



# Medal of Honor

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2019

Gainesville Daily Register

Section B

## Preparing a hero's welcome

24 Medal of Honor recipients expected to arrive in Gainesville

By **MEGAN GRAY-HATFIELD**  
Staff Writer  
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If all goes as planned, the 18th year of the Medal of Honor Host City Program could bring more recipients of the nation's highest military honor to town than ever before, according to Medal of Honor Host City Program Board President Tommy Moore.

Twenty-four Medal of Honor recipients are expected to arrive in Gainesville next month for MOH Host City events that will take place from Wednesday, April 10 through Saturday, April 13.

The 24 men who Moore said confirmed their attendance for the festivities are: Bennie G. Adkins, John P. Baca, Donald E. Ballard, Gary B. Beikirch, Drew Dennis Dix, Michael John Fitzmaurice, Harold A. Fritz, Charles Chris Hagemester, Robert R. Ingram, Allen James Lynch, Walter Joseph Marm Jr., James C. McCloughan, Hiroshi H. Miyamura, Robert J. Modrzejewski, Melvin Morris, Robert E. O'Malley, Gary Mike Rose, Ronald E. Rosser, Clarence Eugene Sasser, Britt K. Slabinski, James Allen Taylor, Michael Edwin Thornton, Gary George Wetzels and Hershel Woodrow Williams.

Slabinski is visiting for the first time this year, Moore said. The U.S. Navy veteran was awarded the Medal of Honor from President Donald J. Trump



Photo courtesy Tony Avila

**Medal of Honor recipient Gary B. Beikirch waves to onlookers during the 2018 Medal of Honor Parade.**

during a White House ceremony May 24, 2018, for his actions during combat operations on March 4, 2002, while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, according to his biography on the

See WELCOME, page B2

## Medal of Honor Week schedule of events

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10**  
**Recipient arrival:** 5:30 p.m. (estimate) at Liberty Crossing, open to the public

**Banquet:** 6-9 p.m. at North Central Texas College, ticket required

**THURSDAY, APRIL 11**  
**Gainesville Lee Intermediate School**  
**address:** 8:30-9:30 a.m., by invitation only

**SATURDAY, APRIL 13**  
**Parade:** 9-11 a.m. (see parade route inside), open to the public

**Gainesville High School**  
**address:** 10-11:30 a.m., by invitation only

**First pitch:** Noon at the Boys Baseball of Cooke County game at Leonard Park, open to the public

**North Central Texas College**  
**address:** 1-2:30 p.m., by invitation only

**Music and food trucks:** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Gainesville Farmers Market, open to the public

**Visit to Medal of Honor Park:** 2:45-3:15 p.m., by invitation only

**Book signing:** 1-3 p.m. at the Gainesville Civic Center, open to the public

**Patriot Dinner:** 6-8 p.m. at Gainesville High School, ticket required

*Note: All ticketed events are sold out.*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 12**  
**Tree planting:** 10-11:30 a.m. on Home Grown Hero Walking Trail, open to the public

This schedule is subject to change; pick up daily issues of the Register or visit [www.gainesvilleregister.com](http://www.gainesvilleregister.com) for the latest information.

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### Online



Follow us on Twitter @GvilleRegister or on Facebook @GainesvilleRegister for updates throughout the week

### About the main photo

At top, flags wave during the 2018 Medal of Honor parade down California Street in Gainesville. (Photo courtesy Tony Avila)



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**WELCOME**  
continued from page B1

U.S. Navy's website. Three widows of MOH recipients will also be attending, Moore said. They are Ruby Lucas, Patricia Pittman and Sally Jackson. During the recipients' time here, they will visit area schools to talk to students about their life experiences. Other MOH Host City events include a tree dedication ceremony along the Home Grown Hero Walking Trail and a parade Saturday morning. Moore said the MOH Host City Program is unique because it doesn't just focus on "however long the duration of their action lasted" but also the family and the life

"that these heroes came home and lived after their service." Anyone who attends any of the events during the second week of April has a great opportunity to see living history, according to Moore. "Don't miss an opportunity to celebrate the heroism and the patriotism that this community has always exhibited for those who serve," Moore said. Gainesville Economic Development Corp. Executive Director Arlene Loyd said the MOH festivities not only boost tourism because of the publicity the events receive, but it also homes in on the pride and honor the community has in being a host city.

"That pride and honor is instilled in our children, as well," Loyd said. "You can't buy honor and integrity, but it can be taught." The city of Gainesville is the only Medal of Honor Host City in the United States, according to Moore. Program volunteers estimate 50,000 people are touched by the MOH events each year. "This program has really impacted a lot of North Texas," Moore said. "It's not just Gainesville ... The character that's been developed in this community as a result of that, we want to maintain that. We want to maintain that enthusiasm for patriotism, love of country and integrity."

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## BOOK REVIEW

# 'Zero to Hero' tells of Allen Lynch's childhood, bravery

*Medal of Honor recipient and author expected to visit Gainesville during Medal of Honor Week this year*

By **LESLIE NICHOLS**  
Guest reviewer

When the word hero comes to mind, one conjures up images of a person who acts selflessly in a particular situation. We all think of firemen, policemen and soldiers as heroes and Allen Lynch most definitely falls into that category. In his new book "Zero to Hero," he writes about his life with an openness and candor that makes you want to not only thank him for his service, but also shake his hand and applaud him for overcoming the obstacles he faced.

Lynch was born into a middle-class home with a stern working-class ethic that was firmly ingrained in him. During his early years the family moved several times and that isn't always easy on a child. Because of bullying, Lynch began to dislike school and would dread everything about it. He was bullied on the bus, at lunchtime and recess was the bully's favorite time to pick on him. He referred to recess as a nightmare. He was beat up, verbally abused and isolated.

Sadly, the few friends he did have during his middle school years ultimately chose to side with the bullies. His father tried to teach Lynch to fight, to stand up to the bullying but when he did, he got in trouble at school. At one point the bullying was so bad that a doctor prescribed a tranquilizer. His father didn't like that so back to the doctor he went. He had the opportunity to speak to the doctor alone and after hearing about what was going on the doctor said, "Son, everyone has his day to shine. These kids pushing you around are shining now, but one day it will be your turn."

Lynch never forgot those words. Academics were never a priority for Lynch but he became a young entrepreneur in high school. He finally had a few friends and so they started a snow-shoveling business in the winter and lawn-mowing service in the summer. They also began repairing and selling bikes which started him on the path of always having a job and taking care of whatever needed to be done.

Following high school, Lynch had several different jobs but he was restless and decided to enlist in the U.S. Army. The year was 1964. He eventually ended up stationed in Germany. He began to enjoy military service and the fact that he knew what was expected of him. He grew more independent as he took time to explore places like Berlin and Frankfurt. During his time in Germany he was approached by a career counselor and eventually in 1966 he decided to reenlist for three more years. Little did he know how that epic decision would ultimately change his life. He was given a pass to go home and he realized after being home a short time that he had changed, matured and when it was time to go back, he was ready.

The Vietnam War was heating up and Lynch felt that he wanted to see some action. So on Feb. 16, 1967 he signed up for a tour in Vietnam. By the end of May, Lynch was on a plane to Cam Ranh Bay. The adjustment to Vietnam was at first staggering. The weather, the humidity and even the uniform were totally different. Gone were the white T-shirts, replaced by olive green with very little to identify who was who. Saluting no longer took place due to snipers watching and waiting to see an officer. Lynch had asked for and received placement in the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). This unit pioneered the use of Huey helicopters in warfare and they were a critical part of the strategy in combat in Vietnam. Lynch said that to this day when he hears the sound of a helicopter it triggers memories.

During the first few days he met a sergeant who had been serving in Vietnam for several years. As the conversation was ending, the sergeant said, "You can die like a man or you can die like a coward. You're here and what's going to happen to you is going to happen, but you have the choice of what you do with it." Those words impacted Lynch. He had come to Vietnam to prove himself and he did not want to fail. Soon he was in the thick of things, searching villages for Viet Cong, going on patrols and ambushes.

Early on into his time in Vietnam,

Lynch sadly lost a friend, Jerry, to friendly fire. It was just a bad accident but it affected him profoundly and after that he had a difficult time getting close to anyone. He knew that he was learning and proving to himself that he was capable. He thought at the time that he wasn't a great soldier but that he was a competent one.

Lynch felt that every soldier in Vietnam has a moment of truth and his came on Dec. 15, 1967. There had been an ongoing battle in the Bong Son Plain region. He was serving as a radiotelephone operator which meant he stayed close to the platoon leader and relayed all messages.

The heroism that Lynch displayed that day was impressive. He first ran out in the middle of a barrage of bullets and rescued one soldier who had been shot in the shoulder. After dragging him to safety, he went back out and found another soldier who had been shot in both legs lying in a deep trench. While trying to determine how to get himself and the wounded soldier back to safety, he saw another soldier running towards him. Suddenly he too was shot in the leg and without hesitation, Lynch ran from the trench and proceeded to drag the soldier back to the trench. He could hear his fellow soldiers yelling at him to return to safety but he never wavered in his determination to save not just himself but also the two wounded soldiers. After several hours an attempt was made to get to Lynch and the others, but it proved unsuccessful. A second attempt was also made and that too fell short of rescuing them in the trench. Many hours later, a full-on attack

including an air strike was made and the rescue was successful. Both soldiers survived.

When Lynch returned to his platoon after being Medevac'd out with the others, he was informed that he was being nominated for the Medal of Honor.

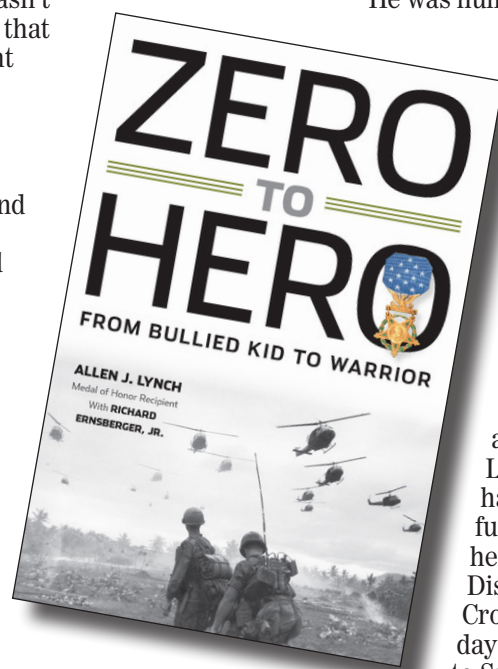
He was humbled but then quickly returned to being a regular soldier. Because of the nomination, he was pulled from the action and within three months he was heading back to the U.S. He returned to Fort Hood where he served until he left the Army.

Back at home and working for Libby's, two events happened. He met his future wife, Susan, and he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. On April 24, the day before his marriage to Susan, Lynch was informed that President

Nixon would be presenting him with Medal of Honor on May 14 at the White House. His entire family was there with him when he received the highest honor.

Lynch went on to continue helping soldiers throughout his career. He held various positions with the Veterans Administration and he was always striving to improve the benefits for returning soldiers and their families. In 2012 the Allen J. Lynch Medal of Honor Veteran's Assistance Program was created. All the board members are either veterans or directly connected to a veteran and Lynch serves as the president. They continue to help veterans with the motto, "We are veterans helping veterans help themselves."

Leslie Nichols is a volunteer with the Medal of Honor Host City Program. An advance review copy of "Zero to Hero" was provided by the publisher to the Register.



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MEET THE AUTHOR

# Lynch to return during Medal of Honor festivities

By MEGAN GRAY-HATFIELD  
Staff Writer  
mhatfield@gainesvilleregister.com

Medal of Honor recipient Allen "Al" Lynch says he is looking forward to returning to Gainesville.

"I love it," Lynch, 73, said of visiting Gainesville during the Medal of Honor Host City Program events. "It's just a phenomenal time. It's just a great city."

Lynch said he has been to Gainesville twice by himself and twice with his wife of nearly 49 years, Susan "Susie" Lynch.

He said he hasn't been able to make it to the MOH week events the past three years because he was busy working on his new book, "Zero to Hero: From Bullied Kid to Warrior."

"I think what impresses me most is the parade," Lynch said of the MOH Host City Program festivities. "I've been to a lot of parades and this is one of the parades that I just look forward to. It's just very cool."

He said he and Susie drive down to Texas from their home in Illinois via a scenic route.

"We look forward to it," Lynch said. "It's a neat city. You've got such wonderful people."

Lynch enlisted in the U.S. Army when he had "just turned 19" and was active for four and a half years.

"I got out April 25, 1969," Lynch said while adding that he retired from the National Guard in 1994 as a first sergeant.

Lynch was awarded his Medal of Honor in 1970 by then-President Richard Nixon for his actions in the Republic of Vietnam as a specialist fourth class and radio operator.

He recalled jets flying overhead, his wounded comrades and trying to stay alive during the Battle of My An II on Dec. 15, 1967.

"It was a horrendous day," Lynch said of the events that led to receiving his medal.

As for being awarded the nation's highest military honor, he said he didn't know how to feel about it.

"It was kind of a whirlwind thing," Lynch said of

the experience. "My wife and I, Susie, had just gotten married April 25, 1970. About a month and a half later we were in Washington, D.C. being treated like royalty."

He said he was flown first class to Washington, D.C. where he was put up in a suite "in a big hotel."

"It wasn't until a couple of weeks after I got home that it hit me what happened," Lynch said.

After receiving his medal, Lynch spent 12 years working for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs before serving as the executive director of the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program. In 1986, Lynch said he joined the Illinois Attorney General's Office where he was chief of the Veterans Rights Bureau.

"I spent 20 years there and that's where I retired,"

Lynch said. "My whole life has been veterans and veteran work."

Like many veterans, the war also left Lynch suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

He said supporting nongovernmental organizations is key to helping veterans struggling with the disorder because many don't want to "deal with the VA."

"There's a need for private organizations to get involved," Lynch said. "Sometimes the stigma of the government floats into everything the VA does, where if you go to a private doc sometimes you can get a little bit better handle on things. I think, all in all, there's a lot of resources out there for those that are seeking help."

He said President Donald Trump's recently signed executive order aimed at combating veteran suicide is "amazing."

Lynch said veterans with PTSD should stop trying to handle their struggles on their own and seek help.

"Remember you made it back here for a reason," Lynch said. "Don't disgrace the men and women that have died serving this country by killing yourself. Come back here and live your life if not for you, for them."

Lynch said his "major slap across the face one day" was when he was told something similar.

"It was, 'How dare you. All of these men and women that have given their lives for this country that have died would love to have what you have. How dare you feel sorry for yourself.' And that started the long struggle with healing," Lynch said.

He said when he was losing his parents he was so focused on being there for them and his family that his PTSD symptoms "diminished a lot."

"What PTSD does is it forces us to focus inward," Lynch said.

When one starts to shift their focus on other things in life and putting others first is when symptoms can begin to go away, Lynch said, adding that approach and "a lot of therapy" worked for him.

"I've suffered (from) PTSD since 1973," Lynch said. "... Thankfully I'm still here."



Courtesy photo

Medal of Honor recipient Allen "Al" Lynch recently released his book, "Zero to Hero: From Bullied Kid to Warrior."

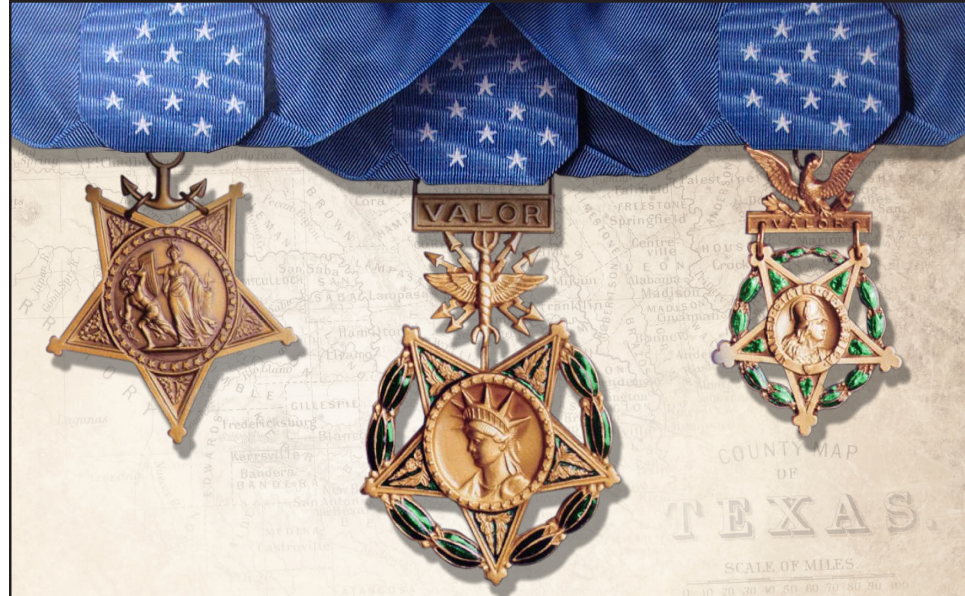
### If you go

**What:** Medal of Honor recipients sign their books

**When:** 1-3 p.m. Saturday, April 13

**Where:** Gainesville Civic Center, 311 S. Weaver St.

**Info:** Bring your book or purchase a copy on site



# THANK YOU

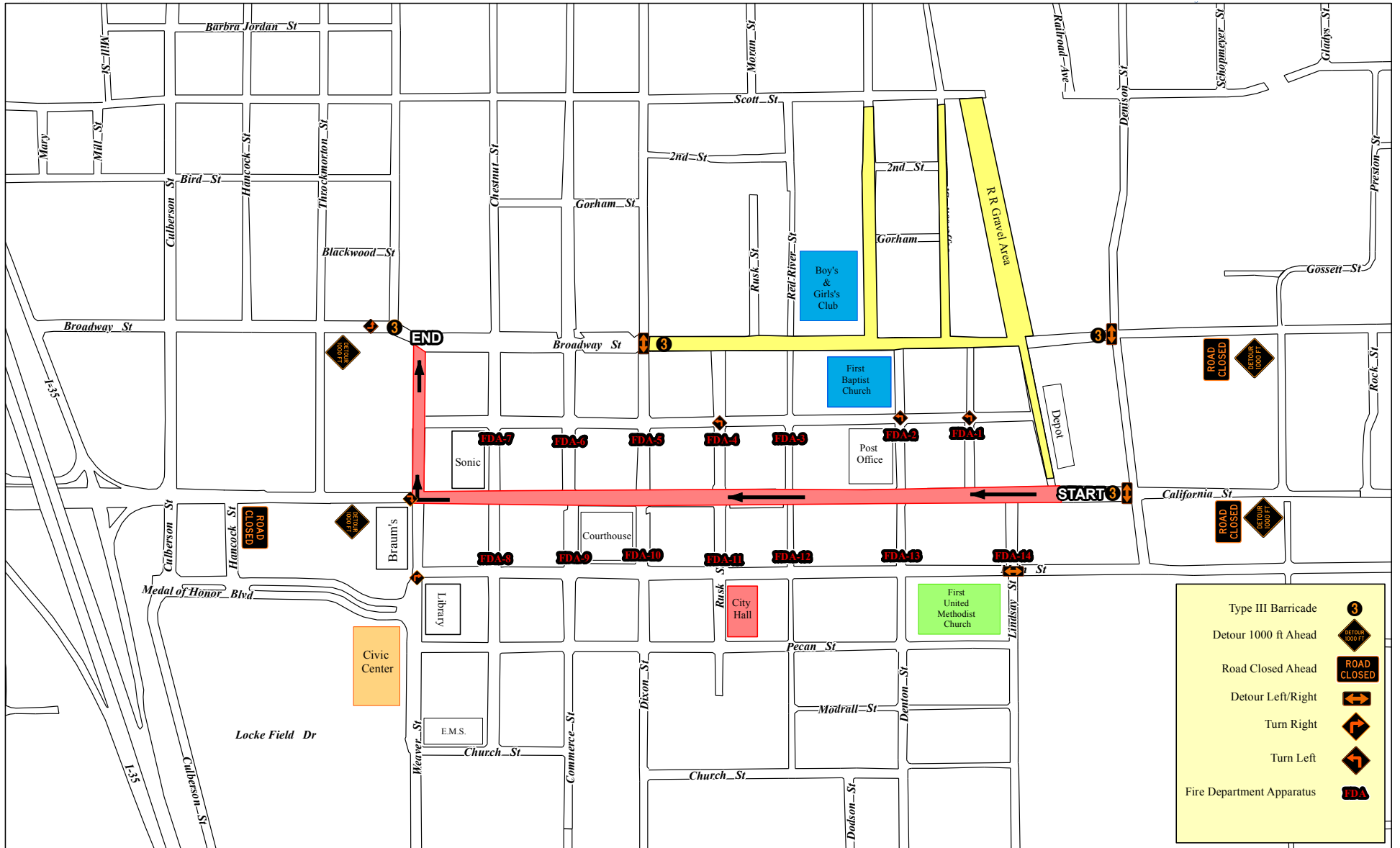
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# Planned route for the 2019 Medal of Honor Parade



Graphic courtesy of the city of Gainesville

This map shows the parade staging area in yellow and the parade route, in red, through downtown Gainesville. The affected roads will be closed to traffic beginning at points marked on the map by traffic signs. Through traffic on California Street will be detoured onto Main Street between Weaver and Denison streets. The parade will step off at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 13. Motorists are reminded to observe all road laws, temporary traffic signs and marked parking regulations when navigating through downtown Gainesville during Medal of Honor Week.

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**Bennie G. Adkins**  
U.S. Army/Vietnam

Sgt. First Class Bennie Adkins, a native of Waurika, Oklahoma, received his Medal of Honor from 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."



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, fighting with mortars, machine guns, recoilless rifles, small arms and hand grenades, it was estimated Adkins killed up to 175 of the enemy while sustaining 18 different wounds to his body."

**John P. Baca**  
U.S. Army/Vietnam

Sp4c. Baca, Company D, distinguished himself while serving on a recoilless rifle team during a night ambush mission. A platoon from his company was sent to investigate the detonation of an automatic



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

ambush device forward of his unit's main position and soon came under intense

See THEIR STORIES on next page

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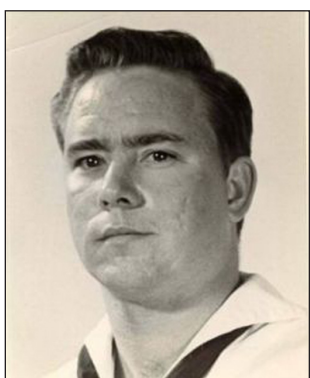
# THEIR STORIES

enemy fire from concealed positions along the trail. Hearing the heavy firing from the platoon position and realizing that his recoilless rifle team could assist the members of the besieged patrol, Sp4c. Baca led his team through the hail of enemy fire to a firing position within the patrol's defensive perimeter. As they prepared to engage the enemy, a fragmentation grenade was thrown into the midst of the patrol. Fully aware of the danger to his comrades, Sp4c. Baca unhesitatingly, and with complete disregard for his own safety, covered the grenade with his steel helmet and fell on it as the grenade exploded, thereby absorbing the lethal fragments and concussion with his body. His gallant action and total disregard for his personal well-being directly saved eight men from certain serious injury or death.

## Donald E. "Doc" Ballard

U.S. Navy/Vietnam

On 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.

## Gary B. Beikirch

U.S. Army/Vietnam

Sgt. Gary B. Beikirch was awarded for his actions as a medical aidman, Detachment B-24, Company B, during the defense of Camp Dak Seang.

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, he 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.



to the safety of the Tactical Operations Center. Being informed of other trapped civilians within the city, S/ Sgt. Dix voluntarily led another force to rescue eight civilian employees in a building which was under heavy mortar and small-arms fire. S/Sgt. Dix then returned to the center of the city. As he approached a building, he was subjected to intense automatic rifle and machine gun fire from an unknown number of Viet Cong. He personally assaulted the building, killing six Viet Cong and rescuing two Filipinos. The following day S/Sgt. Dix, still on his own volition, assembled a 20-man force and though under intense enemy fire cleared the Viet Cong out of the hotel, theater, and other adjacent buildings within the city. During this portion of the attack, Army Republic of Vietnam soldiers inspired by the heroism and success of S/Sgt. Dix rallied and commenced firing upon the Viet Cong. S/Sgt. Dix captured 20 prisoners,

See THEIR STORIES on next page

## Drew Dennis Dix

U.S. Army/Vietnam

Staff Sgt. Drew Dennis Dix was born Dec. 14, 1944, in West Point, New York. He received the Medal of Honor in 1969 for risking his life above and beyond the call of duty while in action in the Chau Doc Province of Vietnam on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 1968.

S/Sgt. Dix distinguished himself while serving as a unit adviser. S/Sgt. Dix, with a patrol of Vietnamese soldiers, was recalled to assist in the defense of Chau Phu after two Viet Cong battalions broke down the city's defenses. Learning that a nurse was trapped in a house near the center of the city, S/Sgt. Dix organized a relief force, successfully rescued the nurse and returned her



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## THEIR STORIES

including a high ranking Viet Cong official. He then attacked enemy troops who had entered the residence of the Deputy Province Chief and was successful in rescuing the official's wife and children. S/Sgt. Dix's personal heroic actions resulted in 14 confirmed Viet Cong killed in action and possibly 25 more, the capture of 20 prisoners, 15 weapons, and the rescue of the 14 United States and free world civilians.

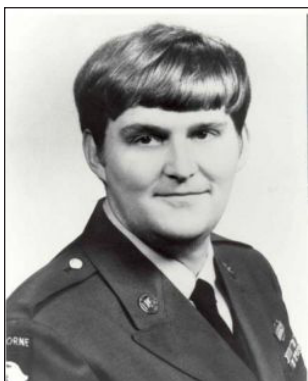
### Michael John Fitzmaurice

U.S. Army/Vietnam

Born in Jamestown, North Dakota, on March 9, 1950, Specialist Fourth Class Michael John Fitzmaurice received the Medal of Honor on Oct. 15, 1973 for valorous actions on March 23, 1971.

According to the citation, Fitzmaurice distinguished himself at Khe Sanh. Fitzmaurice and three fellow soldiers were occupying a bunker when a company of North Vietnamese sappers infiltrated the area.

At the onset of the attack Fitzmaurice saw three



explosive charges which had been thrown into the bunker by the enemy. Realizing the imminent danger and with complete disregard for his personal safety, he hurled two of the charges out of the bunker. He then threw his flak vest and himself over the remaining charge. By this courageous act he absorbed the blast and shielded his fellow-soldiers. Although suffering from serious multiple wounds and partial loss of sight, he charged out of the bunker, and engaged the enemy until his rifle was damaged by the blast of an enemy hand grenade.

While in search of another weapon, Fitzmaurice encountered and overcame an enemy sapper in hand-to-hand combat. Having obtained another weapon, he returned to his original fighting position and inflicted additional casualties on the attacking enemy. Although seriously wounded, Fitzmaurice refused to be medically evacuated, preferring to remain at his post.

### Harold A. Fritz

U.S. Army/Vietnam

1st Lt. Harold A. Fritz was born Feb. 21, 1944, in Chicago. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on March 2, 1971, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while in action in the Binh Long Province, Republic of Vietnam, on Jan. 11, 1969.

Then-Capt. Fritz, Armor, U.S. Army, distinguished himself while serving as a platoon leader with Troop A, near Quan Loi. Capt. Fritz was leading his seven-vehicle armored column to meet and escort a truck convoy when the column suddenly came under intense crossfire from a reinforced enemy company in ambush. In the initial attack, Capt. Fritz' vehicle was hit and he was seriously wounded. Realizing that his platoon was completely



surrounded, vastly outnumbered and in danger of being overrun, Capt. Fritz leaped to the top of his burning vehicle and directed the positioning of his remaining vehicles and men. Disregarding his wounds, he ran from vehicle to vehicle in view of the enemy gunners in order to lead the defense and assist the wounded. When a strong enemy force assaulted the position and attempted to overrun the platoon, Capt. Fritz manned a machine gun and through his exemplary action inspired his men to deliver intense fire which broke the assault and routed the attackers. Moments later a second enemy force advanced to within 2 meters of the position and threatened to overwhelm the defenders. Capt. Fritz, armed only with a pistol and bayonet, led a small group in a fierce and daring charge which routed the attackers and inflicted heavy casualties. When a relief force arrived, Capt. Fritz saw that it was not deploying effectively against the enemy positions, and he moved through the heavy enemy fire to direct its deployment against the hostile positions. This deployment forced the enemy to abandon the ambush site and withdraw. Despite his wounds, Capt. Fritz returned to his position, assisted his men, and refused medical attention until all of his wounded comrades had been treated and evacuated.

### Charles Chris Hagemeister

U.S. Army/Vietnam

Born Aug. 21, 1946 in Lincoln, Nebraska, Sp5c. Charles Hagemeister was awarded the Medal of Honor on May 14, 1968 for conspicuous gallantry on March 20, 1967, in Vietnam.

While conducting combat operations, Sp5c. Hagemeister's platoon suddenly came under heavy attack from three



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# THEIR STORIES

sides. Seeing two of his comrades seriously wounded in the initial action, Sp5c. Hagemeister unhesitatingly raced through the deadly hail of fire to aid them. Upon learning that the platoon leader and several other soldiers also had been wounded, Sp5c. Hagemeister continued to brave the enemy fire and crawled forward to render lifesaving treatment and offer encouragement. Attempting to evacuate the seriously wounded soldiers, Sp5c. Hagemeister came 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 trying to encircle him and silenced an enemy machine gun that covered the area. 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 ahead of him. These efforts completed, he then moved to the other flank and evacuated additional wounded men though his every move drew fire from the enemy.

## Robert R. Ingram

U.S. Marine Corps/Vietnam



Petty Officer Ingram was awarded for 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.

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 about 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, resolutely answered. Though severely wounded three times, he aided 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 4 p.m. until just prior to sunset, Petty Officer Ingram pushed, pulled, cajoled and doctored his Marines. Enduring the pain from his many wounds and disregarding his likely death, Petty Officer Ingram's intrepid actions saved many lives that day.

## Allen James Lynch

U.S. Army/Vietnam



Sp4c. Allen James Lynch was born Oct. 28, 1945, in Chicago. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on May 14, 1970, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in the Battle of My An II in Binh Dinh province in Vietnam on Dec. 15, 1967.

Then-Sgt. Lynch distinguished himself while serving as a radio telephone operator with Company D, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. While serving in the forward element on an operation near the village of My An, his unit became heavily engaged with a larger enemy force. Quickly and accurately assessing the situation, Sgt. Lynch provided his commander with information which later proved essential to the unit's successful actions. Seeing three wounded comrades lying exposed to enemy fire, Sgt. Lynch dashed across 50 meters of open ground through a hail of fire to help them. Reconnoitering a nearby trench to protect the wounded from hostile fire, he killed two enemy soldiers at point-blank range. He then returned to the fire-swept area three times to carry the wounded men to safety. When his company was forced to withdraw, Sgt. Lynch remained to aid his comrades at the risk of his life rather than abandon them. Alone, he defended his

isolated position for two hours, and using only his rifle and a grenade, he stopped the enemy just short of his trench, killing five. Again under hostile fire, he crossed 70 meters of exposed terrain five times to carry his wounded comrades to a more secure area. Once he had assured their comfort and safety, Sgt. Lynch located the counterattacking friendly company to assist in directing the attack and evacuating the three casualties.

## Walter Joseph Marm Jr.

U.S. Army/Vietnam



As Alpha Company, 7th Air Cavalry, landed in the Ia Drag Valley in 1965, young Joe Marm had been in country only two months. It would be the Alpha Company's 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.

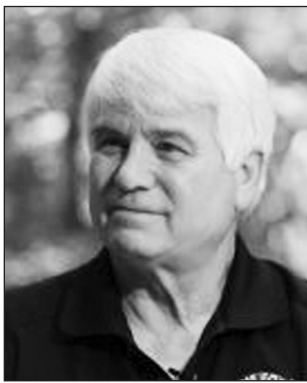
Marm's action was effective, saving his men from a deadly torrent of fire, but it was also costly — less than an hour into his combat experience, he was shot in the face. Medevac'd stateside, his jaw was reconstructed, and a year later he received the Medal of Honor.

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."

## James C. "Jim" McCloughan

U.S. Army/Vietnam



Private First Class James C. McCloughan distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty from May 13-15, 1969, while serving as a combat medic with Company C, 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division. The company air assaulted into an area near Tam Ky and Nui Yon Hill. On May 13, with complete disregard for his life, he ran 100 meters in an open field through heavy fire to rescue a comrade too injured to move. That same day, 2d Platoon was ordered to search the area near Nui Yon Hill when the platoon was ambushed by a large North Vietnamese Army force and sustained heavy casualties. Private First Class McCloughan led two Americans into the safety of a trench while being wounded by shrapnel from a rocket propelled grenade. He ignored a direct order to stay back and braved an enemy assault while moving into the "kill zone" four more times to extract wounded comrades. Though bleeding heavily from shrapnel wounds on his head and body, he refused evacuation to safety in order to remain with his fellow soldiers who were heavily outnumbered. On May 14, the platoon was again ordered to move out towards Nui Yon Hill. Private First Class McCloughan was wounded a second time by small arms fire and shrapnel from a rocket propelled grenade while aiding two soldiers in an open rice paddy. In the final phases of the attack, two North Vietnamese companies and 700 Viet Cong soldiers descended upon Company C's position on three sides. Private First Class McCloughan went into the crossfire numerous times to extract wounded soldiers while also fighting the enemy, inspiring his comrades to fight for their survival. He also volunteered to hold a blinking light as a marker for a nighttime resupply drop when supplies ran low, staying there while bullets landed all around him and rocket propelled grenades flew over. During the morning darkness of May 15, Private First Class McCloughan knocked out a rocket propelled grenade position with a grenade, fought and eliminated enemy soldiers, treated numerous casualties, kept two critically wounded soldiers alive during the night and organized the dead and wounded for evacuation at daylight.

## Hiroshi H. Miyamura

U.S. Army/Korea



Miyamura was born in Gallup, New Mexico to Japanese immigrant parents. He is a Nisei, which means 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.

As Brigadier Gen. Ralph Osborne explained to Miyamura and a group of reporters upon notifying them of his medal, "If the Reds knew what he had done to a good number of their soldiers just before he was taken prisoner, they might have taken revenge on this young man. He might not have come back."

Following his release on August 20, 1953, he was repatriated to the United States and honorably discharged from the military shortly thereafter. His medal was presented to him by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in October 1953 at the White House.

## 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

See THEIR STORIES on next page

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# THEIR STORIES

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 dangerously 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.

## Melvin Morris

U.S. Army/Vietnam

Born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma Jan. 7, 1942, Melvin Morris, Staff Sergeant U.S. Army, Vietnam received the Medal of Honor for valorous actions on Sept. 17, 1969. Morris received his honor March 18, 2014.

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."



with his rifle and grenades, and singly killed eight of the enemy. He then led his squad to the assistance of an adjacent Marine unit which was suffering heavy casualties. Continuing to press forward, he reloaded his weapon and fired with telling effect into the enemy emplacement.

He personally assisted in the evacuation of several wounded marines, and again regrouping the remnants of his squad, he returned to the point of the heaviest fighting.

Ordered to an evacuation point by an officer, Sgt. O'Malley gathered his besieged and badly wounded squad, and boldly led them under fire to a helicopter for withdrawal.

Although three times wounded in this encounter, and facing imminent death from a fanatic and determined enemy, he steadfastly refused evacuation and continued to cover his squad's boarding of the helicopters while, from an exposed position, he delivered fire against the enemy until his wounded men were evacuated.

Only then, with his last mission accomplished, did he permit himself to be removed from the battlefield.

## Gary Michael Rose

U.S. Army/Vietnam

Sergeant Gary Michael Rose distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Special Forces Medic with a company sized exploitation force, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces. From Sept. 11-14, 1970, Sgt. Rose's company was continuously engaged by a larger, well-armed hostile force deep in enemy-controlled territory.

B-40 rockets and mortar rounds rained down while the adversary sprayed the area with small arms and machine gun fire, wounding many and forcing everyone to seek cover. Sgt. Rose, braving the hail of bullets, sprinted 50 meters to a wounded soldier's side. He then used his own body to protect the man while treating his wounds before carrying him to safety. As the enemy accelerated the attack, Sgt. Rose continuously exposed himself to intense fire as he aided casualty after casualty. A B-40 rocket fell just meters from Sgt. Rose, knocking him down and injuring his head, hand and foot. Ignoring his wounds, Sgt. Rose continued to render aid to the other injured soldiers, including exposing himself to enemy fire during an attempted evacuation. That attempt was aborted and over the next two days, Sgt. Rose continued to treat the wounded, estimated to be half of the company's personnel. On Sept. 14, during the company's eventual helicopter extraction, the enemy launched a full-scale offensive. Sgt. Rose, after loading wounded personnel on the first set of extraction helicopters, returned to the outer perimeter under enemy fire, moving wounded personnel to more secure positions to await evacuation. He then returned to help repel the enemy until the final helicopter arrived. As that helicopter was loaded, the enemy began to overrun the area and the helicopter's Marine door gunner was shot in the neck. Sgt. Rose instantly treated the Marine, saving his life. The helicopter crashed several hundred meters from the evacuation point, further injuring Sgt. Rose and the other personnel on board. Despite his wounds, Sgt. Rose continued to carry unconscious and wounded personnel out of the wreckage and administered aid until another extraction helicopter arrived.



## Ronald E. Rosser

U.S. Army/Korea

Cpl. Ronald E. 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 a 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.



## Robert E. O'Malley

U.S. Marine Corps/Vietnam

While leading his squad in the assault against a strongly entrenched enemy force on Aug. 18, 1965, Sgt. Robert E. O'Malley's unit came under intense small-arms fire.

With complete disregard for his personal safety, Sgt. O'Malley raced across an open rice paddy to a trench line where the enemy forces were located.

Jumping into the trench, he attacked the Viet Cong



## Clarence Eugene Sasser

U.S. Army/Vietnam

Sp5c. Clarence Eugene Sasser was born Sept. 12, 1947, in Chenango, Texas. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on March 7, 1969, for conspicuous gallantry while in action in the Ding Tuong province of Vietnam on Jan. 10, 1968.

Sp5c. Sasser was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, serving as a medical aidman with Company A, 3d Battalion, on a reconnaissance in force operation. His company was making an air assault when suddenly it was taken under heavy fire from three sides of the landing zone. During the first few minutes, over 30 casualties were sustained. Without hesitation, Sp5c. Sasser ran across an open rice paddy through a hail of fire to assist the wounded. After helping one man to safety, he was painfully wounded in the left shoulder by fragments of an exploding rocket. Refusing medical attention, he ran through a barrage of rockets and gunfire to aid casualties and, after treating them, continued to seek other wounded. Despite two more wounds immobilizing his legs he dragged himself through the mud toward another soldier 100 meters away. Although in agonizing



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See THEIR STORIES on next page

# THEIR STORIES

pain and faint from loss of blood, Sp5c. Sasser reached the man, treated him and proceeded on to encourage another group of soldiers to crawl 200 meters to relative safety. There he attended their wounds for five hours.

**Britt K. Slabinski**  
U.S. Navy/Afghanistan



Senior Chief Britt K. Slabinski was born Dec. 1, 1969 in Northhampton, Massachusetts. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor on May 24, 2018, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while assigned to a Joint Task Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, in Takur Ghar, Afghanistan.

The morning of March 4, 2002, Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Slabinski led a reconnaissance team to its assigned area atop a 10,000-foot snow-covered mountain. Their helicopter was suddenly riddled with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire; the crippled helicopter lurched violently and ejected one teammate onto the mountain before the pilots were forced to crash-land in the valley. Senior Chief Slabinski boldly rallied his five remaining team members and marshalled an assault to rescue their stranded teammate. The team came under fire from three directions, and Senior Chief Slabinski attacked two enemy bunkers with a teammate. After several team casualties, Senior Chief Slabinski maneuvered his team to a more defensible position. As daylight approached, mortar fire forced the team further down the mountainside. Senior Chief Slabinski carried a seriously wounded teammate through deep snow and led a trek across precipitous terrain while calling in fire on the enemy on the surrounding ridges. Throughout the next 14 hours, Senior Chief Slabinski stabilized the casualties and continued the fight until the hill was secured and his team was extracted.

**James Allen "Jim" Taylor**  
U.S. Army/Vietnam

One of Capt. James Allen Taylor's armored cavalry assault vehicles was hit immediately by recoilless rifle fire and all five crew members were wounded.

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 three-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.

**Michael Edwin Thornton**  
U.S. Navy/Vietnam



Petty Officer Michael Thornton, as Assistant U.S. Navy Adviser, along with a U.S. Navy lieutenant serving as Senior Adviser, accompanied a three-man Vietnamese Navy SEAL patrol on an intelligence gathering and prisoner capture operation against an enemy-occupied naval river base.

Launched from a Vietnamese Navy junk in a rubber boat on Oct. 31, 1972, the patrol reached land and was continuing on foot toward its objective when it suddenly came under heavy fire from a numerically superior force. The patrol called in naval gunfire support and then engaged the enemy in a fierce firefight, accounting for many enemy casualties before moving back to the waterline to prevent encirclement.

Upon learning that the Senior Adviser had been hit by enemy fire and was believed to be dead, Thornton returned through a hail of fire to the lieutenant's last position; quickly disposed of two enemy soldiers about to overrun the position, and succeeded in removing the seriously wounded and unconscious Senior Naval

Adviser to the water's edge.

He then inflated the lieutenant's life jacket and towed him seaward for approximately two hours until picked up by support craft.

By his extraordinary courage and perseverance, Petty Officer Thornton was directly responsible for saving the life of his superior officer and enabling the safe extraction of all patrol members, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

**Gary George Wetzel**  
U.S. Army/Vietnam



Sp4c. Gary Wetzel, 173d Assault Helicopter Company, distinguished himself while serving as door gunner aboard a helicopter, which was part of an insertion force trapped in a landing zone by intense hostile fire. Sp4c. Wetzel 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 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, Sp4c. Wetzel staggered back to his gun-well and fired at the enemy. His machinegun was the only effective weapon at that time. Through a resolve that overcame the shock and pain of his injuries, Sp4c. Wetzel remained until he had eliminated the automatic weapons that had been inflicting heavy casualties on the American troops and preventing them from moving against this enemy force. Refusing to attend his own extensive wounds, he attempted to return to aid his aircraft commander but passed out from loss of blood. Reviving, he persisted in his efforts to drag himself to the aid of his fellow crewman. After an agonizing effort, he came to the side of the crew chief who was attempting to drag the wounded aircraft commander to the safety of a nearby dike. Sp4c. Wetzel assisted his crew chief even though he lost consciousness once again during this action.

See THEIR STORIES on next page

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**THEIR STORIES**

**Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams**  
 U.S. Marine Corps/WWII



Born in West Virginia, Hershel "Woody" Williams enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in the spring of 1943. He was assigned to a tank battalion and later trained as a demolition man and in the use of the flame thrower. During July and August 1944 he participated in action against the Japanese at Guam, and in October he rejoined Company C. His next and final campaign was on Iwo Jima where he earned the Medal of Honor.

Landing on Feb. 21, 1945, Williams distinguished himself by volunteering his services to assist Marine tanks and infantry maneuver through a maze of reinforced concrete pillboxes, buried mines, and the unforgiving black volcanic sand. Williams daringly went forward alone to attempt the reduction of devastating machine gun fire from the unyielding positions.

Covered by only four riflemen, he fought desperately for four hours under terrific enemy small-arms fire and repeatedly returned to his own lines to prepare demolition charges and obtain serviced flame throwers, struggling back, frequently to the rear of hostile emplacements, to wipe out one position after another. At one point he was mounted on a pillbox and inserted the nozzle of his flame thrower through the air vent, killing the occupants and silencing the gun. On another, he charged enemy riflemen who attempted to stop him with bayonets and destroyed them with a burst of flame from his weapon.

He was wounded in action during the campaign on March 6, 1945, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart.

In September 1945 he returned to the U.S. and on Oct. 5 he was presented the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman at the White House. He retired at the rank of Chief Warrant Officer in 1969.

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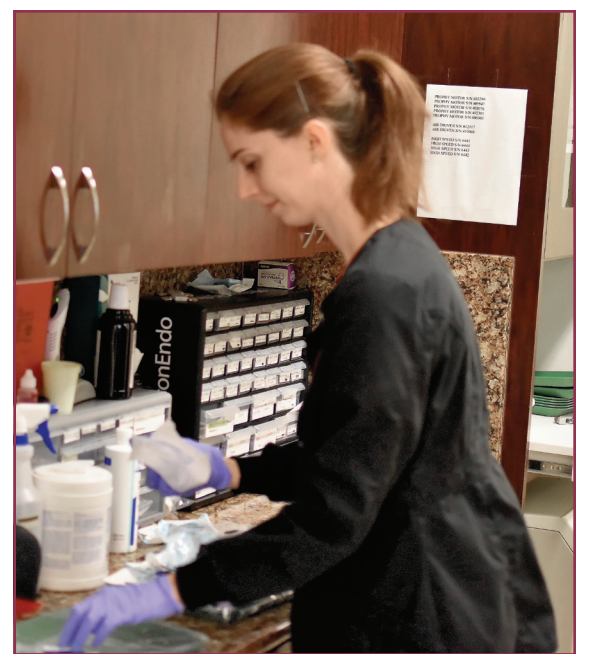
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