

GENERAL ORDERS

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 24 January 1969

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:



First Lieutenant *Stephen E. Karopczyc*, United States Army. While leading the 3d Platoon, Company A, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, on a flanking maneuver against a superior enemy force in Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 12 March 1967, Lieutenant *Karopczyc* observed that his lead element was engaged with a small enemy unit along his route. Aware of the importance of quickly pushing through to the main enemy force in order to provide relief for a hard-pressed friendly platoon, he dashed through the intense enemy fire into the open and hurled colored smoke grenades to designate the foe for attack by helicopter gunships. He moved among his men to embolden their advance, and he guided their attack by marking enemy locations with bursts of fire from his own weapon. His forceful leadership quickened the advance, forced the enemy to retreat, and allowed his unit to close with the main hostile force. Continuing the deployment of his platoon, he constantly exposed himself as he ran from man to man to give encouragement and to direct their efforts. A shot from an enemy sniper struck him above the heart but he refused aid for this serious injury, plugging the bleeding wound with his finger until it could be properly dressed. As the enemy strength mounted, he ordered his men to organize a defensive position in and around some abandoned bunkers where he conducted a defense against the increasingly strong enemy attacks. After several hours, a North Vietnamese soldier hurled a handgrenade to within a few feet of Lieutenant *Karopczyc* and two other wounded men. Although his position protected him, he leaped up to cover the deadly grenade with a steel helmet. It exploded to drive fragments into Lieutenant *Karopczyc's* legs, but his action prevented further injury to the two wounded men. Severely weakened by his multiple wounds, he continued to direct the actions of his men until he succumbed two hours later. Lieutenant *Karopczyc's* heroic leadership, unyielding perseverance, and selfless devotion to his men were directly responsible for the successful and spirited action of his platoon throughout the battle and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army.



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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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