



**BENNETT, EMORY L.**

**Rank and organization:** Private First Class, U.S. Army, Company B, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division. **Place and date:** Near Sobangsan, Korea, 24 June 1951. **Entered service at:** Cocoa, Fla. **Born:** 20 December 1929, New Smyrna Beach, Fla. **G.O. No.:** 11, 1 February 1952. **Citation:** Pfc. Bennett, a member of Company B, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action against an armed enemy of the United Nations. At approximately 0200 hours, two enemy battalions swarmed up the ridgeline in a ferocious banzai charge in an attempt to dislodge Pfc. Bennett's company from its defensive positions. Meeting the challenge, the gallant defenders delivered destructive retaliation, but the enemy pressed the assault with fanatical determination and the integrity of the perimeter was imperiled. Fully aware of the odds against him, Pfc. Bennett unhesitatingly left his foxhole, moved through withering fire, stood within full view of the enemy, and employing his automatic rifle, poured crippling fire into the ranks of the onrushing assailants, inflicting numerous casualties. Although wounded, Pfc. Bennett gallantly maintained his one-man defense and the attack was momentarily halted. During this lull in the battle, the company regrouped for a counterattack, but the numerically superior foe soon infiltrated into the position. Upon orders to move back, Pfc. Bennett voluntarily remained to provide covering fire for the withdrawing elements and defying the enemy, continued to sweep the charging foe with devastating fire until mortally wounded. His willing self-sacrifice and intrepid actions saved the position from being overrun and enabled the company to effect an orderly withdrawal. Pfc. Bennett's unflinching courage and consummate devotion to duty reflect lasting glory on himself and the military service.



## EMORY L. BENNETT



*Private First Class Emory Lawrence Bennett is listed as the 49th soldier and the 75th overall Korean War Medal of Honor recipient. Born on 20 December 1929 at New Smyrna Beach, Florida, he was the youngest child of Sterling Gary Bennett, Sr. and Stella Lee (Skipper) Bennett. His parents lost their business in the Great Depression of the 1930s and the family moved to Indianola on 15 March 1936 where his father found work with the state road department. The Bennett's relocated to Cocoa in May of the same year where they operated a family-owned seafood business ("Bennett Fish Market"). Emory Bennett grew up working in this family enterprise along with his three brothers (Sterling Jr., Marvin LaVerne, and John Madison) and as a youth, he spent most of his leisure time hunting and fishing. After graduating from Cocoa High School in 1948, Bennett worked several different jobs to earn enough money to attend college. He subsequently enrolled at a business college in North Florida and continued to work part-time to finance his higher education. On 25 July 1950, Bennett enlisted in the United States Army and was initially assigned to the Corps of Engineers. As America's involvement in the Korean War expanded, an urgent need for infantrymen materialized. As a result, Bennett was transferred to that branch of the service and was deployed to the Korean Theater of Operations in February 1951. On 25 March, he was assigned as a rifleman to Company B of the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. Bennett was baptized by fire on 31 March 1951 and was promoted to private first class the next day. He subsequently saw action in three consecutive campaigns and on 24 June 1951, Bennett was killed in the same engagement that would merit him the Medal of Honor. In his last letter home from Korea dated 20 June 1951, he expressed the hope that he would be rotated home by Christmas. During an awards ceremony held at the Pentagon on 1 February 1952, Mr. Sterling G. Bennett, Sr. formally accepted his son's posthumous Medal of Honor from Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett. At this same ceremony, a posthumous Medal of Honor was also presented to the family of Sergeant First Class Nelson V. Brittin. Bennett has the distinction of being the first soldier of the 15th Infantry Regiment (the "Can Do" Regiment) and one of eleven soldiers assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division (the "Marne Division") to earn our nation's highest military decoration for battlefield valor during the Korean War. Additionally, he is one of two Korean War Medal of Honor recipients accredited to the state of Florida and he is the only resident of Volusia County, Florida, ever to be awarded the Medal of Honor. His additional awards and decorations for service in Korea include the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal with three bronze service stars, the United Nations Service Medal, the Republic of Korea's (ROK) Presidential Unit Citation, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. On 11 October 1963, the Emory L. Bennett Causeway (a two-lane toll bridge and road located in his hometown of Cocoa, Florida) was dedicated to his memory and a painting of Bennett is on permanent display at the Brevard County Library located in New Smyrna Beach. Also, the Emory L. Bennett Veterans Nursing Home (which is located in Daytona Beach) perpetuates his memory. This facility, which became operational in 1993, qualified as the first veterans' nursing home established in the state of Florida. As further tributes to his selfless act of heroism and ultimate sacrifice, the PFC Emory L. Bennett Veterans Memorial Park, located in Volusia County, Florida, is named after him and an individual marker identifying him as one of Florida's Medal of Honor recipients can be found in the Medal of Honor Park (located in Sebring, Florida). Emory Bennett's remains were returned to the United States on 23 November 1951 and he was buried with full military honors at the Pine Crest Cemetery (which is located in Cocoa, Florida). He was survived by his parents and three brothers.*