

HB

245

Alaska State Legislature

Chair

Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Member

Labor and Commerce Committee
State Affairs Committee
Econ Dev, Int'l Trade & Tourism
Education Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee

Finance Subcommittees

Labor and Workforce Development
Community and Economic Development
Military and Veterans' Affairs



A Communication From

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN

Chairman

House Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee

E-Mail: Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us

"Bob Lynn's Alaska Blog" AlaskaDistrict31.blogspot.com

Session:

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Phone: (907) 465-4931

Fax: (907) 465-4316

Toll Free: (800) 870-4391

Interim:

716 W. 4th Ave., #650

Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

Phone: (907) 269-0205

Fax: (907) 269-0207

HB 245

Veterans' Vehicle Fees/Taxes

HB 245 will allow DMV to issue special registration plates for one noncommercial motor vehicle to a person who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Currently there are no Congressional Medal of Honor recipients in Alaska but that could change at any time. The bill will also waive any registration or plate fees for the Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and deletes the \$30.00 license plate fee for Purple Heart recipients.

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March 29, 2006

To: Senator Gene Therriault, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee

Fr: Representative Bob Lynn

Re: CSHB 245

"An Act relating to motor vehicle registration plates and fees for Purple Heart recipients and Congressional Medal of Honor recipients; and providing for an effective date."

Thank you for scheduling HB 245 in Senate State Affairs Committee. Attached is a copy of the Bill and supporting documents. It's possible we might have a CS that we will want the Committee to adopt but still not sure at this point and will bring one down to you tomorrow if that happens.

Bob Lynn _____

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
 Bill Version: CSHB 245(FIN)
 (H) Publish Date: 2/10/06

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Administration
 Title: "An Act relating to registration and licensee fees.." RDU: Division of Motor Vehicles
 Component: Motor Vehicles
 Sponsor: (H) Special Committee MVA
 Requester: (H) Special Committee MVA Component No.: 2348

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0					
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1156 Rcpt Svcs	5.0					
TOTAL	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill will eliminate the 1-time fee paid by Recipients of the Purple Heart for special request license plates. We project 50 new applicants annually. (50 x \$30.00 = \$1500.00 decrease in revenue)

This bill will also allow expand the free vehicle registration to include recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor (CMoH), current Prisoner's of War and the spouse of a current Prisoner of War. We project a small number of applicants above the 21 Former Prisoner of War vehicle registrations recorded today (5 X \$100. = \$500. decrease in revenue)

The one time contractual cost will provide necessary programming changes for the sale of the Purple Heart plate. Also registration and registration renewal fee changes of vehicles owned by CMoH recipients.

Prepared by: Duane Bannock, Director Phone 269 5008
 Division: Motor Vehicles Date/Time 1/30/2006 4:00pm
 Approved by: Mike Tibbles, Deputy Commissioner Date _____
 Agency: Department of Administration

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

APRIL 13, 2005



REPORT NUMBER 05.252

VEHICLE REGISTRATION AND LICENSE PLATE PROVISIONS FOR CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS AND PRISONERS OF WAR

PREPARED FOR REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN

BY PATRICIA YOUNG, MANAGER

You wished to know the number of states that offer free vehicle registration or license plates to recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. You also wished to know the number of states that provide similarly for current prisoners of war or their spouses.

The attached table shows the results of our search of state laws on LEXIS. As you will see, we identified 31 states that offer special license plates to Medal of Honor recipients. Of these, all but one waive registration fees and provide such plates without charge or at a reduced rate. Four also specify that a recipient's surviving spouse is eligible for the plates.

We identified 40 states, including Alaska, that offer special license plates to former prisoners of war. All but seven waive registration fees and provide the plates without charge or at a reduced rate. Twenty-nine specify that a prisoner's surviving spouse is also eligible.

Although some address persons missing in action, *none of the state laws we identified address current prisoners of war or their spouses.*¹

I hope you find this information to be useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or need additional information.

¹ Some states define "prisoner of war" narrowly: Georgia law, for example, defines the term as a veteran who was held by enemy forces while serving in the U.S. military in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War. In a number of states, however, the term is defined more broadly. Alabama law, for example defines the term as a person who, as a member of the U.S. armed forces, or while serving with a formal U.S. ally force, or as a U.S. civilian, was held . . . during "any armed conflict by forces hostile to the United States." Provisions for current prisoners would likely require a similarly broad definition.



Medal of Honor Breakdown

(By War and Service - As of May 2003)

War	Totals	Army	Navy	Marines	Air Force	Coast Guard	Posthumous
Civil War	1522	1198	307	17	0	0	32
Indian Campaigns	426	426	0	0	0	0	13
Korea 1871	15	0	9	6	0	0	0
Spanish American	110	31	64	15	0	0	1
Samoa	4	0	1	3	0	0	0
Philippine Insurrection	80	69	5	6	0	0	4
Philippine Outlaws	6	1	5	0	0	0	0
Boxer Rebellion	59	4	22	33	0	0	1
Mexican Campaign	56	1	46	9	0	0	0
Haiti	6	0	0	6	0	0	0
Dominican Republic	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
World War I	124	95	21	8	0	0	33
Haiti 1919-1920	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Nicaraguan Campaign	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
World War II	464	324	57	82	0	1	266
Korean War	131	78	7	42	4	0	94
Vietnam	245	159	16	57	13	0	154
Somalia	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
Non-Combat	193	3	185	5	0	0	5
Unknowns	9	9	0	0	0	0	9
<hr/>							
GRAND TOTALS	3459	2400	745	296	17	1	614

These totals reflect the total number of Medals of Honor awarded. Nineteen (19) men received a second award; fourteen of these men received two separate Medals for two separate actions, five received both the Navy and the Army Medals of Honor for the same action. The total number of Medal of Honor recipients is 3,408.


Total Medals of Honor awarded: 3,459

Total number of Medal of Honor recipients: 3,440

Total number of double recipients: 19

As of 13 April 2003, there are 137 living Medal of Honor recipients.

Source: Congressional Medal of Honor Society, 40 Patriots Point Rd, Mt Pleasant
SC 29464

	Return to CMH Online
	<i>Last updated 3 October 2003</i>

A Brief History - The Medal of Honor*

The first formal system for rewarding acts of individual gallantry by the nation's fighting men was established by General George Washington on August 7, 1782. Designed to recognize "any singularly meritorious action," the award consisted of a purple cloth heart. Records show that only three persons received the ward: Sergeant Elijah Churchill, Sergeant William Brown, and Sergeant Daniel Bissel Jr.

The Badge of Military Merit, as it was called, fell into oblivion until 1932, when General Douglas MacArthur, then Army Chief of Staff, pressed for its revival. Officially reinstated on February 22, 1932, the now familiar Purple Heart was at first an Army award, given to those who had been wounded in World War I or who possessed a Meritorious Service Citation Certificate. In 1943, the order was amended to include personnel of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Coverage was eventually extended to include all services and "any civilian national" wounded while serving with the Armed Forces.

Although the Badge of Military Merit fell into disuse after the Revolutionary War, the idea of a decoration for individual gallantry remained through the early 1800s. In 1847, after the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, a "certificate of merit" was established for any soldier who distinguished himself in action. No medal went with the honor. After the Mexican-American War, the award was discontinued, which meant there was no military award with which to recognize the nation's fighting men.

Early in the Civil War, a medal for individual valor was proposed to General-in-Chief of the Army Winfield Scott. But Scott felt medals smacked of European affectation and killed the idea.

The medal found support in the Navy, however, where it was felt recognition of courage in strife was needed. Public Resolution 82, containing a provision for a Navy medal of valor, was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on December 21, 1861. The medal was "to be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen, and Marines as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry and other seamanlike qualities during the present war."

Shortly after this, a resolution similar in wording was introduced on behalf of the Army. Signed into law July 12, 1862, the measure provided for awarding a medal of honor "to such noncommissioned officers and privates as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldierlike qualities, during the present insurrection."

Although it was created for the Civil War, Congress made the Medal of Honor a permanent decoration in 1863.

Almost 3,400 men and one woman have received the award for heroic actions in the nation's battles since that time.

* Quoted from "Armed Forces Decorations and Awards," a publication of the American Forces Information Service. Copies of the pamphlet are available upon request (in print format only), via the "DefenseLINK Comment/Question Form" in the "Questions" section.

- Updated 22 Jun 1998
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The Nation's Highest Military Award

The Medal of Honor

The Bravest of the Brave

World War II Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Lieutenant Audie L. Murphy



Major General "Iron Mike" O'Daniel, CG, 3rd Infantry Division, presents the Medal of Honor to Lieutenant Audie L. Murphy for heroism during World War II.



AUDIE L. MURPHY

AMERICA'S MOST DECORATED WAR
HERO



Audie Murphy was born on June 20, 1924, near Kingston (Hunt County) Texas, one of thirteen children. On June 30, 1942, at the Federal Building in Dallas, Texas, Audie was inducted into the United States Army-Paratroopers. Audie had initially applied to the Marines but was turned down as being underweight and too short. He received his basic training at Camp Wolters, Texas, and advanced infantry training was carried out at Ft. Meade, Maryland. On March 3, 1943, Audie was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division. On May 7, 1943, he was promoted to Private First Class; through subsequent promotions including Corporal, Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, and finally on October 14, 1944, was given a battlefield commission to Second Lieutenant. He was promoted to First Lieutenant after his Medal of Honor action.

Before his 21st birthday, and after more than two years overseas, most of it front line duty, Audie Murphy returned home at the end of World War II with every decoration for valor this country could bestow. He participated in nine battle campaigns, including participating in the assault landings at Sicily and Southern France. His fame earned him the title of "The most decorated combat soldier of World War II."

Audie's string of decorations began on March 2, 1944 with the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valorous conduct in action against the enemy on the Anzio Beachhead, Italy. This was followed with the First Oak Leaf Cluster on the Bronze Star Medal for his exemplary conduct in ground combat on or about 8 May, 1944. Also at this time, Audie was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge.

After landing near Ramatuelle in Southern France, Audie earned the Distinguished Service Cross on 15 August, 1944. Audie Murphy advanced inland with his squad but was halted by intense machine gun and small arms fire from a boulder covered hill to his front. Acting alone, he obtained a light machine gun and in the ensuing duel, he was able to silence the enemy weapon. Killing two of it's crew and wounding the third. As he proceeded further up the draw, two Germans advanced toward him they were quickly killed. Still alone, Audie then dashed further up the draw toward the enemy strong point disregarding the hail of bullets directed at him. Closing in, he wounded two more Germans with Carbine fire, killed two others in a fire fight, and forced the remaining five to surrender. But it was during this action that took the life of his dear friend, Lattie Tipton. So devastated by this loss, that Audie co-dedicated his autobiographical book "To Hell and Back" to PVT Lattie Tipton and to PVT Joe Sieja who was killed in action on the Anzio Beachhead in January, 1944



On the morning of 2 October 1944, near the Cleurie Quarry, France, Audie inched his way over rugged terrain toward an enemy machine gun which had fired upon a group of American Officers on reconnaissance. Getting to within fifteen yards of the German gun, Audie stood up, and disregarding a burst of enemy fire, flung two hand grenades into the position, killing four Germans and wounding three more thus destroying the position. For this action, Audie was awarded the Silver Star. Just three days later, on October 5, 1944, on a hill in the Vosges Mountains near Le Tholy, France, he earned an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star. Carrying an SCR536 radio, and alone, Audie crawled fifty yards under severe enemy machine gun and rifle fire, to a point 200 yards from a strongly entrenched enemy. For an hour Audie Murphy directed artillery fire upon the enemy, killing fifteen Germans and inflicting approximately thirty-five casualties.

Audie Murphy's three Purple Hearts recognize wounds he received on 15 September 15, 1944, in his action near Genevreuille, France, October 26, 1944 in action near Les Rouges, Eaux, France, January 25, 1945, in action in the Colmar Pocket.

Audie Murphy received a severe hip wound from a German mortar on October 26, 1944. Tired of the monotony of hospital life, he took it upon himself to rejoin Company B. He was still in a state of convalescence on January 26, 1945 when Audie earned the Nation's highest tribute for action in the Riedwihr Woods near Holtzwihr, France. The Third Division was engaged in fierce fighting in the Colmar Pocket which consisted of a heavily fortified bulge stretching from the Rhine into France. At midnight on January 25, Company B moved through the Riedwihr Woods, but fierce fighting reduced the company to two officers and about 28 men. Despite five replacements, the company remained critically under strength. As the senior ranking officer, Audie was placed in charge of the company and was ordered to advance to the edge of the forest and hold the line until relieved. Company B was supported by two tank destroyers from the 601st Tank battalion which were attached to the 15th Infantry, but they would soon be out of action.



The frozen ground was covered with 10-12 inches of snow; it was impossible for the men to dig in. Audie's company was strung along a three hundred yard front at the edge of the woods. Company B was in a defensive position when at 1400 hours, on January 26, 1945, the Germans began a fierce attack from Holtzwihr. This assault consisted of six heavy Jagdpanther tanks supported by approximately 250 German infantry attired in white snow capes. The first tank destroyer slid into a drainage ditch and could not extricate itself. The second TD received a direct hit from a German 88, killing the commander and gunner. Seeing that the situation was desperate, Audie ordered his men to fall back to an alternate position. At this time, Audie began calling in artillery supported by a field telephone through Battalion Headquarters. With his ammunition depleted, Audie decided to mount the burning TD and employ its .50 caliber machine gun. After removing the dead TD commander, Audie sprayed deadly fire upon the German infantry. With the TD in danger of blowing up at any moment, the Germans gave it a wide berth. The black smoke streaming from the TD made it difficult for the Germans to see Audie, but it also reduced his view of the advancing infantry. At this point, Audie called in more artillery support even though it was dangerously close to his own position. For an hour, Audie managed to kill or wound approximately 50 to 100 Germans and confused the rest as to the source of the deadly fire. The German tanks, lacking infantry support, were forced to withdraw. Audie jumped from the burning TD only to hear it explode seconds later. Thus ended one of the most famous Medal of Honor actions of World War II.

Following the presentation of the Medal of Honor on June 2, 1945, at an airfield near Werfen, Austria, Audie was also awarded the Legion of Merit. In addition to the US awards, Audie received the French Legion of Honor (Grade of Chevalier), the French Croix du Guerre with Silver Star, the French Croix du Guerre with Palm and the Belgium Croix du Guerre 1940 with Palm. Despite the weight and burden of his medals, Audie always stated that the "the real heroes were the ones with the wooden crosses."



On July 14, 1950, Audie was sworn in as a member of the Texas National Guard's 36th Infantry Division and promoted to the rank of Captain. He was promoted to the rank of Major on February 14, 1956.

Audie Murphy's fame earned him the cover of Life Magazine on July 16, 1945. His popular appeal led him to a film career in Hollywood. He was in forty-four movies, mainly westerns. His most noteworthy were "To Hell and Back," "The Red Badge of Courage," and "The Unforgiven."

Audie was a passenger in an Aero Commander 680E when it crashed in the Appalachian Mountains 12 miles northwest of Roanoke, Virginia on Memorial Day weekend, May 28, 1971. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. Audie's resting place is one of the most frequently visited sites at Arlington. There were many tributes paid to Audie, mostly after his untimely death. In the end, Audie was destined to cast a longer shadow than most Medal of Honor recipients.

[Visit the Audie L. Murphy Medal of Honor Tribute](#)



Audie Murphy's Military Award List

Military Service Number 01 692 509

Medal of Honor

Distinguished Service Cross

Silver Star with First Oak Leaf Cluster

Legion of Merit

Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device and First Oak Leaf Cluster

Purple Heart with Second Oak Leaf Cluster

U.S. Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal

Good Conduct Medal

Distinguished Unit Emblem with First Oak Leaf Cluster

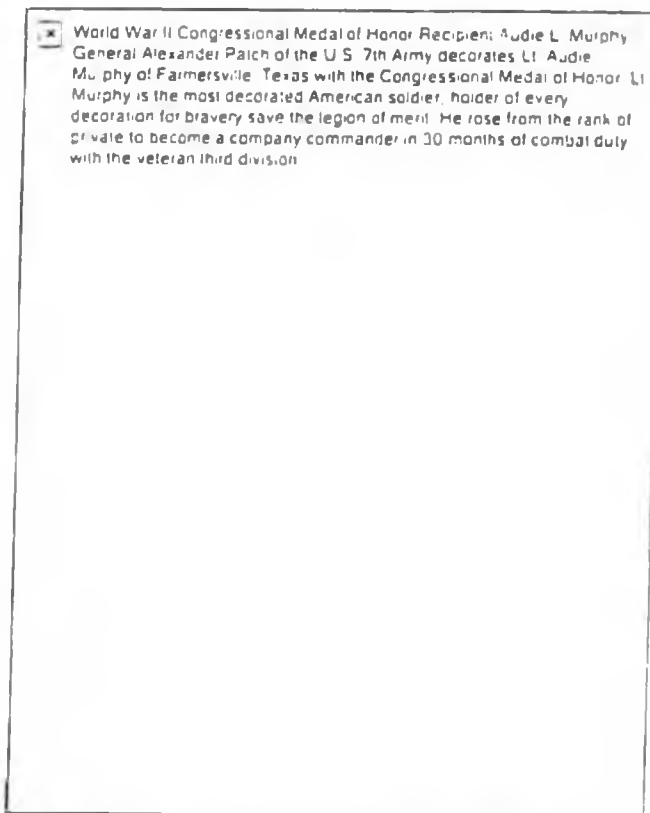
American Campaign Medal



European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with One Silver Star, Four Bronze Service Stars (representing nine campaigns) and one Bronze Arrowhead (representing assault landing at Sicily and Southern France)
 World War II Victory Medal
 Army of Occupation Medal with Germany Clasp
 Armed Forces Reserve Medal
 Combat Infantry Badge
 Marksman Badge with Rifle Bar
 Expert Badge with Bayonet Bar
 French Fourragere in Colors of the Croix de Guerre
 French Legion of Honor, Grade of Chevalier
 French Croix de Guerre With Silver Star
 French Croix de Guerre with Palm
 Medal of Liberated France
 Belgian Croix de Guerre 1940 Palm



Reprinted from a letter dated 7 Sept 1979, from the Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General and the Adjutant General Center, Washington, D.C. 20314. Subject: Maj Audie Murphy - Authorization for Awards and Decorations



World War II Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient: Audie L. Murphy
 General Alexander Patch of the U.S. 7th Army decorates Lt. Audie Murphy of Farmersville, Texas with the Congressional Medal of Honor. Lt. Murphy is the most decorated American soldier, holder of every decoration for bravery save the legion of merit. He rose from the rank of private to become a company commander in 30 months of combat duty with the veteran third division.

General Alexander Patch of the U.S. 7th Army decorates Lt. Audie Murphy of Farmersville, Texas with the Congressional Medal of Honor. Lt. Murphy is the most decorated American soldier, holder of every decoration for bravery save the legion of merit. He rose from the rank of private to become a company commander in 30 months of combat duty with the veteran third division.

Official Narrative
 For Medal of Honor Recipient

MURPHY, AUDIE L.

CITATION: 2ND Lt. Murphy commanded Company B, which was attacked by 6 tanks and waves of infantry. 2ND Lt. Murphy ordered his men to withdraw to prepared positions in a woods, while he remained forward at his command post and continued to give fire directions to the artillery



by telephone. Behind him, to his right, 1 of our tank destroyers received a direct hit and began to burn. Its crew withdrew to the woods. 2ND Lt. Murphy continued to direct artillery fire which killed large numbers of the advancing enemy infantry. With the enemy tanks abreast of his position, 2ND Lt. Murphy climbed on the burning tank destroyer, which was in danger of blowing up at any moment, and employed its .50 caliber machine gun against the enemy. He was alone and exposed to German fire from 3 sides, but his deadly fire killed dozens of Germans and caused their infantry attack to waver. The enemy tanks, losing infantry support, began to fall back. For an hour the Germans tried every available weapon to eliminate 2ND Lt. Murphy, but he continued to hold his position and wiped out a squad which was trying to creep up unnoticed on his right flank. Germans reached as close as 10 yards, only to be mowed down by his fire. He received a leg wound, but ignored it and continued the single-handed fight until his ammunition was exhausted. He then made his way to his company, refused medical attention, and organized the company in a counterattack which forced the Germans to withdraw. His directing of artillery fire wiped out many of the enemy, he killed or wounded about 50. 2ND Lt. Murphy's indomitable courage and his refusal to give an inch of ground saved his company from possible encirclement and destruction, and enabled it to hold the woods which had been the enemy's objective.



Audie Murphy was a successful movie star earning his own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame



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The Nation's Highest Military Award

The Medal of Honor

The Bravest of the Brave

**Vietnam War Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient
Major Bernard Francis Fisher, USAF**



Major Bernard Fisher was awarded the Medal of Honor, the first airman in the Vietnam War to receive it. It was presented by President Lyndon Baines Johnson at the White House, Jan. 19, 1967.



**MAJOR BERNARD FRANCIS FISHER
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in :



Rank and organization: Major, U.S. Air Force, 1st Air Commandos.

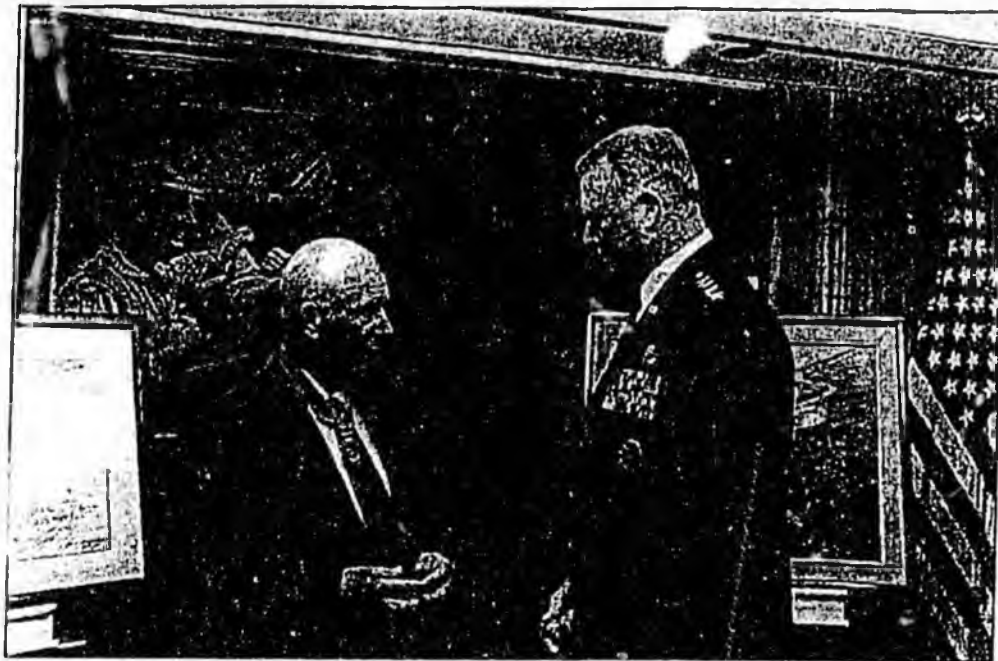
Place and date: Bien Hoa and Pleiku, Vietnam, 10 March 1966.

Entered service at: Kuna, Idaho.

Born: 11 January 1927, San Bernardino, Calif.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. On that date, the special forces camp at A Shau was under attack by 2,000 North Vietnamese Army regulars. Hostile troops had positioned themselves between the airstrip and the camp. Other hostile troops had surrounded the camp and were continuously raking it with automatic weapons fire from the surrounding hills. The tops of the 1,500-foot hills were obscured by an 800 foot ceiling, limiting aircraft maneuverability and forcing pilots to operate within range of hostile gun positions, which often were able to fire down on the attacking aircraft. During the battle, Maj. Fisher observed a fellow airman crash land on the battle-torn airstrip. In the belief that the downed pilot was seriously injured and in imminent danger of capture, Maj. Fisher announced his intention to land on the airstrip to effect a rescue. Although aware of the extreme danger and likely failure of such an attempt, he elected to continue. Directing his own air cover, he landed his aircraft and taxied almost the full length of the runway, which was littered with battle debris and parts of an exploded aircraft. While effecting a successful rescue of the downed pilot, heavy ground fire was observed, with 19 bullets striking his aircraft. In the face of the withering ground fire, he applied power and gained enough speed to lift-off at the overrun of the airstrip. Maj. Fisher's profound concern for his fellow airman, and at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Air Force and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

Vietnam War Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Major Bernard Francis Fisher, USAF



Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Bernard Fisher (USAF, Ret.) and USAF Chief of Staff General Mike Ryan share a moment during a ceremony which took place at the Pentagon on March 9, 1999.

If Bernie Fisher went into the airstrip at A Shau, his chances of coming out again would not be good...

[Into the Valley of Fire](#)

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The Nation's Highest Military Award

The Medal of Honor

The Bravest of the Brave

World War I Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient
Sgt. Alvin C. York, US Army



Alvin C. York Wearing Congressional Medal - March 4, 1961
Famed World War I hero, Sgt. Alvin C. York, (left) was "mightily grateful" when he learned that the Internal Revenue Bureau had agreed on March 18th, to settle his \$25,000 tax debt. The Revenue Bureau's announcement followed a national drive started by House Speaker Sam Rayburn, who donated \$1,000 himself, to raise the money for Sgt York's income tax debt. In this March photo, York's coveted Congressional Medal of Honor is admired by his grandson Larry Jackson York, (right) Pall Mall, Tennessee

U.S. Constitution



MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

Iraq

*SMITH, PAUL R.

Rank and Organization: Sergeant First Class, United States Army

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with an armed enemy near Baghdad International Airport, Baghdad, Iraq on 4 April 2003. On that day, Sergeant First Class Smith was engaged in the construction of a prisoner of war holding area when his Task Force was violently attacked by a company-sized enemy force. Realizing the vulnerability of over 100 fellow soldiers, Sergeant First Class Smith quickly organized a hasty defense consisting of two platoons of soldiers, one Bradley Fighting Vehicle and three armored personnel carriers. As the fight developed, Sergeant First Class Smith braved hostile enemy fire to personally engage the enemy with hand grenades and anti-tank weapons, and organized the evacuation of three wounded soldiers from an armored personnel carrier struck by a rocket propelled grenade and a 60mm mortar round. Fearing the enemy would overrun their defenses, Sergeant First Class Smith moved under withering enemy fire to man a .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a damaged armored personnel carrier. In total disregard for his own life, he maintained his exposed position in order to engage the attacking enemy force. During this action, he was mortally wounded. His courageous actions helped defeat the enemy attack, and resulted in as many as 50 enemy soldiers killed, while allowing the safe withdrawal of numerous wounded soldiers. Sergeant First Class Smith's extraordinary heroism and uncommon valor are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Third Infantry Division "Rock of the Marne," and the United States Army.



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Last updated 4 April 2005

***For God & Country
By Ed Knoebel
Post 27 Service Officer***

I have been a Service Officer for the past thirty years and wanted to pass on some things that I have learned in that time.

Do you know what the oldest military decoration in the world is? It was established by General George Washington at Newburgh, NY in August 1782, during the Revolutionary War and is awarded in the name of the President of the United States. The recipient of this badge is permitted to pass guards and sentinels without challenge. It is specifically a combat decoration and is the only medal that can not be given to you for something you have done, but is awarded to members of the armed forces who are wounded in war by the enemy.

Do I have you guessing? The answer is The Purple Heart. There is an organization, formed in 1932 known as the "Military Order of the Purple Heart," that is composed exclusively of Purple Heart recipients. It is the only veterans service organization comprised strictly of "combat" veterans.

If you are like me, and forgot to duck, you should be registered with the VA and be listed as a Category II or III. If you haven't registered you are missing out on having to pay nothing (or a very minimal amount) of money out of your own pocket for your medicine and you should also be eligible to receive combat pay (CRSC). If you have not registered yet ask your service officer for a DD2860 Form and that will get you going to start receiving the benefits you deserve and paid a high price for.

The next time you see a Purple Heart recipient, take the time to stop give a snappy salute and thank them for the sacrifice that he or she made for God and Country.