

Ramon S. Subejano
c/o Dr. Louis S. Posner
277 West 38th Street
New York, N. Y.
March 16, 1949

Captain Harold G. Bergdale
1116 West 13
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Dear Captain Bergdale:

Perhaps you will be very much surprised to receive this letter. However, those of us who fought in the arena of the bloodiest battlefields in Europe share memories and thoughts quite unknown to the average person. These memories knit a bond that is unbreakable.

The object of my letter is to inform you that I received the Award of Silver Star - decorated by Brig. Gen. George C. Beach, Jr. of Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C. The happiest moment of my life was when the General pinned the Silver Star on my chest. I thank you a thousand times Captain Bergdale for recommending me for this award and making the Philippines very proud of me.

I believe you are the only one who perfectly understands how I fought - hard, unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in my heart that the real victory was my end. It was under your command that I fought in some of the bloodiest battles of the war. For example - At the Battle of Falaise Gap, it was reported that we destroyed 300 enemy tanks, 240 self-propelled guns, 170 artillery pieces, 3,280 vehicles, over 8000 casualties and 13,000 prisoners.

I will never forget the battle of Mairy on Sept. 8, 1944. You came to us in the very early morning to give us orders to prepare to move out. A few minutes later you told us to stay in dig. You said that "there were one hundred German Tanks roaming and rambling around last night and now they are ready to attack." Before you left us, you gave your final orders saying that: "When the German go in counter attack, you all just lay down and turn around and shoot." I had a feeling we were surrounded, and it was the first time I had learned that tactic from anyone since D-Day Normandy.

During that morning, my position on the top of the hill was the best spot for observation. I saw the German Jeep & Royal Tiger Tank headed for our Co. C.P., Batt. & Regt. C. P. in the village. My direct report down the hill to our T.D. & Infantry was successfully executed, at which time, we destroyed 5 Royal Tiger Tanks and 2 Jeeps were destroyed, one jeep captured, and all their infantry was wiped out.

One German Jeep, in an attempt to escape from the village was speeding toward me. I used your tactic and let them go past me; then I shot the two officers in it at the back - and their jeep jumped into the ditch. I was wounded by German artillery barrage and was sent to the village for treatment. Upon my arrival I had seen German Tanks and German prisoners

and German dead all over the place. Sir: You are the luckiest commander I have ever known, for no one in our company was killed during that bloody morning, on September 8, 1944.

The battle of Mozelle River - when we crossed it and attacked Fort Koenigsmacker on November 9, 1944. The bloodiest of all the bloodiest. The earth trembled under the worst artillery bombardment the world had ever known. Co. "A" - 358th Infantry had mustered one of the strongest steel and concrete bastions ever designed by German engineering skill. On the first day of that battle, I was one man of the hour, when S/Sgt. Johnson ordered me to return to the first tunnel we captured that morning for our Co. C.P. & Battalion aid station.

When I arrived at that tunnel, I found that it was occupied by escaped Germans from Besse Hamtown. I engaged in skirmish inside the tunnel, wounded one of the Germans, breaking his wrist - and captured the second soldier, turning him over to you in the woods. As I returned to the tunnel, I saw a German running toward my position from the BesseHam town. It was my mission to keep these Germans from counter attacking our Company in the woods. Fortunately, our medical aid man Private Carl Weingartner came and I let him guard the 8 Germans I captured that morning.

Counter attack was followed by counter attack - so many times that I was very tired of shooting them single handed. You came to me and you personally gave me orders to go inside the tunnel to sleep. When I complained that there was nobody to take my place, you promised to put in two soldiers - and I immediately fell asleep. When I awoke in the afternoon I realized the tunnel was full of wounded.

I joined our Company that afternoon and we were pinned by Artillery bombardment. Then the enemy counter attacked. I crawled and crept around - completely covered with human flesh and blood. I saw Jacobson's head six feet away from his body. During the night we carried our wounded to the tunnel.

The next morning, we stormed the slope of the Fort. The Germans were so prepared that they rapidly blew us apart. However, during the morning we controlled the top of Fort Koenigsmacker. Three counter attacks were beaten off by us during the afternoon, and the casualties mounted. On the third day, Captain Blake ordered me to go back to guard our C.P. & Battalion aid station.

When I arrived at the station, I saw you were busy at the telephone. I resumed my position - and again that earth shaking bombardment began. I saw artillery shells bursting all around us - and the whistling came from every direction. I suspected that it was not all German artillery that was butchering our soldiers. I called your attention to this - and you immediately investigated and by checking with our Bn. & Regt. the barrages were stopped. This action saved the lives of those soldiers we had left behind at the Fort, as well as the lives of the rest of the Division. Without you we could not have captured the Fort that afternoon.

I also remember what Lt. Gen James A. Van Fleet said to us before we crossed the Moselle River on November 9, 1944. He said: "Boys, we have a very serious mission." Pointing his finger across the hills, he said. "There are lots of Pill Boxes and Fortresses over there and the Germans are sitting down and doing nothing. Now, we are the ones that work hard and it is for us now to dig them out of there."

He also said that the Infantry can never win the war and only the artillery wins wars. "You have the best rifle in the world and don't forget to zero it for two hundred yards - and good luck to you all." His statement was really true and proven by us for so many times - that one Company of M - 1 can wipe out one German Battalion. Sir - your words and those of the General - were the words of the Army. And, I am the only one who came back alive to repeat those words.

Our fight and our leader's words in the arena of the battlefield, the whole world does not know. I believe this is the secret of our mission.

On November 22, 1944 in the evening we attacked the Siegfried line. When we were climbing to the barbed wire, the German machine guns opened fire and many of the boys were killed - their bodies caught on the wire. I was lucky enough to drop inside that dragon's teeth line. We crawled forward and then jumped into the trenches full of water. This was my first experience with sober trench foot. Many Germans jumped over our heads in a counter attack but they did not see us in the trenches. Two other boys and I were 75 yards away from the German machine gun nest - but we were helpless to face them.

We were waiting for some more help but nobody came. When our messenger found us, he asked me where the Sniper was. I grabbed his mouth to keep him quiet because many Germans were lying on the top of the trenches. I realized the whole Company were waiting for me to move out. If our Company were gone, we were only three boys left behind inside of Siegfried line. I remember how we suffered - hiking and circling the town in the whole night.

November 25, 1944, we launched our attack. We captured Pill Boxes, and a few prisoners. When German 88 opened fire you shouted: "Boys - go and get it." We were running fast and I didn't know where to go. When I came out of the woods, I saw one German running and I shot him dead. All the boys followed me to the town, half of which was occupied by Co. B. When you arrived you told me we were going to take the other half of the town.

We were fighting from house to house and all my squad were captured and killed. I was alone, and about to cross the street to join the other squad when German Royal Tiger in the middle of the street opened fire of 50 caliber machine gun on me. I escaped in the 1st building and all the others after that one until I found you in the C. P. But the 1st building was destroyed by German 88 fired from the Tank. I was lucky that morning.

I joined with you to observe in the top of our C. P. There was a German Medic and a group of soldiers carrying white flags approaching. I was ready to shoot them, but you told me to let them in. We were real soldiers - with guts. We could take days and nights of constant Artillery Bombardment without complaining. We left the place in ruins.

On December 6, 1944 we crossed the Saar River. I was so weak I could hardly carry my boxes of mortal shells. I became lost in the woods alone at dawn. The Germans shot at me but missed. I fired back and killed two soldiers and captured three. I believe I was the first to kill Germans that morning.

I was very happy about capturing the three soldiers because I wanted them to carry my boxes of shells. I marched them to our Battalion Headquarters in Saarhauern town. All the boys were happy to have me in the Battalion. I found out that the whole town was full of German S S troops. The Master Sergeant cooked roast chicken for me and sent me to sleep on his bed. He said he would awaken me at 6:00 p.m. to guard. At 6:30 P.M. I heard soldiers marching in the far distance. Their march step was so peculiar that I knew they were not American soldiers. I let them come closer then halted them. They raised their hands. I jumped from my door and found them to be German S S troops. I called all the boys to come out and everybody was pleased at my capturing 13 German S S troopers.

I told the boys to remove the Germans' belts and the bottom of their trousers. Everybody got souvenirs from them except me.

At 8:00 o'clock I worked with the Master Sergeant in loading and unloading our truck and boat - and carried our water, food and ammunition to the Battalion Headquarters across the Saar River.

At 4:00 A. M. Dec. 7, 1944, our boys came to get water, food and ammunition for our company. At 4:30 a.m. I joined our company shouting: "Where is our Company Commander?" I woke up everybody and they were all surprised that I was still alive.

The guard in front of your door brought me to your bed. In the darkness I recounted my experience to you regarding the capture of the 13 Germans. You got up and ordered the company to have breakfast and be ready to attack that same morning. At 5:00 a. m. you gave us orders to move out, which the boys did by means of the windows rather than the doors - because the smart Americans knew German snipers always zeroed for the doors.

We were pinned by German machine gun fire - and we took cover in a big building. Again you gave orders to go forward - and we crossed that stream of water.

I occupied the 1st building, captured 3 Germans, killed 7 with hand grenades in the basement. Then fighting from room to room, wounded 2 more and killed 1. A few of the boys joined me and I took six hand grenades and went from building to building throwing hand grenades as I went. In one room, I killed three German soldiers and one woman. I was moving so fast I found myself alone, surrounded by Germans. Thanks to my hand grenades and my rifle, a lot of Germans lay dead and wounded. The ones that remained alive surrendered without a struggle. This was the battle for which you recommended me for the Third Highest Medal of the United States Army.

Besides all this, I might say that before our Division sent me home to the United States on September 1945, I was also recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor, signed by three soldiers who fought with me in Normandy - but much to my surprise and disappointment the award did not come through.

This took place between June 15, 1944 and July 3, 1944. - Major General Eugene M. Lamdrum, gave me orders, personally, to go out for Germans as a sniper and shoot anything I could see. By carrying out his orders, I was able to locate the German lines - and thirty-one Germans were killed by me. Later this German position was reported to my platoon leader who reported the position to the 357th which gave them barrage. Because I had been able to locate the German position and our barrage had weakened their defenses, we were able to attack on July 3, 1944. We moved from our position on July 2nd, Sunday at noon - to go to a new position. Monday morning at 2:00 am we moved out very close to the German line.

At 5:00 a. m. we gave them a 45 minute barrage and then our machine guns fired a tracer which we followed. We met the Germans by skirmish, using hand grenades, bazookas and rifles against German Royal Tiger Tanks.

I was given fifteen German soldiers and one officer to march into the C.P. While we were marching along, the Germans laughed and sneered at the wounded and dead Americans that were lying along the road. The German officer spit on one of the wounded Americans. I borrowed P.F.C. Martin's M - 1 rifle and shot the officer and the fifteen German soldiers with the sixteen bullets in the M - 1. We returned to our lines and found the German's counter attacking our company at which time I killed, eleven of these Germans. Upon joining my company, I was wounded with my former Company Commander Captain Rust and Captain Blake, at 8:00 a.m. on July 3rd, 1944. We were sent back to the Battalion Aid Station. General Eugene M. Lamdrum our Division Commander saw me and talked to me for the last time here - before I left for hospitalization in England, 52nd General Hospital.

This, Sir, is the story of my Congressional Medal of Honor. Sir - a thorough search has been made of the records and no information has been found to indicate that a recommendation was submitted on my behalf for a medal of Honor.

On June 6, 1948, I visited and consulted the Awards & Decorations Branch Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D. C. The colonel who interviewed me, advised me to contact you as my Company Commander who recommended me for the Award of Silver Star Medal. He told me my Silver Star Award can be changed to the Congressional Medal of Honor by this Commander.

I was also told that all awards approved overseas, except the Medal of Honor are announced in orders - and that copies of such orders were forwarded to the Department of the Army. The recommendations for the Medal of Honor are forwarded to the Decorations Board, Dept. of the Army for consideration. Upon approval, the Awards are announced in War Department General Orders.

Herewith enclosed is a copy of my Citation or Award of the Silver Star, the original of which is under the auspices of Leon J. Gund, Major, A.G.D., O.I.C., Dec. Board Section Dec. & Awards Branch, A.G.D., Washington 25, D.C.

I also enclose the duplicate letter from the Major concerning your present address. Sir - I am asking you for your help again so that I may secure the highest Medal in the land. Your sending Washington a recommendation for me, will be the greatest pressure in this direction - for I have no doubt that when they receive your letter they may grant me my wish.

Sir - this is the last fight for me before I die. At present I am totally disabled with 100% compensation. I was very ill with arthritis when I

reenlisted in the Army.

Upon my arrival in Germany, I was transferred to 1st Division, 18th Infantry Anti Tank Co., in Bamberg, Germany. Then the 3rd Army Headquarters ordered me to fly to London. I attended Victory Parade and was decorated by the French Government with the Croix de Guerre. I also received decorations from the Belgium and Dutch governments with the Fourragere medals.

Above all, I was the national guest of the whole of England - with all expenses paid for my convenience. When I was flown back to Frankfurt, I suffered another attack of arthritis from which I am still suffering.

In conclusion, may I say that I am looking forward to your gracious, favorable answer, and that you will give consideration to my request regarding the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Yours Faithfully - ex "Sniper"

Ramon S. Subejano
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P. S. I would be very grateful if you would drop me a note at the same time that you write to Washington, D. C.

Mr. Ramon S. Subejano
c/o Dr. Louis S. Posner
277 West 38th Street
New York, N. Y.

VIA AIR MAIL



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Captain Harold G. Bergdale
0331167
1116 West 13
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

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NO 384484
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