

First Lieutenant Henry O. Odegard (Class 51-43)

Distinguished Service Cross

Headquarters, Third U.S. Army

General Orders No. 219 (1945) (20 August 1945)

CITATION: The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to First Lieutenant [then Second Lieutenant] Henry O. Odegard (ASN: 0-1177559), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving with Company E, 259th Infantry Regiment, 65th Infantry Division, in action against enemy forces on 18 March 1945, in Germany.

On that date, First Lieutenant Odegard led his platoon in a pre-dawn attack against strongly fortified enemy Siegfried Line positions near Saarlautern, Germany. When his attacking force became disorganized due to numerous casualties and enemy mines in front of the hostile positions, he courageously returned to the initial point, reorganized his platoon and led them in a second assault through the minefield which was under heavy enemy machine gun, artillery, mortar and small arms fire. Inspired by his cool, heroic leadership, his men knocked out two small bunkers and one large pillbox with pole charges and rocket fire. Lieutenant Odegard's intrepid gallantry against overwhelming odds, his personal bravery and zealous devotion to duty exemplify the highest traditions of the military forces of the United States and reflect great credit upon himself, the 65th Infantry Division, and the United States Army.