

31May68

Captain Edward W. Leonard Jr., A-1 Skyraider s.n. 135-282, successful Yankee-extraction over Communist occupied Laos. Taken POW. Released on 28Mar73

Capt. Edward Watson Leonard, Jr.

Date of Birth: August 1938

Place of Birth: Portland, Oregon

Home of record: Winlock, Washington

Status: POW-released ...alive and well in 2013!

Edward Leonard flew 257 combat missions during the Vietnam War and participated in the recovery of 18 aircrew members in North Vietnam and Laos before being shot down over Laos for the second time on 31 May 1968. He was interned as a Prisoner of War in Laos as a LULUs (Legendary Union of Laotian Unfortunates) after he was shot down on 31 May 1968, and then at the end in North Vietnam until his release on 28 March 1973.



Silver Star

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Captain Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an A-1E Skyraider Pilot of the 602d Fighter Squadron, Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, in action over North Vietnam on 5 November 1967. On that date, Captain Leonard participated on a search and rescue effort for a downed pilot in North Vietnam. He contributed directly and significantly to the recovery of the downed pilot under the worst conditions possible. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Captain Leonard has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Company: 602d Fighter Squadron

Division: Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand

Silver Star First Oak Leaf Cluster

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting First Oak Leaf Cluster to Captain Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an A-1E Skyraider Pilot of the 602d Fighter Squadron, Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, on 9 and 10 November 1967, in Southeast Asia. On those dates, Captain Leonard participated on an extremely hazardous rescue effort for three helicopter crews downed amidst a battle field. He contributed directly and significantly to the recovery of the seven survivors under the worst conditions possible. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Captain Leonard has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Company: 602d Fighter Squadron

Division: Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand

Silver Star Second Oak Leaf Cluster

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting a Second Oak Leaf Cluster to Captain Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an A-1E Skyraider Pilot of the 602d Fighter Squadron, Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, on 31 May 1968, in Southeast Asia. On that date, Captain Leonard led a search and rescue effort for an American pilot who had been forced to abandon his aircraft over hostile territory. Despite continuous barrages of withering ground fire from a multitude of gun positions, Captain Leonard pressed the search for the downed pilot. Captain Leonard's aircraft ultimately received so much damage that he was forced to abandon it. His search pinpointed the defending gun positions and materially assisted in locating the downed pilot's position, leading to the eventual success of the rescue. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Captain Leonard has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Company: 602d Fighter Squadron

Division: Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand

Silver Star Third Oak Leaf Cluster

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting a Third Oak Leaf Cluster to Major Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against armed enemy forces while serving as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam, on 3 August 1971. At Camp Plantation, a group of prisoners had been collaborating with the enemy. In spite of the knowledge that he would be informed on, which would result in severe punishment, Major Leonard deliberately approached the group in full view of his guard and ordered them to stop collaborating with the enemy. He was immediately placed in solitary confinement for nine months and severely punished. By his heroic stand against the enemy, Major Leonard demonstrated devotion to duty and reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Action Date: 3-Aug-71

Service: [Air Force](#)

Rank: Major

Division: Prisoner of War (North Vietnam)



Legion of Merit

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, 20 July 1942, takes pleasure in presenting the Legion of Merit to Major Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam from 31 May 1968 to 10 June 1970. His ceaseless efforts, by a continuous showing of resistance to an enemy who ignored all international agreements on treatment of Prisoners of War, in the extremely adverse conditions of the communist prisons of North Vietnam, demonstrated his professional competence, unwavering devotion, and loyalty to his country. Despite the harsh treatment through his long years of incarceration, he continued to perform his duties in a clearly exceptional manner which reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



Distinguished Flying Cross

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross with Combat "V" to Captain Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for heroism while participating in aerial flight as an A-1# Skyraider pilot in Southeast Asia on 10 July 1967. On that date, Captain Leonard was flying his A-1E Skyraider in support of a search and rescue effort for a downed F-105 pilot located less than three hundred yards from a heavily defended infiltration route. Captain Leonard voluntarily risked his life by making numerous low passes in this area despite low ceilings, mountainous terrain and devastating ground fire which damaged two of the rescue aircraft on several passes. Captain Leonard remained in the area for well over an hour and contributed significantly to the recovery of the downed pilot as well as inflicting heavy losses upon the hostile forces opposing the rescue effort. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Captain Leonard reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Distinguished Flying Cross First Oak Leaf Cluster

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross First Oak Leaf Cluster to Captain Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an A-1E Skyraider pilot in Southeast Asia on 26 June 1967. On that date, Captain Leonard was flying his A-1E Skyraider in support of friendly ground forces engaged in defense of their beleaguered outpost. With unwavering calmness and courage, Captain Leonard attacked and destroyed critical storage areas, troop emplacements and anti-aircraft gun positions despite mountainous terrain, low cloud cover and withering fire from the hostile forces which damaged two of the friendly aircraft. Captain Leonard remained in this hostile area for more than one hour making approximately fifteen passes against the unfriendly positions. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain Leonard reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Distinguished Flying Cross First Oak Leaf Cluster

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross with Combat "V" First Oak Leaf Cluster to Captain Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, for heroism while participating in aerial flight as an A-1E Skyraider pilot over North Vietnam on 23 August 1967. On that date, Captain Leonard participated in a successful rescue effort for a downed pilot just ten miles south of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. The pilot had been downed by intense anti-aircraft artillery fire and bailed out near a major highway within range of numerous unfriendly gun positions. Despite these overwhelming defenses, Captain Leonard remained in the immediate area for over two hours during which time two of the rescue aircraft sustained battle damage in this successful venture. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Captain Leonard reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



Prisoner of War Medal

Major Edward Watson Leonard, Jr. (AFSN: FR-59295), United States Air Force, was held as a Prisoner of War in Laos and North Vietnam from May 31, 1968 until his release on March 28, 1973.

Action Date: May 31, 1968 - March 28, 1973