavalier) and the Croix de Guerre, with palm.

The War Department has been officially advised that Admiral of the Fleet Lord Beatty, representing the British Government, will bestow the Victoria Cross on the unidentified American soldier at Arlington on Nov. 11.

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