

MEDAL OF HONOR: JOEL THOMPSON BOONE

Medal of Honor Series

Our "Medal of Honor" series explores the stories behind the courageous Pennsylvania veterans who have been awarded the prestigious Medal of Honor for their exemplary service in the United States military. In this entry, we recognize the achievements of Joel Thompson Boone, who received the Medal of Honor for his actions on July 19, 1918.



Joel Thompson Boone was awarded the Medal of Honor for actions taken on July 19, 1918. In addition to the Medal of Honor, Boone received the Army's Distinguished Service Cross and was awarded the Silver Star six times. These awards made Boone the most highly decorated medical officer in the history of the United States armed services.

Boone was born in St. Clair, Pennsylvania on August 29, 1889 and graduated in June 1913 from Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia. The following year he was commissioned a lieutenant (junior grade) in the United States Naval Reserve.

For extraordinary heroism, conspicuous gallantry, and intrepidity while serving with the 6th Regiment, U.S. Marines, in actual conflict with the enemy, on July 19, 1918, southeast of Vierzy, France, near the cemetery, and on the road south from that town. With absolute disregard for personal safety, ever conscious and mindful of the suffering fallen, Surgeon Boone, leaving the shelter of a ravine, went forward onto the open field where there was no protection and despite the extreme enemy fire of all calibers, through a heavy mist of gas, applied dressings and first aid to wounded marines. When the dressings and supplies had been exhausted, he went through a heavy barrage of large-caliber shells, both high explosive and gas, to replenish these supplies. He returned quickly with a sidecar load, and administered them in saving the lives of the wounded. A second trip, under the same conditions and for the same purpose, was made by Surgeon Boone later that day.

Boone remained in the Navy after the First World War and served during the Second World War and the Korean War. He was one of the few individuals to have served in all three conflicts. Vice Admiral Boone died in 1974 in Washington, D.C. and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.