

GENERAL ORDERS

No. 24

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 17 April 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 by the Department of the Army in the name of the Congress to:

Staff Sergeant *Joe R. Hooper*, (then Sergeant), United States Army, who distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity on 21 February 1968, while serving as squad leader with Company D, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 501st Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, near Hue, Republic of Vietnam, Company D was assaulting a heavily defended enemy position along a river bank when it encountered a withering hail of fire from rockets, machineguns and automatic weapons. Staff Sergeant *Hooper* rallied several men and stormed across the river, overrunning several bunkers on the opposite shore. Thus inspired, the rest of the company moved to the attack. With utter disregard for his own safety, he moved out under the intense fire again and pulled back the wounded, moving them to safety. During this act Staff Sergeant *Hooper* was seriously wounded, but he refused medical aid and returned to his men. With the relentless enemy fire disrupting the attack, he singlehandedly stormed three enemy bunkers, destroying them with handgrenades and rifle fire, and shot two enemy soldiers who had attacked and wounded the chaplain. Leading his men forward in a sweep of the area, Staff Sergeant *Hooper* destroyed three buildings housing enemy riflemen. At this point he was attacked by a North Vietnamese officer whom he fatally wounded with his bayonet. Finding his men under heavy fire from a house to the front, he proceeded alone to the building, killing its occupants with rifle fire and grenades. By now his initial body wound had been compounded by grenade fragments, yet, despite the multiple wounds and loss of blood, he continued to lead his men against the intense enemy fire. As his squad reached the final line of enemy resistance, it received devastating fire from four bunkers in line on its left flank. Staff Sergeant *Hooper* gathered several handgrenades and raced down a small trench which ran the length of the bunker line, tossing grenades into each bunker as he passed by, killing all but two of the occupants. With these positions destroyed, he concentrated on the last bunkers facing his men, destroying the first with an incendiary grenade and neutralizing two more by rifle fire. He then raced across an open field, still under enemy fire, to rescue

GO 24

a wounded man who was trapped in a trench. Upon reaching the man, he was faced by an armed enemy soldier whom he killed with a pistol. Moving his comrade to safety and returning to his men, he neutralized the final pocket of enemy resistance by fatally wounding three North Vietnamese officers with rifle fire. Staff Sergeant *Hooper* then established a final line and reorganized his men, not accepting treatment until this was accomplished and not consenting to evacuation until the following morning. His supreme valor, inspiring leadership and heroic self-sacrifice were directly responsible for the company's success and provided a lasting example in personal courage for every man on the field. Staff Sergeant *Hooper's* actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army. (This award supersedes the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to Staff Sergeant *Joe R. Hooper* for extraordinary heroism on 21 February 1968 as announced in General Orders Number 2749, Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, dated 7 June 1968.)

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.

Distribution:

To be distributed in accordance with DA Form 12-4 requirements.