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## Letter: Austin native, veteran deserves recognition

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By Nicklaus Gill

### Elk River

My name is Nicklaus Gill and in my sixth history class we did a World War I project since it is its 100th anniversary. I chose Claude H. Craig because a lot of my mom's side of the family is from Austin, Minn.

First Lt. Claude H. Craig grew up in Austin, where he was the 1909 Austin High School valedictorian. On Sept. 26, 1918, in Bois-des-Forges, France, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross Medal when the advance of his platoon was held up by enemy machine-gun fire. Lt. Craig, with utter disregard for his own safety and in front of his platoon, personally led the attack on the machine-gun nests, and assisted in destroying the hostile nests, killing two officers and six men. His courageous action was an inspiration to his men and made possible the advance of the attacking wave. Attacking at 5:30 a.m. on Sept. 26 after a delayed bombardment by 2,700 guns, the final goal of the offensive was to capture the city of Sedan in which would cripple the German railway network by cutting off their food and troop supply. The initial assault made solid gains and was supported by French and American tanks.

The Distinguished Service Cross medal was established Jan. 2, 1918, by President Woodrow Wilson. The qualifications for a recipient are: while serving in any capacity with the army, distinguished himself or herself by extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of a Medal of Honor; while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing or foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the U.S. is not a belligerent party. The act or acts of heroism must have been so notable and have involved risk of life so extraordinary as to set the individual apart from his or her comrades. Lt. Craig's act of heroism largely impacted the deadliest U.S. battle in WWI. This battle captured 36 enemy officers and an estimated 1,400 other ranked Germans.

Lt. Craig should be remembered forever and honored by his country.