

Medal of Honor Recipient Don Carlos Faith, Jr.



Don Carlos Faith, Jr. was born August 26, 1918 in Washington, Indiana. The son of a career soldier, Don, Jr. grew up on army bases around the United States and overseas. His father, Don, Sr., was transferred to Fort Thomas in 1936 to become Plans and Training Officer; Major Faith moved his family into Quarters No. 7 in Alexandria Circle at the fort. "Paddy," as he was known, attended Highlands High School his Senior year, joining the football, track, and tennis teams and was elected Vice-President of the Rifle Club. After graduation in 1937, his dream of attending the United States Military Academy at West Point was thwarted by a medical disqualification, so he attended Georgetown University in Washington, DC for Foreign Service Training.

When Don's local draft board turned him down for that same disqualification, he appealed and won, enlisting in the Army on June 25, 1941, headed for Fort Benning, GA and Officer Candidate School. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant of Infantry on February 26, 1942.

He was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, first as aide to then Brigadier General Matthew B. Ridgeway, later as a staff officer. He took part in all of the combat jumps made by the division in World War II, and won successive promotions to the grade of Lieutenant Colonel. He was twice awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

Following World War II, Lieutenant Colonel Faith was assigned to the military mission in China. When the mission was withdrawn, he became a battalion commander in the 7th Infantry Division in Japan .

With the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, he entered into action with the 7th Division, earned a Silver Star for gallantry in action, and met his death in the fierce fighting around the Chosin Reservoir on December 1, 1950.

His Medal of Honor Citation reads as follows:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pride in presenting the Medal of Honor (Posthumously) to Lieutenant Colonel (Infantry) Don Carlos Faith, Jr. (ASN: 0-46673), United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action above and beyond the call of duty while Commanding the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, in action against enemy aggressor forces at Hagaru-ri, (Chosin Reservoir) North Korea, from 27 November to 1 December 1950. When the enemy launched a fanatical attack against his battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Faith unhesitatingly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire as he moved about directing the action. When the enemy penetrated the positions, Lieutenant Colonel Faith personally led counterattacks to restore the position. During an attack by his battalion to effect a junction with another U.S. unit, Lieutenant Colonel Faith reconnoitered the route for, and personally directed, the first elements of his command across the ice-covered reservoir and then directed the movement of his vehicles which were loaded with wounded until all of his command had passed through the enemy fire. Having completed this he crossed the reservoir himself. Assuming command of the force his unit had joined he was given the mission of attacking to join friendly elements to the south. Lieutenant Colonel Faith, although physically exhausted in the bitter cold, organized and launched an attack which was soon stopped by enemy fire. He ran forward under enemy small-arms and automatic weapons fire, got his men on their feet and personally led the fire attack as it blasted its way through the enemy ring. As they came to a hairpin curve, enemy fire from a roadblock again pinned the column down. Lieutenant Colonel Faith organized a group of men and directed their attack on the enemy positions on the right flank. He then placed himself at the head of another group of men and in the face of direct fire. Don Carlos Faith, Jr. was born August 26, 1918 in Washington, Indiana. The son of a career soldier, Don, Jr. grew up on army bases around the United States and overseas. His father, Don, Sr., was transferred to Fort Thomas in 1936 to become Plans and Training Officer; Major Faith moved his family into Quarters No. 7 in Alexandria Circle at the fort. "Paddy," as he was known,

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Following World War II, Lieutenant Colonel Faith was assigned to the military mission in China. When the mission was enemy fire led an attack on the enemy roadblock, firing his pistol and throwing grenades. When he had reached a position approximately 30 yards from the roadblock he was mortally wounded, but continued to direct the attack until the roadblock was overrun. Throughout the five days of action Lieutenant Colonel Faith gave no thought to his safety and did not spare himself. His presence each time in the position of greatest danger was an inspiration to his men. Also, the damage he personally inflicted firing from his position at the head of his men was of material assistance on several occasions. Lieutenant Colonel Faith's outstanding gallantry and noble self-sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty reflect the highest honor on him and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army.

The Medal of Honor was presented posthumously to his widow and daughter by General Omar Bradley on June 21, 1951. Lt. Col. Faith's body was not recovered until nearly 54 years later, when a box of remains from that battle were excavated by JPAC, the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Account Command, in September, 2004. After years of meticulous detail work in sorting through the container of mixed remains from the North Korean mass burial site, Lt. Col. Faith's remains were positively identified in August 2012, by a DNA match with his surviving daughter, who lives in Baton Rouge, LA.

In a solemn ceremony, Lt. Col. Don Carlos Faith, Jr. was buried in Arlington Cemetery on April 17, 2013.

(Written by Deanna Beineke. Information from dedication of Faith Middle School, Ft. Benning, GA, Highlands High School 1937 annual, and newspaper accounts.)