

GENERAL ORDERS

No. 84

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 31 December 1968

AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR



By direction of the President, under the Joint Resolution of Congress approved 12 July 1862 (amended by act of 3 March 1863, act of 9 July 1918 and act of 25 July 1963), the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty is awarded posthumously by the Department of the Army in the name of Congress to:



Captain *Riley L. Pitts*, Infantry, United States Army, who distinguished himself by exceptional heroism while serving as Company Commander of Company C, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, during an airmobile assault in the vicinity of Ap Dong, Republic of Vietnam, on 31 October 1967. Immediately after his company landed in the area, several Viet Cong opened fire with automatic weapons. Despite the enemy fire, Captain *Pitts* forcefully led an assault which overran the enemy positions. Shortly thereafter, Captain *Pitts* was ordered to move his unit to the north to reinforce another company heavily engaged against a strong enemy force. As Captain *Pitts*' company moved forward to engage the enemy, intense fire was received from three directions, including fire from four enemy bunkers, two of which were within 15 meters of Captain *Pitts*' position. The severity of the incoming fire prevented Captain *Pitts* from maneuvering his company. His rifle fire proving ineffective against the enemy due to the dense jungle foliage, he picked up an M-79 grenade launcher and began pinpointing the targets. Seizing a Chinese Communist grenade which had been taken from a captured Viet Cong's web gear, Captain *Pitts* lobbed the grenade at a bunker to his front, but it hit the dense jungle foliage and rebounded. Without hesitation, Captain *Pitts* threw himself on top of the grenade which, fortunately, failed to explode. Captain *Pitts* then directed the repositioning of the company to permit friendly artillery to be fired. Upon completion of the artillery fire mission, Captain *Pitts* again led his men toward the enemy positions, personally killing at least one more Viet Cong. The jungle growth still prevented effective fire to be placed on the enemy bunkers. Captain *Pitts*, displaying complete disregard for his life and personal safety, quickly moved to a position which permitted him to place effective fire on the enemy. He maintained a continuous fire, pinpointing the enemy's fortified positions, while at the same time directing and urging his men forward, until he was mortally wounded. Captain *Pitts*' conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity at the cost of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the armed forces of his country.



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By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

Official:

KENNETH G. WICKHAM,
Major General, United States Army,
The Adjutant General.

W. C. WESTMORELAND,
General, United States Army,
Chief of Staff.

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