

# Medal of Honor



## WHERE THEY ARE NOW

Medal of Honor recipients give  
their wishes to Gainesville

## FINDING THE LIGHT

New book details how Beikirch  
emerged from a cave to find  
healing and hope

GAINESVILLE  
**Daily Register**

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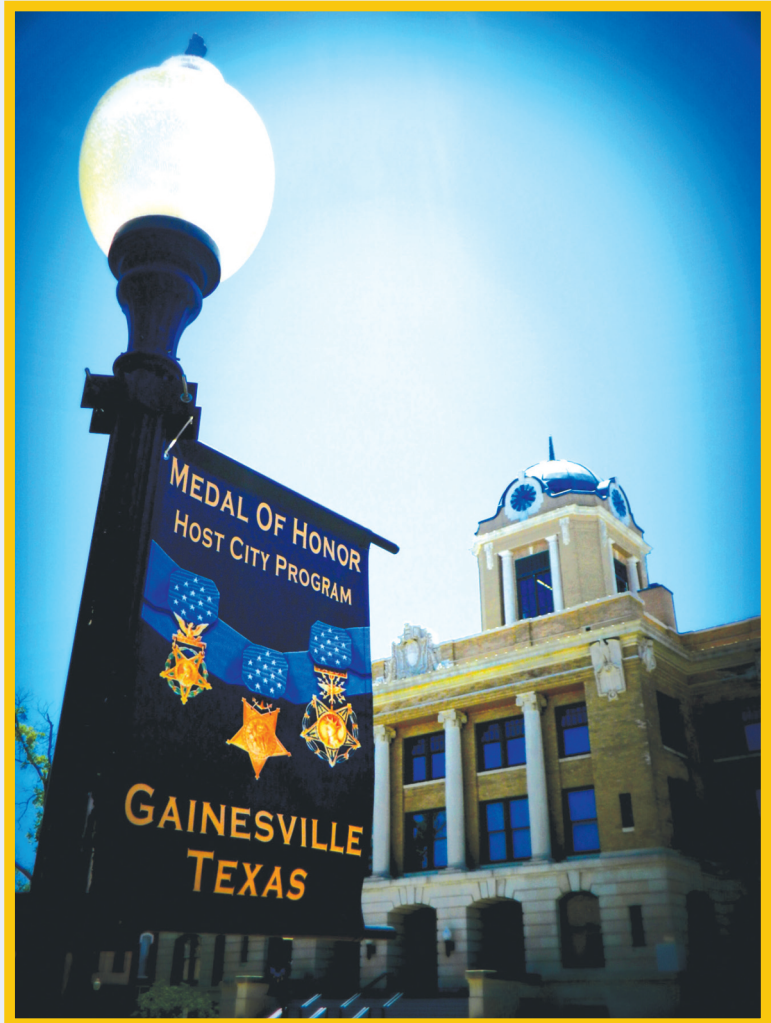


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## CONTENTS



▲ **07 Keeping Honor Alive** Medal of Honor recipients send their wishes to Gainesville.



### **12 Finding the Light**

Gary Beikirch returned from Vietnam broken and confused. In a new book with Marcus Brotherton, he tells how he secluded himself in a cave and found healing and hope.

### **PROFILES OF MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS**

**14** Patrick Henry Brady

**15** Bennie G. Adkins

**16** Donald E. Ballard

**17** Gary B. Beikirch

**18** Ty Michael Carter

**19** Charles Chris Hagemeister

**20** Robert Ingram

**21** James E. Livingston

**22** Walter Joseph Marm Jr.

**23** Hiroshi H. Miyamura

**24** Robert J. Modrzejewski

**25** Melvin Morris

**26** Robert Martin Patterson

**27** Ronald E. Rosser

**28** James Allen Taylor

**29** Gary George Wetzell

## Medal of Honor

**2020** ISSUE

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### **ON THE COVER**

Medal of Honor recipient Gary Beikirch holds the emblem of his heroism on the battlefield. (Image courtesy WaterBrook & Multnomah)



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# Keeping Honor Alive

Medal of Honor recipients  
give their wishes to Gainesville

STORY BY MEGAN GRAY-HATFIELD AND PATRICK HAYSLIP

ONLY A PANDEMIC COULD KEEP MANY MEDAL of Honor recipients away from Gainesville's annual Medal of Honor week. A total of 15 medal-wearing veterans were confirmed to attend before health and safety considerations made springtime festivities out of the question this year. But the honored guests were no less grateful for the invitation and the chance they would have had to share their stories with the people of Cooke County. Three of the 15 spoke with our writers about their activities over this past year and the messages they would bring to North Texas.

## DONALD 'DOC' BALLARD

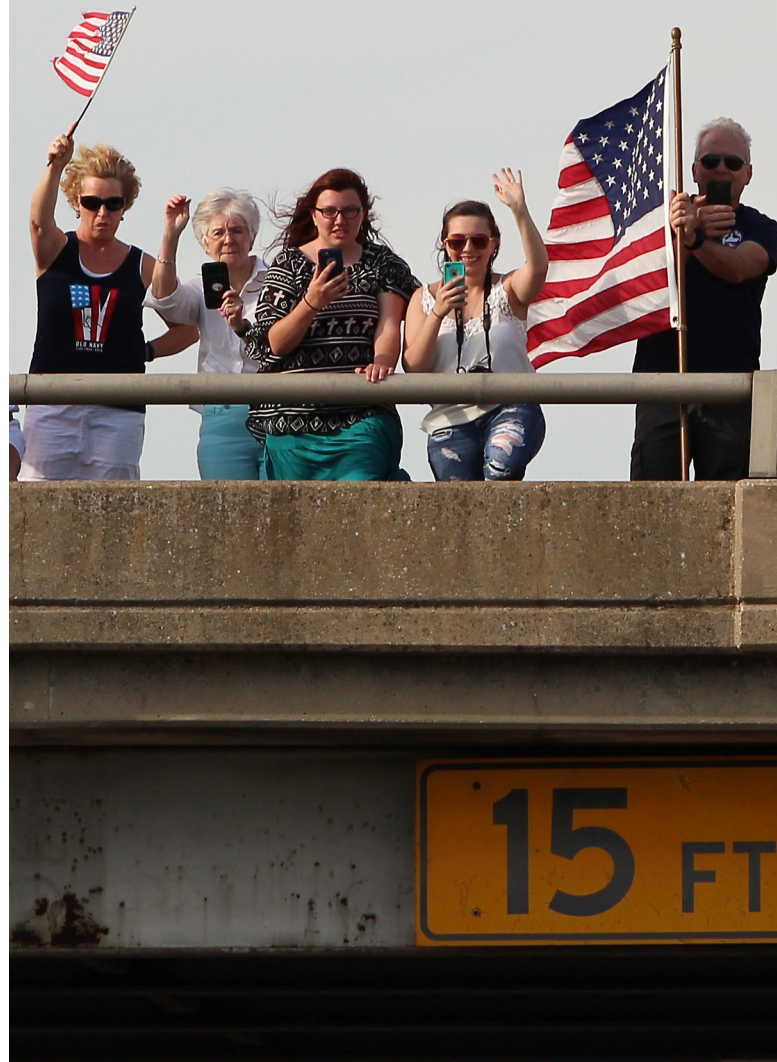
As the first recipient of the Medal of Honor to visit in Gainesville in 2001, Col. Don "Doc" Ballard has a special connection to all that comes with the ceremonies and fanfare in the area.

In his 35 years in the military, Ballard learned what comes with earning the distinguished award and he said he will sorely miss being around everyone involved this year.

"Obviously Gainesville Texas has been part of my life for 20 years," Ballard said. "I've gotten to know everybody down there on a personal level and they're like family. It's like a family reunion and I sat on the board of directors for a while and became close to a lot of people. I've always looked forward to it."

Ballard joined the Navy in 1965 and at the time had never heard of Vietnam. He originally enlisted in the Navy because he thought he could finish his education and become a dentist.

In 1967 he was drafted into the Marine Corps and sent to



Area residents welcome Medal of Honor recipients arriving to Gainesville in a motorcade in 2019.

the Vietnam War.

Ballard remembers those days like they were yesterday. During his time at the Marine Corps boot camp, Ballard was given his nickname "Doc."

"They knew we were going to Vietnam and knew we needed to learn how to live," Ballard said. "By God, I'm glad I paid attention. After that, they started calling me Doc, which they called hospital corpsmen. I went through two years with the Marines and most of them didn't know my name."

For 10 months and 14 days, Ballard was in Vietnam. He was injured several times in the war and after the eighth one he was Medevac'd to Japan.

Ballard finally returned home in 1969 and in those tough times, he learned a true appreciation of the cost of freedom.

Ballard would talk to kids and students in Gainesville about that price and he said he will miss being able to articulate that this year.

"I've been talking to them for 20 years and the main thing I would talk about is patriotism," Ballard said. "The country is founded on our freedom to get away from Britain. I expand on what freedom really is because these kids have never really been without. If we hadn't done anything, we wouldn't have what we have today. I would also talk about what we can do to improve our own country."

During his time in the military, Ballard visited 60 coun-



tries and he always made a point to soak in their situations.

"I learned that we should be grateful for what we have because not only do we have freedom, but we have a better quality of life," Ballard said. "I would get off the Navy ship and take tours because I didn't figure I would ever get back over there. I realized what they didn't have much. I was always explaining to the kids that I was grateful."

Last year, Ballard traveled around the country for nearly 110 days and he said it is difficult not coming to Gainesville this year to share his experiences.

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**WITHOUT FREEDOM THERE IS NO ART**  
- Albert Camus



At right, James Taylor, seated, and Donald "Doc" Ballard are recognized by Robert E. Lee Elementary School students, pictured below.



"It's sad knowing we can't spread Americanism and patriotism," Ballard said. "We want to spread why we fought and gave our lives. We were taught that freedom wasn't free. If you want it, you have to fight for it. I'll miss explaining the sacrifices that we made."

#### JAMES TAYLOR

Medal of Honor recipient James Taylor spent 24 years in the military and with the Medal of Honor festivities being canceled this year, it will be just the second time since 2001



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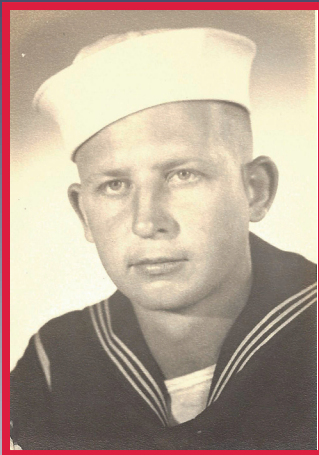
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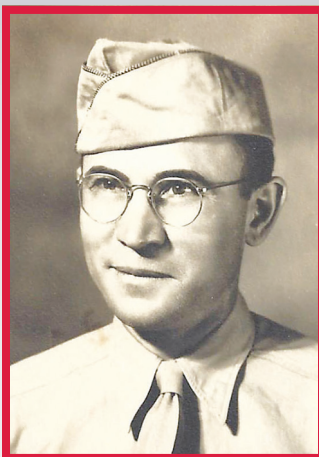
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that Taylor has missed the event.

It was a tough blow for Taylor as he said he always enjoys being around his fellow recipients, their families and everyone else affiliated with the Medal of Honor.

"It will be hard not being able to visit with my extended family and the folks living in Gainesville and surrounding areas that attend the events," Taylor said. "[I'll miss] Don and Lynnette Pettigrew, Tommy and Paula Moore and their girls Brittaney, Morgan and Jordan Moore. [I'll miss] Gabrielle and Ray Fletcher and Gary Alexander as well as the kids at Robert Lee Intermediate School and the students at North Central Texas College."

This past year, Taylor has been attending several fundraising events for charities in California. He has also been "hunkered down" until the coronavirus situation settles down.

Not being around his compatriots will be difficult this year.

"[It's] always great to be around my fellow recipients," Taylor said. "Most of us have been members of the society for over 50 years and have developed a close relationship. The recipients from the War on Terror are a refreshing group of guys and are realizing that the biggest challenge they are and will be facing after receiving the medal is to live up to the medal."

"I tell them they are custodians of it. It represents something above and beyond itself. It represents country, courage, sacrifice and patriotism which are the foundation of our freedoms."

One of the main takeaways for Taylor from his time in the military is the importance of teamwork.

If Taylor had the opportunity to speak to young people this year, he would stress the importance of working together.

Taylor, who served all over the United States including Texas, Kentucky and Hawaii along with his time in Germany, said he is proud to wear the Medal of Honor for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country, especially the ones he served with in the Vietnam War.

"The biggest challenge I have is trying to live up to the medal and what it stands for and represents," Taylor said. "You are in the 'spotlight' 24-7 because of the lofty ethos and standards that come with being a recipient. What it means to be an American and a patriot is to understand that the freedoms [people] enjoy came at a terrible price. Thousands of Americans died to protect and preserve their freedom."

Taylor elaborated on what it meant to be a patriot and gave his advice on how to embody a good American.

"A patriot is not someone who simply says he or she loves their country, but proves their love of country through their willingness to support and defend it so future generations might enjoy the liberties and freedoms granted in our constitution that they enjoy," Taylor said. "Live up to the ideals embodied in the Medal of Honor — courage, sacrifice, selflessness, patriotism, responsible citizenship and commitment."

## **GARY BEIKIRCH**

Even though Gary Beikirch, 72, isn't traveling to Gainesville this spring, he says he's hopeful to be able to visit soon.



Above, Gary Beikirch at a book signing; at right, the Medal of Honor motrocade arrives in Gainesville.

“It’s always been one of the special times of the year,” Beikirch said of visiting the Medal of Honor Host City Program. He said the Gainesville community not only respects the military’s highest award for valor, but residents are able to look beyond the medal and connect with recipients as everyday people.

“One of the things that us as recipients believe is that we’re not all that special. The Medal of Honor is special. But we’re not special, we’re just ordinary. To be around people who accept you for being who you are, that’s refreshing.”

He said he hasn’t always been able to attend the festivities in town because of working at a middle school. Other recipients described Gainesville as one of the most “welcoming, sincere, hospitable places in the country,” according to Beikirch.

“Unfortunately, for all those years that I was working I never was able to get to Gainesville because it always fell right in April and our spring break never really aligned [with] when they were having the events in Gainesville,” he said.

Beikirch said he believes it was the last year he was working that he took some time off to come to Cooke County and check the MOHCP out. He retired “around 2014,” he said.

“And since then, I have been out there oh, perhaps four or five years in a row,” Beikirch said. “We’ve become very close with the people out there ... It was almost like a reunion getting out there ... My wife and I are going to miss that.”

Beikirch said he’s been busy attending other Medal of Honor-related events since his last visit to town for the MOHHCP, sharing testimony at churches and speaking at schools across the country as part of the Medal of Honor Society’s Character Development Program. He had planned on sharing some of his life’s lessons with Gainesville area students and bringing a message of friendship.



“One of the biggest things for us is getting out to the school systems and talking to students,” Beikirch said. “Most of us keep a pretty busy schedule, but we look forward to those events like Gainesville where we have an opportunity to get together.”

He also wrapped up a book he’s been working on with author Marcus Brotherton called “Blaze of Light,” he said. The book was released March 24.

As of mid-March, the Vietnam veteran and his wife of 45 years, Loreen “Lolly” Beikirch, were quarantined inside their home in New York. The Beikirchs decided to stay home after an employee of Greece Arcadia Middle School tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus. Beikirch, who worked at the school as a counselor for 33 years, had visited the campus the day before the positive test in Monroe County, he said.

As of press time, Beikirch said he and his 64-year-old wife planned on staying quarantined “at least until the beginning of April.”

Despite being homebound, Beikirch said he and his wife are going to continue to live life to its fullest.

“We’re going to try to continue to make a difference in the lives of people as much as we can,” Beikirch said. “For us, that’s what living is about.”



# *Finding the Light*

## Medal of Honor recipient details journey to healing in new book

**G**ARY BEIKIRCH IS BEST KNOWN TO THOSE ATTENDING Medal of Honor Week in Gainesville as a beloved friend and hero to model. The former Green Beret A-Team medic went on from the military to spend many years as a counselor in schools, hospitals, prisons and with the Veterans Outreach Center, sharing healing and hope with hundreds. But it took years for him to find that healing himself.

Beikirch and biographer Marcus Brotherton are bringing the Medal of Honor recipient's backstory to life in the new book "Blaze of Light," just released this spring. The 272-page inspirational autobiography recounts how Beikirch found courage to face both the physical battles in the field and the emotional battles that nearly tore him apart.

In Vietnam, Sgt. Beikirch thought he had discovered his true calling as an A-Team medic with the U.S. Army Green Berets in the remote village of Dak Seang, where he taught medical skills to the Montagnard people, a highly principled indigenous group who loved him for his dedication and loyalty.

But the idyllic calm was shattered on April 1, 1970, when some 10,000 enemy soldiers surrounded the village and launched a devastating surprise attack on all inside — 12 Special Forces soldiers, 400 Montagnard fighters, and 2,300 women and children.

Severely wounded three times, shot in the stomach and near the spine, paralyzed from the waist down and under heavy fire, Beikirch refused medical treatment. Instead, he asked two medical helpers to carry him around the battlefield so he could continue to treat the wounded and help bring them to safety.

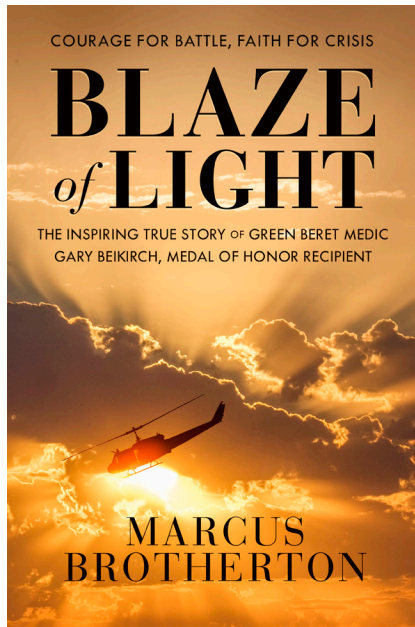
Finally, after collapsing and being evacuated by helicopter, Beikirch wavered in and out of a coma in an intensive care unit for seven days, facing death. A chance encounter with a chaplain began the process of change in Beikirch's life, and he eventually healed enough to be released from the hospital. But he still had a long way to go.

Physically damaged and confused, Beikirch's return to an embittered U.S. was the beginning of a new battle. He would fight the pain of a wounded heart, soul, and spirit. He didn't know it yet, but the emotional pain would prove more destructive than any of his physical wounds.

Returning to enroll in university studies, Beikirch was

At right: "Blaze of Light" by Marcus Brotherton with Gary Beikirch was released March 24, 2020.

At left: Gary Beikirch and Marcus Brotherton.



spit upon and harassed for being a veteran, so he decided to "drop out" of society. He hiked far out into the Northern Appalachians and for two years lived in a cave. Inside that cocoon of seclusion, Beikirch endured frigid winters in the snow and ice, bathed in streams and shouted to the walls about all the rage and dismay inside of him.

But after a surprise message called him to the White House, Beikirch's life would never be the same.

"The Medal of Honor Society is comprised of a highly elite group of American heroes," Oscar-nominated actor Gary Sinise said in praise of the book. "What Gary Beikirch did to receive his medal is unforgettable — and the story of what he overcame afterward is as big and moving as they come."

Beikirch eventually earned a bachelor's degree from White Mountain Seminary and became an ordained minister, then received a second bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology from the University of New Hampshire and a master's degree in educational counseling from the State University of New York-Brockport. He and his wife live in New York and enjoy visits to their three children and 14 grandchildren.

The biographer Beikirch worked with on "Blaze of Light," Marcus Brotherton, is a bestselling author with credits on more than 25 books. The day of the book's release, it was ranked the No. 1 new release among Vietnam War biographies on Amazon.

**"What Gary Beikirch did to receive his medal is unforgettable."**

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# Patrick Henry Brady

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*

**B**ORN OCT. 1, 1936, IN Philip, South Dakota, Pat Brady received the Medal of Honor on Oct. 9, 1969, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action Jan. 6, 1968, in Vietnam while he was serving with the 54th Medical Detachment.

A major at the time, Brady was commanding a UH-1H ambulance helicopter when he volunteered to rescue wounded men from a site in enemy-held territory which was reported to be heavily defended and blanketed by fog. He was supposed to be off duty at the time, a profile on the Medal of Honor Museum's website states.

To reach the location, he descended through heavy fog and smoke and hovered slowly along a valley trail, turning his helicopter sideward to blow away the fog with the backwash from his rotor blades.

Despite the unchallenged, close-range enemy fire, he found the dangerously small site, successfully landed and evacuated two badly wounded South Vietnamese soldiers. He was then called to another foggy where two other aircraft had previously been shot down and still others had made unsuccessful attempts to rescue Americans trapped there earlier in the day, according to Brady's Congressional Medal of Honor citation.

"With unmatched skill and extraordinary courage, Maj. Brady



**"With unmatched skill and extraordinary courage, Maj. Brady ... successfully rescued all the wounded."**

made four flights to this embattled landing zone and successfully rescued all the wounded," his citation reads. Then, on Brady's third mission that day, he once again landed at a site surrounded by the enemy. Although his helicopter had been badly damaged and his controls partially shot away during his initial entry into that area, he returned minutes later and rescued the remaining injured.

Brady then flew a replacement aircraft into an enemy minefield

where a platoon of American soldiers was trapped. A mine detonated near his helicopter, wounding two crewmembers and damaging the aircraft. In spite of that, he managed to fly six severely injured patients to medical aid.

Throughout that day, Brady flew three different helicopters to evacuate a total of 51 seriously wounded men, many of whom would have perished without prompt medical treatment, his citation stated.

# Bennie G. Adkins

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*



**S**GT. FIRST CLASS BENNIE ADKINS, a native of Waurika, Oklahoma, received his Medal of Honor from then-President Obama on Sept. 15, 2014. His exploits, so numerous and heroic in the jungles of Vietnam caused President Obama to exclaim, “There would not be enough time to describe them all.”

The following edited transcript of the ceremonial citation details a portion of Adkins’ incredible story.

In the presentation to Adkins, the president related the events of March 9, 1966, when Adkins’ camp was attacked by a large North Vietnamese and Viet Cong force in the early morning hours.

“Sergeant First Class Adkins rushed through intense enemy fire and manned a mortar position continually adjusting fire for the camp, despite incurring wounds as the mortar pit received several direct hits from enemy mortars.... During a 38-hour battle and 48 hours of escape and evasion waiting for a second evacuation helicopter, it was estimated Adkins killed up to 175 of the enemy while sustaining 18 different wounds to his body.”

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# Donald E. 'Doc' Ballard

*U.S. Navy/Vietnam*



**O**N MAY 16, 1968, HAVING JUST TREATED two Marines for heat exhaustion during a patrol, Ballard was returning from the evacuation landing zone when his company was ambushed by a North Vietnamese unit firing automatic weapons and mortars.

As he kneeled to take care of the wounded, a Marine who had been shot in the face yelled, "Grenade!"

Ballard's first thought as he saw it hit nearby was that it would kill the men he was treating if it exploded. With no thought for his own safety, Ballard threw himself on the grenade and cradled it against his body.

Seconds passed. The grenade failed to immediately detonate and Ballard was able to throw it out of the hole; it exploded harmlessly a few seconds later. Ballard calmly continued to treat the wounded.

Ballard eventually left the Navy and later received a commission in the Army Medical Corps.

He retired at the rank of colonel.

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Recipients!**



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# Gary B. Beikirch

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*

**S**GT. GARY B. BEIKIRCH WAS AWARDED for his actions as a medical aidman, Detachment B-24, Company B, during the defense of Camp Dak Seang.

The allied defenders suffered a number of casualties as a result of a devastating and well-concealed attack. Sgt. Beikirch, with complete disregard for his personal safety, moved through the withering enemy fire to his fallen comrades, applied first aid to their wounds and helped them to the medical aid station. Although he was wounded seriously by fragments from an exploding enemy mortar shell, Sgt. Beikirch carried an American officer to a medical aid station. Ignoring his own serious injuries, Sgt. Beikirch left the relative safety of the medical bunker to search for and evacuate other men who had been injured. He was again wounded as he dragged a critically injured Vietnamese soldier to the medical bunker while simultaneously administering CPR. Sgt. Beikirch again refused treatment until he collapsed. Only then did he permit himself to be treated. Sgt. Beikirch's complete devotion to the welfare of his comrades, at the risk of his life are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the U.S. Army.



Photo courtesy Tony Avila

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# Ty Michael Carter

*U.S. Army/Afghanistan*

**T**Y MICHAEL CARTER WAS BORN in Spokane, Washington, in January 1980, and enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school in 1998. He was discharged honorably in 2002, went to college and again enlisted in the military, this time in the U.S. Army, on Jan. 3, 2008, and was twice deployed to Afghanistan. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on Aug. 26, 2013, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life.

While he was serving as a scout with during combat operations against an armed enemy in Kamdesh District, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan on Oct. 3, 2009, Carter and his comrades awakened that morning to an attack of an estimated 300 enemy fighters occupying the high ground on all four sides of Combat Outpost Keating, according to his medal citation. Carter reinforced a forward battle position, ran twice through a 100-yard gauntlet of enemy fire to resupply ammunition and voluntarily stayed there to defend the isolated position.

Armed with only an M4 carbine rifle, Carter fired accurately on the enemy with deadly effect, beating back the assault force and preventing the position from being overrun, over the course of several hours. Disregarding his wounds, he ran through a hail of enemy rocket-propelled grenade and machine gun fire to rescue a critically wounded comrade who had been pinned down in an exposed position. Carter administered first aid and carried the soldier to cover.

On his own initiative, Carter again maneuvered through enemy fire to check on a fallen soldier and recovered the squad's radio, which allowed them to coordinate their evacuation with fellow soldiers. With teammates

providing covering fire, Carter helped the wounded soldier more than 100 yards through withering enemy fire to the aid station and before returning to the fight.

“Carter’s heroic actions and tactical skill were critical to the defense of Combat Outpost Keating, preventing the enemy from capturing the position and saving the lives of his fellow soldiers,” according to his citation. His “extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and



**“Carter’s heroic actions and tactical skill were critical to the defense of Combat Outpost Keating, preventing the enemy from capturing the position and saving the lives of his fellow soldiers.”**



beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service.”

Carter is currently stationed as a staff noncommissioned officer with the 7th Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

# Charles Chris Hagemeister

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*

**B**ORN AUG. 21, 1946 IN Lincoln, Nebraska, Sp5c Charles Hagemeister was awarded the Medal of Honor on May 14, 1968, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action that took place on March 20, 1967, in Vietnam.

While conducting combat operations against a hostile force, Sp5c. Hagemeister's platoon suddenly came under heavy attack from 3 sides by an enemy force occupying well concealed, fortified positions and supported by machine guns and mortars. Seeing 2 of his comrades seriously wounded in the initial action, Sp5c. Hagemeister unhesitatingly and with total disregard for his safety, raced through the deadly hail of enemy fire to provide them medical aid. Upon learning that the platoon leader and several other soldiers also had been wounded, Sp5c. Hagemeister continued to brave the withering enemy fire and crawled forward to render lifesaving treatment and to offer words of encouragement. Attempting to evacuate the seriously wounded soldiers, Sp5c. Hagemeister was taken under fire at close range by an enemy sniper. Realizing that the lives of his fellow soldiers depended on his actions, Sp5c. Hagemeister seized a rifle from a fallen comrade, killed the sniper, three other enemy soldiers who were attempting to encircle his position and silenced an enemy machine gun that covered the area with deadly fire. Unable to remove the wounded to a less exposed location and aware of the enemy's efforts to isolate his unit, he dashed through the fusillade of fire to secure help from a nearby platoon. Returning with help, he placed men in positions to cover his advance as he moved to evacuate the wounded forward of his location. These efforts successfully



completed, he then moved to the other flank and evacuated additional wounded men despite the fact that his every move drew fire from the enemy. Sp5c. Hagemeister's repeated heroic and selfless actions at the risk of his life saved the lives of many of his comrades and inspired their actions in repelling the enemy assault. Sp5c.

Hagemeister's indomitable courage was in the highest traditions of the U.S. Armed Forces and reflect great credit upon himself.

# Robert Ingram

*U.S. Marine Corps/Vietnam*

**F**OR CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as Corpsman with Company C, First Battalion, Seventh Marines against elements of a North Vietnam Aggressor (NVA) battalion in Quang Ngai Province Republic of Vietnam on March 28, 1966, Robert Ingram was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Petty Officer Ingram accompanied the point platoon as it aggressively dispatched an outpost of an NVA battalion. The momentum of the attack rolled off a ridge line down a tree covered slope to a small paddy and a village beyond. Suddenly, the village tree line exploded with an intense hail of automatic rifle fire from approximately 100 North Vietnamese regulars. In mere moments, the platoon ranks were decimated. Oblivious to the danger, Petty Officer Ingram crawled across the bullet spattered terrain to reach a downed Marine.

As he administered aid, a bullet went through the palm of his hand. Calls for "CORPSMAN" echoed across the ridge. Bleeding, he edged across the fire-swept landscape, collecting ammunition from the dead and administering aid to the wounded. Receiving two more wounds before realizing the third wound was life-threatening, he looked for a way off the face of the ridge, but again he heard the call for corpsman and again, he resolutely



**“By his indomitable fighting spirit, daring initiative, and unfaltering dedications to duty, Petty Officer Ingram reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”**



answered. Though severely wounded three times, he rendered aid to those incapable until he finally reached

the right flank of the platoon. While dressing the head wound of another corpsman, he sustained his fourth bullet wound. From sixteen hundred hours until just prior to sunset, Petty Officer Ingram pushed, pulled, cajoled, and doctored his Marines. Enduring the pain from his many wounds and disregarding the probability of his demise, Petty Officer Ingram's intrepid actions saved many lives that day. By his indomitable fighting spirit, daring initiative, and unfaltering dedications to duty, Petty Officer Ingram reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

# James E. Livingston

*U.S. Marine Corps/Vietnam*

**I**t was May 2, 1968, in Vietnam, and the Battle of Dai Do was raging. James Livingston commanded Company E in an assault against the heavily fortified village, where a Marine company had been isolated since the enemy seized the village the evening before. As he maneuvered his men across 500 yards of open rice paddy, exposed to intense enemy fire, he fearlessly moved to the points of heaviest resistance, shouting encouragement to his men and directing their fire.

Twice wounded by grenade fragments, he refused medical treatment, instead leading his men to destroy more than 100 bunkers and relieving the stranded Marine company. He went on to halt a counterattack with the remaining men in his company, during which he was wounded a third time. Though he couldn't walk, he stayed in the fight, submitting to evacuation only when he had assured himself of the safety of his men.

Capt. Livingston received the Medal of Honor on May 14, 1970, recognizing his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.



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# Walter Joseph 'Joe' Marm Jr.

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*

**A**S ALPHA COMPANY, 7TH AIR CAVARY, LANDED in the Ia Drag Valley in 1965, young Joe Marm had been in Vietnam just two months. It would be the second platoon commander's first time under fire.

A well-planned ambush hit the 500 troopers as soon as the choppers hit the LZ and chaos reigned in the opening minutes of what would be one of Vietnam's pivotal battles.

Trying to move his unit to reinforce the remnants of a disseminated lead platoon, Marm was held back by an NVA gun emplacement. Attacking over 100 feet of open ground with only grenades and his rifle, Marm silenced the position, killing 12-18 of the enemy.

Marm's action was effective, saving his men from a deadly torrent of fire, but it was also costly — less than an hour into his combat experience, he was shot in the face. Medevac'd stateside, his jaw was reconstructed, and a year later he received the Medal of Honor.

In 1969, Marm returned to Vietnam at his request.

"I felt like I should pull my share of the hardship tours," he said. "I was really there just to lead them and set the example and do the best I could," Marm says now. "I always say I wear the medal for all those brave men who were in that battle whose actions went unsung. My actions happened to be observed."



Photo courtesy The Medal of Honor Project



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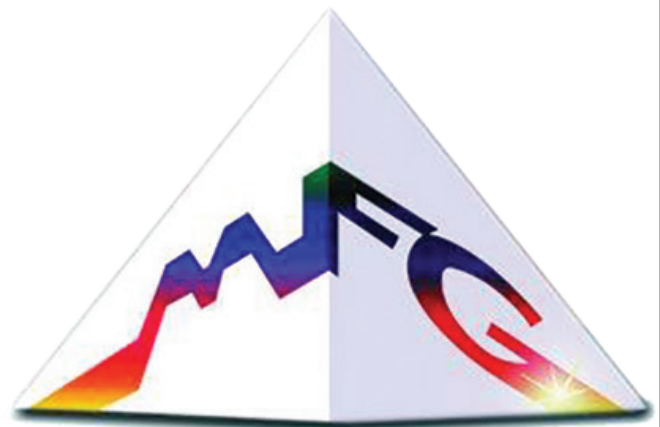


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# Hiroshi H. 'Hershey' Miyamura

*U.S. Army/Korea*



**M** IYAMURA WAS BORN IN GALLUP, NEW MEXICO to Japanese immigrant parents. He is a Nisei, which means that he is a second-generation Japanese-American. Miyamura joined the U.S. Army in January 1945.

He volunteered to be part of the all-Nisei 100th Infantry Battalion. This army unit was mostly made up of Japanese Americans from Hawaii and the mainland. He was discharged from the active army shortly after Japan surrendered. Following the war, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve, and was recalled to active duty following the start of the Korean War. He endured as a prisoner of war for 28 months.

He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on April 24–25, 1951, near Taejon-ni, Korea, while serving as a corporal in the 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. His was the first Medal of Honor to be classified Top Secret. Miyamura was captured by the North Koreans and held as a prisoner of war immediately after the actions that led to his award. Following his release on Aug. 20, 1953, he was repatriated to the United States and honorably discharged shortly thereafter.

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# Robert J. Modrzejewski

*U.S. Marine Corps/Vietnam*

OVER A PERIOD OF THREE DAYS, CAPT. ROBERT J. MODRZEJEWSKI and his men fought at close quarters against a regiment-size North Vietnamese concentration.

Wounded by shrapnel, he ran and crawled 200 yards to retrieve ammunition and deliver it to vulnerable troops; he later called in artillery strikes within a few yards of the Marine positions.

Decimated by casualties and surrounded, Modrzejewski's company was running out of ammunition when the enemy attacked. Facing more than 1,000 soldiers, he reorganized his men for close combat and again called in danger- close air strikes.

Then, sometime before dark, for reasons Modrzejewski never fully understood, the North Vietnamese force broke off its assault and withdrew into the mountains.



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# Melvin Morris

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*



**B**ORN IN OKMULGEE, OKLAHOMA on Jan. 7, 1942, Melvin Morris received the Congressional Medal of Honor for valorous actions on Sept. 17, 1969, while he was a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. Morris was awarded his MOH on March 18, 2014.

At the ceremony, then-President Barack Obama said “Morris led an advance across enemy lines to retrieve a fallen comrade. He single-handedly destroyed an enemy force who had pinned his battalion down in a series of bunkers. Morris was shot three times running back to the “American lines with casualties but did not stop until he reached safety.”

“Staff Sergeant Morris, 27 years old, was one of our nation’s very first Green Berets,” President Obama said. “I mean one of our very first Green Berets, think about that, I mean that’s legendary.”



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# Robert Martin 'Bob' Patterson

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*

**A**S 21-YEAR-OLD BOB PATTERSON stood at attention on the east lawn of the White House, he listened to President Richard Nixon read out his Congressional Medal of Honor citation.

He was being recognized “for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty” — yet he had little memory of the actions that would lead to his receiving the nation’s highest military award.

Patterson, born April 16, 1948, in Durham, South Carolina, enlisted in the Army and was deployed to Vietnam. A specialist fourth class at the time, he distinguished himself there while serving as a fire team leader of the 3d Platoon, Troop B, during an assault against a North Vietnamese Army battalion which was entrenched in a heavily fortified position.

On May 6, 1968, the leading squad of the 3d Platoon was pinned down by heavy interlocking automatic weapon and rocket propelled grenade fire from two enemy bunkers near La Chu. Patterson and the two other members of his assault team moved forward under a hail of enemy fire to destroy the bunkers with grenade and machine-gun fire. His last clear memory for the following four hours was of his platoon sergeant lying severely wounded just feet from one of the bunkers. Based on reports, Patterson then saw his comrades were being fired on from a third enemy bunker covered by enemy gunners in one-man spider holes. With complete disregard for his safety and ignoring the warning of his comrades that he was moving into a bunker complex, he assaulted and destroyed the position. Although exposed to intensive small arm and grenade fire from the



**“His dauntless courage and heroism inspired his platoon to resume the attack and to penetrate the enemy defensive position.”**

bunkers and their mutually supporting emplacements. Patterson continued his assault upon the bunkers which were impeding the advance of his unit.

Patterson single-handedly destroyed by rifle and grenade fire five enemy bunkers, killed eight enemy

soldiers and captured seven weapons, his citation noted.

“His dauntless courage and heroism inspired his platoon to resume the attack and to penetrate the enemy defensive position,” the citation went on to note.

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# Ronald E. Rosser

*U.S. Army/Korea*

**C**PL. ROSSER DISTINGUISHED himself by conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty. While assaulting heavily fortified enemy hill positions, Company L, 38th Infantry Regiment, was stopped by fierce automatic-weapons, small-arms, artillery, and mortar fire. Cpl. Rosser, a forward observer, was with the lead platoon of Company L when it came under fire from two directions.

Cpl. Rosser turned his radio over to his assistant and, disregarding the enemy fire, charged the enemy positions armed with only carbine and a grenade. At the first bunker, he silenced its occupants with a burst from his weapon. Gaining the top of the hill, he killed two enemy soldiers, and then went down the trench, killing five more as he advanced. He then hurled his grenade into a bunker and shot two other soldiers as they emerged.

Having exhausted his ammunition, he returned through the enemy fire to obtain more ammunition and grenades and charged the hill once more. Calling on others to follow him, he assaulted two more enemy bunkers. Although those who attempted to join him became casualties, Cpl. Rosser once again exhausted his ammunition obtained a new supply, and returning to the hilltop a third time hurled grenades into the enemy positions.

During this heroic action Cpl. Rosser single-handedly killed at least 13 of the enemy. After exhausting his ammunition he accompanied the withdrawing platoon, and though himself wounded, made several trips across open terrain still under enemy fire to help remove other men injured more seriously than himself.

This outstanding soldier's courageous and selfless devotion

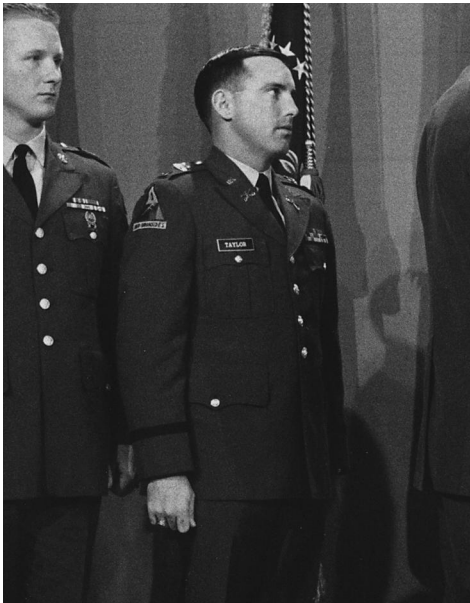
to duty is worthy of emulation by all men. He has contributed magnificently to the high traditions of the military service.



**“After exhausting his ammunition he accompanied the withdrawing platoon, and though himself wounded, made several trips across open terrain still under enemy fire to help remove other men injured more seriously than himself.”**

# James Allen 'Jim' Taylor

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*



**O**NE OF CAPT. JAMES ALLEN TAYLOR's armored cavalry assault vehicle was hit immediately by recoilless rifle fire and all five crew members were wounded that day in November 1967.

Aware that the stricken vehicle was in grave danger of exploding, Capt. Taylor rushed forward and personally extracted the wounded to safety despite the hail of enemy fire and exploding ammunition.

Disregarding continued intense enemy fire, Capt. Taylor moved forward to rescue the wounded men from a second burning vehicle and personally removed all the wounded crewmen and, valiantly established a landing zone for medical evacuation.

Then, aggressively responding to enemy machine gun fire not 50 yards away, Taylor engaged the position with his machine gun, killing the 3-man crew.

Once again, Capt. Taylor rushed forward and pulled the wounded from a third vehicle, loaded them aboard his vehicle, and returned them safely to the evacuation site.



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The graphic features a large, detailed image of the Medal of Honor, a gold eagle with wings spread, perched atop a ribbon that reads "VALOR". Below the ribbon is a five-pointed star with a circular medallion in the center depicting a Minuteman soldier. The star is surrounded by a laurel wreath. The background is a blue field with white stars, reminiscent of the American flag. The text is in a white, serif font, and the "Daily Register" logo is at the bottom right.

# Gary George Wetzel

*U.S. Army/Vietnam*

**S**P4C. GARY WETZEL, 173D ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life on Jan. 8, 1968. Wetzel was serving as door gunner aboard a helicopter which was part of an insertion force trapped in a landing zone by intense and deadly hostile fire. He was going to the aid of his aircraft commander when he was blown into a rice paddy and critically wounded by two enemy rockets that exploded just inches from his location.

Although bleeding profusely due to the loss of his left arm and severe wounds in his right arm, chest, and left leg, Wetzel staggered back to his original position in his gun-well and took the enemy forces under fire. His machine gun was the only weapon placing effective fire on the enemy at that time. Through a resolve that overcame the shock and intolerable pain of his injuries, Wetzel remained at his position until he had eliminated the automatic weapons emplacement that had been inflicting heavy casualties on the American troops. Refusing to attend his own extensive wounds, he attempted to return to the aid of his aircraft commander, passing out multiple times from loss of blood.



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