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GENERAL ORDERS

No. 2022-24

HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON, DC, 14 October 2022

**AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR**

**Specialist Five Dwight W. Birdwell**

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded in the name of Congress the Medal of Honor to

**Specialist Five Dwight W. Birdwell**  
**United States Army**

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

**Specialist Five Dwight W. Birdwell** distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving with C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 25th Infantry Division in the Republic of Vietnam on 31 January, 1968. On this date, C Troop was ordered to move south to help repel an enemy attack on Tan Son Nhut Airbase. As the C Troop column of tanks and armored personnel carriers approached the west gate of Tan Son Nhut Airbase, it came under intense enemy fire from a building to its right. Unbeknown to C Troop, it had driven directly into an enemy force consisting of three battalions. The column tried to push through the initial attack but the lead tank, crippled by a rocket-propelled grenade explosion, was blocking the way forward. C Troop immediately came under heavy enemy fire from both sides of the road. Specialist Five Birdwell, upon seeing that his tank commander was wounded by enemy fire, immediately went to his aid. Under intense enemy fire, he lowered the injured tank commander to the ground, and moved him to safety. Specialist Five Birdwell then, with complete disregard for his own safety mounted the tank and assumed the tank commander's position. Standing in the tank commander's hatch with the upper half of his body exposed to heavy enemy fire, Specialist Five Birdwell used the tank's .50 caliber machine gun and 90mm main gun to suppress the enemy attack. With the ammunition for the 90mm main gun exhausted, he continued to fire the .50 caliber machine gun until it overheated. At this point, Specialist Five Birdwell, rather than abandoning his position, continued to engage the enemy with his M-16 rifle, sometimes exposing his entire body to enemy fire in order to engage the enemy from a better vantage point. When a U.S. helicopter crashed nearby, Specialist Five Birdwell, under withering enemy fire, dismounted and moved to the helicopter where he retrieved two M-60 machine guns and ammunition. After giving one M-60 and ammunition to a fellow soldier, he remounted his tank and used the other M-60 to again engage the enemy. Specialist Five Birdwell continued to engage the enemy with complete disregard for his own safety until the M-60 he was firing was hit by enemy fire. Specialist Five Birdwell, now wounded in the face, neck, chest, and arms, dismounted the tank but refused to be medically evacuated. Instead, Specialist Five Birdwell, under enemy fire, rallied fellow soldiers to advance toward the front of the armored column where they set up a defensive position by a large tree. From this position, he and the other soldiers engaged the enemy with M-16 fire and

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grenades. As the enemy fire lessened, Specialist Five Birdwell gathered ammunition from disabled vehicles and helped wounded soldiers move to safer positions. His leadership and tenacity under fire inspired the other C Troop soldiers to continue fighting against the superior enemy force, and directly contributed to the enemy's ultimate defeat. Specialist Five Birdwell's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

[AHRC-PDP-A]

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

**JAMES C. MCCONVILLE**  
*General, United States Army*  
*Chief of Staff*

Official:

  
**MARK F. AVERILL**  
*Administrative Assistant to the*  
*Secretary of the Army*

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