FRANK GAFFNEY'S MEDALS

1] The Medal of Honor, USA

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for military valor conferred by the USA. The President, in the name of Congress, awards the Medal. Only 126 Medals of Honor were awarded to members of the United States military during World War I, Frank J. Gaffney was one of these soldiers. His medal is an older design used between 1904 and 1944.

2] Purple Heart, USA

This is the world's oldest military decoration still in use. It was first established by General George Washington in 1780. It fell into disuse and was not reestablished until 1932. The award is different from other military decorations in that an individual is not recommended for it; rather they are entitled to it for injuries sustained in combat.

3] World War I Victory Medal With Three Bronze Service Stars, USA

To qualify for the Victory Medal, an individual had to have been in an area of active combat, not just overseas. Each bar on the medal recognizes participation in a particular combat area. Frank Gaffney's ribbon has four bars: Cambrai, Somme Offensive, Ypres-Lys and Defensive Sector.

4] World War I Victory Button, USA

This was designed as a lapel button to wear on civilian clothing. If it were in silver, like Frank Gaffney's, it denoted someone wounded in action, otherwise it was made of bronze.

5] George V Distinguished Conduct Medal, 1st Version, Great Britain

After the Victoria Cross, this is the highest British Army award for gallantry in the field for non-commissioned officers and soldiers. If Frank Gaffney had been British, he could have added the initials "D. C. M." after his name.

6] Médaille Militaire, France, 3rd Republic 1870-1940

This medal is roughly the French counterpart to the British Distinguished Conduct Medal, awarded for meritorious service and acts of bravery in action. It is the second highest award ranking immediately after the Legion of Honor.

7] Croix de Guerre with Bronze Palm, Republic of France

This award is equivalent to the United States Silver Star. Frank Gaffney was one of 11,589 American soldiers to receive the Croix de Guerre. His included a bronze palm on the ribbon, which has since been lost.

8] Croce al Merito di Guerra, Italy

Instituted by King Victor Emanuel III during World War I, the Italian War Merit Cross was given to members of the armed forces who, among other criteria, were mentioned for meritorious service.

9] Madalha Militar de Cruz de Guerra, Portugal

This medal was created in 1916 to award acts and feats of bravery performed while on campaign. The Cruz de Guerra is the third highest Portuguese military decoration

10] World War I Montenegrin Medal for Military Bravery

The Bravery Medal was instituted in 1841 by Prince Bishop Petar II Petrović-Njegoš as the first Montenegrin medal, in recognition of gallantry during conflict. It is roughly equivalent to the Silver Star. The ribbon on Frank Gaffney's medal was repaired at one time and now the ribbon is folded backward.

11] Honorable Service Insignia Patch and Pin [Ruptured Duck], USA

The purpose of the patch, and later pin, was to permit honorably discharged personnel to be recognized. It was to be worn on the left lapel of civilian clothing upon discharge or on the right breast uniform pocket. This was an indication that members of the military were in transit and not AWOL. There are many conflicting stories about how this award acquired its colorful nickname, "Ruptured Duck".

12] City of Lockport Medal

On Saturday, September 13, 1919, the city of Lockport honored its World War I veterans by hosting an enormous parade. It included veterans from the civil War and Spanish American War, 49 mothers who had lost their sons in World War One, Knights of Columbus, Elks, Red Cross Workers, teachers, students, and clergy etc. On the reviewing stand sat "the Honor men of the war" with Frank Gaffney sitting in the place of honor. Eighteen other men served as his

'court'. Each of these men were presented with the city of Lockport Medal, a gift from the citizens of the city. Today, only two are currently known to be in existence.

13] Delegate Badge Western New York Volunteer Firemen's Association

On July 30, 1919 Frank Gaffney was an invited guest of the 20th annual convention of the Western New York Firemen's' Association held in North Tonawanda.

14] Buffalo Special Police Badge #2424

The Buffalo Special Police was a volunteer organization that acted as the eyes and ears of the Police Department. During World War II, they acted as railroad and crossing guards, kept watch on the neighborhoods and responded to any emergency when the regular police needed assistance. This helped communities when many of the younger men were in military service.

Frank Joseph Gaffney
Pvt. 108th US Infantry, 27th Division

"Citation: Pfc. Gaffney, an automatic rifleman, pushing forward alone, after all the other members of his squad had been killed, discovered several Germans placing a heavy machine gun in position. He killed the crew, captured the gun, bombed several dugouts, and, after killing 4 more of the enemy with his pistol, held the position until reinforcements came up, when 80 prisoners were captured."

A Lockport native, Frank Gaffney enlisted in the US Army at age 33 at Niagara Falls, NY. The 27th Infantry Brigade was called into federal service on July 15, 1917 and by late August was stationed at Camp Wadsworth, near Spartanburg, SC for intensive training. In May 1918, the unit departed for France and was one of the few divisions assigned to fight under the British Expeditionary Forces. The great Somme "push" from September 24th to October 1st, saw the Division fighting along the St. Quentin Canal Tunnel, one of the outlying strong points of the impregnable Hindenburg Line.

On September 29th, near Ronssoy, France, Private Gaffney, an automatic rifleman, pushed forward alone after other members of his squad had been killed or wounded. He discovered some the enemy setting up a heavy machine gun position. Placing his gun on the parapet, he opened fire, killed the crew, captured the gun, bombed several dugouts in the trenches and killed four of the enemy with his pistol. He then held the position until reinforcements came up and helped with the 80 prisoners Gaffney had captured. Major General John F. O'Ryan, commanding officer of the 27th division, said: "No man has performed more daring exploits or exercised a bigger influence upon those around him by the gallantry of his conduct."

A few weeks later, outside St. Souplet, Frank Gaffney was injured. While recuperating in England, his wound suddenly hemorrhaged resulting in the amputation of his left arm.

Upon returning home, he married Miss Marie Georgen of Buffalo in May 1920. They lived in Niagara Falls where he was employed by the International Paper Company as a chemist. On May 25, 1948, aged 62, he fell from a second-floor porch, fractured his skull, and died. Mr. Gaffney is buried in the United German-French Roman Catholic Cemetery in Buffalo, NY.

For his actions during the battle at the St. Quentin Canal, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. Frank Gaffney's other decorations included the Purple Heart, the City of Lockport Medal, the Victory Medal, the Medaille Militaire and the Croix de Guerre of France, the Distinguished Conduct Medal of England, the Cruz de Guerra of Portugal, the Montenegro Medal of Honor and the Italian Cross of Military Valor.