

Albert Edward Baesel



Born	March 21, 1890 Berea, Ohio
Died	September 27, 1918 (aged 28) near Ivoiry, France
Allegiance	 United States of America
Service/branch	 United States Army
Years of service	1912 - 1918
Rank	 Corporal (National Guard)  Second Lieutenant (Army)
Unit	 148th Infantry Regiment, 37th Division
Battles/wars	World War I *Meuse-Argonne offensive †
Awards	 Medal of Honor

Albert Edward Baesel (March 21, 1890 – September 27, 1918) was an American Army officer who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for actions near Ivoiry, France which led to his death during World War I.

Albert Baesel was born in 1890 in a frame farmhouse that still stands on Sprague Rd. near Marks Rd., Berea, Ohio. He joined the 5th Infantry Regiment of the Ohio National Guard in 1912 as a private and later promoted to Corporal in the Ohio National Guard. In 1918, he resigned from the 5th Infantry and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the 148th Infantry Regiment of the Ohio National Guard. That same year, the 148th was federalized to serve in France.

As a 2nd Lieutenant in Company B, 148th Infantry, the 28 year old Berean served in the opening phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive with the 37th "Buckeye Division". Colonel Ludwig S. Conelly of Cleveland, commander of the 1st Battalion, 148th Infantry, stated the incident leading to Baesel's medal occurred on "the ridge" north of Ivoiry about thirty minutes after the 1st and 2nd battalions had taken the town of Montfaucon and were advancing toward the town of Clerges. Conelly said:

"During the attack, Lieutenant Baesel was on the right flank and exposed to heavy machine gun fire. The best corporal of his platoon, Sterling L. Ryan (a squad leader of his platoon), fell mortally wounded while attempting to capture an enemy machinegun nest about 200 yards in advance of the assault line. Lieutenant Baesel pleaded with his captain, Robert L. Tavenner, to be permitted to rescue the corporal. So persistent was he that

the permission was reluctantly granted even though the company was being hit by heavy artillery, rifle, and machinegun fire, and a heavy deluge of gas. The lieutenant weathered a withering fire and reached the corporal's side. On the return trip, however, both were riddled with bullets. When I saw the dead hero, he was lying on his back with both his arms around the corporal, whose body lay across that of his friend."

Pvt. Carl V. Schmidt, Headquarters Company, wrote of Baesel's character in a letter to his own parents from Champagne France, Dec. 9th 1918:

"there is no question of Lieutenant Baesel's bravery and gallantry. His men all loved him - this I know because I had the honor of sharing my bunk at meals with him for nearly a month on the Lorraine front while operating a buzzer-phone station on the American outposts which were in advance of the front lines at the edge of a forest. He led raiding parties into the enemy trenches and the men say he was fearless. Men of his type are those who have won the war but he was just like a big brother to the men, looking after them when sick and often at night in the dark and rain and mud he would take hot coffee out to the men guarding the outposts."

He was the first World War I soldier from Ohio killed in action. His company fashioned a grave using a mess kit as a digging tool, constructed a cross from tree branches tied together with boot laces, and attached one of Baesel's ID tags to it before departing.

The War Department awarded Baesel the posthumous Medal of Honor In 1922. In early 1926 French farmers, plowing for unexploded artillery projectiles near Ivoiry discovered Baesel's grave and notified authorities. One account claims the original grave had been further buried by earth thrown up by exploding German artillery rounds. Within a short period of time of its discovery Baesel's remains were returned to Berea for a proper burial.

The funeral service was held at Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory (now Baldwin Wallace College) in Berea almost eight years after Baesel's death and four years after the posthumous awarding of the Medal of Honor. The remains were transported to Woodvale Cemetery in Middleburg Heights, Ohio on a flag-draped, horse-drawn caisson with the Cleveland Grays, a militia unit formed in 1837, acting as honor guard along with contingents from the units Baesel had served in. Two other Medal of Honor recipients were present - Leroy W. Williams a Civil War veteran and William G. Keller of the Spanish-American War. The traditional booming of blank howitzer rounds ended the ceremony. It was one of the largest funeral processions the area has ever seen with thousands of people present.

On September 5, 1919 the American Legion Post 91 Congressional Charter was issued, in honor of Albert E. Baesel.

Citation

Upon hearing that a squad leader of his platoon had been severely wounded while attempting to capture an enemy machinegun nest about 200 yards in advance of the assault line and somewhat to the right, 2d Lt. Baesel requested permission to go to the rescue of the

wounded Corporal. After thrice repeating his request and permission having been reluctantly given, due to the heavy artillery, rifle, and machinegun fire, and heavy deluge of gas in which the company was at the time, accompanied by a volunteer, he worked his way forward, and reaching the wounded man, placed him upon his shoulders and was instantly killed by enemy fire.