

CORP. HOMER S. WHEATON FELL ON A GRENADE AND WAS BLOWN TO SHREDS TO SAVE COMPANIONS



Syracuse Soldier Wins First American Heroes' War Medal for Valor

THIS is the third in a series of articles, illustrated by one of Artist Vic Lombardi's color sketches, depicting the unusually gallant deeds of Onondaga county heroes in the world war. The subject of to-day's sketch is Corp. Homer J. Wheaton, winner of the first American Distinguished Service Cross, who voluntarily sacrificed his life to save his comrades.

CORP. HOMER J. WHEATON, Company B, 191st Infantry, was the first Syracusean to fall in battle in the world war.

which they were expected to dump upon the heads of Germans in the opposing trenches.

Suddenly, amid the excitement, one of the grenades fell to the floor of the dugout. Corporal Wheaton gave one glance at it. The firing pin had been released.

This meant that within a few seconds the men in the dugout would be blown to pieces, unless—

Hardly was he prone when the explosion took place. The others were saved.

"For Valor" reads the slogan on the obverse side of the outstretched arms of the Distinguished Service Cross.

"Greater love hath no man than this," says the Good Book. The memory of Corp. Homer J. Wheaton will live in the hearts of those he saved long after the history of the part he played in the war has been filed in the annals of the world.

a young man, he came to this city to prepare himself for his life's work at Syracuse university. He was not surprised to hear that he had given his life for others.

He came from such stock as heroes are made. His paternal grandfathers were Daniel W. Wheaton and Capt. David F. Dodge, Onondaga pioneers. He was born on a farm in Pompey, and before he came to Syracuse university he took a course in the St. Johns military academy in Manlius. After leaving college he chose the engineering as his profession. When

settled. This explains his presence in a New England regiment only in part.

His course at St. Johns had given him a love for military work, and when he left that institution he joined the National Guard. He naturally found his way into a Massachusetts company in Worcester, and was called into service at the Mexican border with that unit.

That was the Ninth Massachusetts Infantry. When the transfer to the Federal service for overseas duty was made, this became the 191st Infantry of the United States army.

As the company was lined up for regimental review, just before it left for France, the band struck up "Where Do We Go From Here?"

Corporal Wheaton gave a little side glance toward a friend as he remarked: "I wonder."

He declared that as he was all alone in the world, with neither father nor mother, wife nor child, he considered it his duty to take the place of another who must be needed at home. It was the same spirit of self-sacrifice that sent him to the front.