

Addendum to Firing Close Artillery Support

By Jerry Granberg

The war story regarding the pinned down patrol in Cambodia which I wrote had a member of the rescue mission receive the Medal of Honor for his role in that mission. My wife gave me a book for Christmas titled "Ordinary Heroes, A Tribute to Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients" by Timothy Wallis. This is the citation for Louis R. Rocco from page 155 of the above book.

Rank and organization:

Warrant Officer (then Sergeant First Class), U.S.Army, Advisory Team 162, U.S. Military Assistance Command.

Place and Date:

Northeast of Katum, Republic of Vietnam, 24 May 1970.

Entered Service at:

Los Angeles, Calif.

Born:

19 November 1938

Albuquerque, N.Mex.

Citation:

WO Rocco distinguished himself when he volunteered to accompany a Medical evacuation team on an urgent mission to evacuate 8 critically Wounded Army of the Republic of Vietnam personnel. As the helicopter approached the landing zone, it became the target for intense enemy automatic weapons fire. Disregarding his own safety, WO Rocco identified and placed accurate suppressive fire on the enemy positions as the aircraft descended toward the landing zone. Sustaining major damage from the enemy fire, the aircraft was forced to crash land, causing WO Rocco to sustain a fractured wrist and hip and severely bruised back. Ignoring his injuries, he extracted the survivors from the burning wreckage, sustaining burns to his own body. Despite intense enemy fire, WO Rocco carried each unconscious man across approximately 20 meters of exposed terrain to the Army Of the Republic Vietnam perimeter. On each trip, his severely burned hands and broken wrist caused excruciating pain, but the lives of the unconscious crash survivors were more important than his personal discomfort, and he continued his rescue efforts. Once inside the friendly position, WO Rocco helped administer first aid to his wounded comrades until his wounds and burns caused him to collapse and lose consciousness. His bravery under fire and intense devotion to duty were directly responsible for saving 3 of his fellow soldiers from certain death. His unparalleled bravery in the face of enemy fire, his complete disregard for his own pain and injuries, and his performance were far above and beyond the call of duty and were in keeping with the highest traditions of self-sacrifice and courage of the military service.