It is not known the exact number of medals awarded for valor during WWII, but it is a definite fact that the number was far lower than it should be.

An Air Force crew flew an mission with only a 50-50 chance of returning. Sailors went into battle overwhelmingly outnumbered. Infantry repeatedly advanced against an invisible enemy.

As a replacement, I joined the 4th Infantry Division during the B
of Normandy. That part of the country was divided into rectangles by earthen hedgerows with year of brush growing on the tops. The brush made the German Enemy invisible to foot soldiers advancing across open fields. As a result, during the month that I was with the 4th Div, our 100 man squad suffered 300 casualties. As replacements poured in, they soon agreed with a general feeling that it wasn't a good idea.
when, and how badly.

One night our squad occupied a hedgerow in an advanced position with no friendly forces on either side. Consequently guards had to be posted on both sides to prevent surprise flanking attack. At the right end of the forward hedgerow was an opening to allow passage of farm wagons. A German machine gun had been firing periodically during the night with no effect due to darkness. It became obvious the
come daylight, the 2 night flan guards, posted near the opening, would become clearly visible, and easy targets. I was aware of our situation and was fairly certain my companion was also, but neither one mentioned it. In the morning, the gunner spotted the target and opened fire. My fire was hit in the arm and I was in the legs.

The pertinent question arises, why were we willing to expose oursel
I believe this basic principle applies to the actions of any G.I. in combat. Failure to obey order in combat results in serious consequences; however, a much
greater motivation was the know
that, if failure to perform duty resulted in unit casualties,
the personal guilt feelings and contempt of friends would be deep.
This, according to my thinking, the reason for the extreme rarity of cowardice or neglect of duty recorded for millions of servicemen from all walks of life.

In my mind, the question is:
How can peaceful American citizens, whose main pursuit is comfort and
safety, become aggressive
combatants, risking life and limb
without hesitation. In my case,
before going overseas, I had
the love of my life, and we had a
take care of each other, being
the constant risks of mortal combat.
These things did not seem to take a back seat.

For many years after the
end of WWII, combat was not talked
about, or even thought about. I
tried to forget it. Somehow, how
the subject seems to have surfaced. Now, more than years later, a memorial has started.

Today, the complete reversal in a person's feelings, actions, personality, conduct is beyond understanding. A psychologist might have an explanation, but this beat-up man is still wondering.