

MEDAL OF HONOR: JOHN D. KELLY

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 John D. Kelly, who received the Medal of Honor on May 28, 1952.



John Kelly was born July 8, 1928, in Youngstown, Ohio. His family moved to Homestead, PA where he attended grade school and high school. He graduated from high school in 1947, and was attending Arizona State College, prior to entering the United States Marine Corps. He gave up college during the Korean War, enlisting in the Marine Corps in August 1951, in Pittsburgh. Kelly served as a radio operator with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

Kelly received the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a radio operator of Company C, in action against enemy aggressor forces. With his platoon pinned down by a numerically superior enemy force employing intense mortar, artillery, small-arms and grenade fire, Pfc. Kelly requested permission to leave his radio in the care of another man and to participate in an assault on enemy key positions. Fearlessly charging forward in the face of a murderous hail of machine gun fire and hand grenades, he initiated a daring attack against a hostile strongpoint and personally neutralized the position, killing two of the enemy. Unyielding in the face of heavy odds, he continued forward and single-handedly assaulted a machine gun bunker. Although painfully wounded, he

bravely charged the bunker and destroyed it, killing three of the enemy. Courageously continuing his one-man assault, he again stormed forward in a valiant attempt to wipe out a third bunker and boldly delivered pointblank fire into the aperture of the hostile emplacement. Mortally wounded by enemy fire while carrying out this heroic action, Pfc. Kelly, by his great personal valor and aggressive fighting spirit, inspired his comrades to sweep on, overrun and secure the objective. His extraordinary heroism in the face of almost certain death reflects the highest credit upon himself and enhances the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Kelly is buried at Jefferson Memorial Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA.