

2LT Michael Ligus, Jr. (Class 36-42)

Distinguished Service Cross

Headquarters, Fifth U.S. Army General Orders No. 6 (1944)

CITATION: The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Second Lieutenant (Field Artillery) Michael Ligus, Jr. (ASN: O-1172526), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving with an Armored Field Artillery Battalion, in action against enemy forces in October 1943.

On that date, Lieutenant Ligus established his forward observation post on the contested hilltop with the foremost elements of an Infantry battalion. As he relayed instructions to the fire control center, the Germans mounted their counterattack, which carried to within 30 yards of the officer and the advance Infantry units. The German advance necessitated swift adjustment of American artillery fire. Despite the proximity of the enemy to his own position, he called for it without hesitation. Lieutenant Ligus remained at that station more than two hours, with supporting Infantry falling on all sides under the ferocity of the German drive. Both sides fought doggedly and the distance between opposing forces lessened as both inched forward on the crest of the hill. Finally, it became impossible for Lieutenant Ligus to direct fire against the enemy without endangering the Americans battling all around him. Accordingly, he crawled toward the enemy, the bulk of his radio equipment making detection almost inevitable. His orders came through steadily and his advance continued until he was killed by a mortar shell. The ground on which Lieutenant Ligus died was won and held. His performance demonstrated great courage under fire and impregnable loyalty to duty, providing an enduring example of the historic traditions of the Army of the United States.