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The Medal of Honor: Transcending Perceptions of U.S. Foreign Policy and War

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The Medal of Honor: Transcending Perceptions of U.S.

Foreign Policy and War

by

Taylor Annese Hathorn

This thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Chancellor’s Honors Program with the degree of

Honors: Journalism and Electronic Media, Business Administration

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to show the way in which the Medal of Honor alters the media coverage of a war. Using media coverage as the basis for public perception and opinion this thesis will show the ways in which the Medal of Honor transcends the typical coverage of war and the role it plays in doing so for each specific action.

This thesis will attempt to answer the question: How does media coverage vary between battle coverage and the Medal of Honor coverage? Thus highlighting the ways in which the Medal of Honor transcends public perceptions of U.S. foreign policy and war. I will be arguing that this media coverage will ultimately alter public opinion, but I want to see if the coverage of the Medal of Honor acts to change public perception of those specific battles. The results were that the Medal of Honor does not act to change coverage, but to fall in line with the public sentiments of that war and the battles discussed.

If one were to take this further it would be beneficial for research to be done that looks at the implications of social media and television on coverage of war and the Medal of Honor as well, in the same way that I evaluated newspapers throughout World War II, the Vietnam War, and The War in Afghanistan.

Keywords:

The Medal of Honor, War, American Perceptions of War, Heroes, Soldiers, Media Coverage, Vietnam, World War II, Afghanistan
Dedication

To the brave men and women who proudly serve our country, we recognize and appreciate all that you sacrifice both at home and abroad.

“To hear that there is this hierarchy of Medals, and that this is the highest medal you can receive, I don’t know of any recipient that wears it form themselves. We wear it for those that are around us, those that we served with, and for this country. There is a strand, a fiber, in this [medal] for you right now. It is out resilience it is our character as Americans.”

-Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, Medal of Honor Recipient
Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Nick Geidner, Michael Wiseman, and The School of Journalism and Electronic Media for all of their help and encouragement throughout my time with the Medal of Honor Project.
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Introduction

Partisan blinders tend to shape the opinions Americans have of United States foreign policy and American-led wars. A commonality throughout the United States is that you are either in support of our government officials’ implemented policies or against those decisions. Having a strong opinion either way is not the issue, after all this is the United States; opinions are welcomed. The problem is that a very narrowed view of a problem that is much broader than most treat it, leads to an unintentional inability for many Americans to change their opinion when new information arises, henceforth an evident blindness that persists. But where does this public blindness originate? My answer, and one that I intend to show throughout this thesis, is that it lies in the media and our dependency on media as a holistic truth.

For the purpose of this thesis I will focus specifically on print because of the constant nature of that medium throughout all three wars that I will be analyzing: WWII, Vietnam, and Afghanistan. Although I will touch briefly on the impact that film had on changing the landscape of the media during Vietnam, this thesis will focus predominantly on print and the impact that it had throughout multiple battles on American understanding of war.

My primary focus is to look at the way in which journalists shape the public perception of war in regards to their coverage and then how the Medal of Honor acts to alter or confirm those perceptions. Although society as a whole claims to not have confidence in the mass media and their ability to report the news fairly and accurately (Fig. 1), we tend to gather most of our news from those same sources. (Fig. 2)
In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, TV, and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

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Source: GALLUP Online

Figure 1

Digital News Surpasses Newspapers, Radio

Where did you get news yesterday?

- Watched news on TV
- Read a newspaper
- Listened to radio news
- Got online/mobile news

Source: Pew Research Center Online

Figure 2
Taking it a step further, not only do we gather our news from these media platforms we depend on and form our perceptions from it. The theory of media dependency, developed in 1976 by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur, states that the more dependent an individual is on the media for receiving his or her information, the more important the media will be to that person. Steven W. Hook reflects on the impact that media has on Americans perceptions of U.S. foreign policy and the way in which they use the news:

Because of the large scale of these political systems, most people do not participate directly in the political process. Instead, they learn what their government is doing primarily by following news reports in the electronic and print media. The public places even greater dependence on the news media when it comes to foreign policy issues, which commonly involve faraway and seldom-seen people and places. (Hook 252)

This dependency is not the public’s fault. Throughout history, specifically in terms of U.S. foreign relations and war, the media are often the only segway that the public has into what is developing in other nations. Since the media has the access, people then use the media for their understanding of foreign policy and war, that coverage then allows the public to form an opinion, which may alter their perception of a war. My goal is to analyze the affect that print media has had during war and conclude whether that same impact is evident when the coverage of the awarding of a Medal of Honor is introduced.

This thesis will attempt to answer the question: How does media coverage vary between battle coverage and the Medal of Honor coverage? Arguing that this same media coverage will ultimately alter public opinion.
Methodology

Throughout this thesis I will be evaluating news coverage of individual battles during WWII, Vietnam, and Afghanistan we will call this “Time 1.” I will also be evaluating the coverage about the specific wars that has no relation to the Medal of Honor. I will then look at the coverage of the awarding of the Medal of Honor, in regards to those same battles, to determine if there is a change in the way journalists refer to the battles, this will be titled “Time 2.”

In order to reflect a variety all articles were randomly selected throughout a multitude of historical databases such as ProQuest Historical Newspapers including papers from: The Wall Street Journal, The Boston Globe, The Chicago Tribune, USA Today, The Washington Post, and The New York Times. The random selection was carried out through a series of search terms. For time 1 I included specific battle titles, war titles (relevant to the era I was studying), and soldiers. The filters of ‘article’ and ‘war news’ were always selected to provide consistency. I chose the top group of articles from the generated list. ProQuest Historical Databases show these as the articles with the highest relatable search to my keywords. This random selection, without me reading the articles prior to, is important to the research because no bias was used during selection. During WWII I used 10 articles, Vietnam 16 articles, Afghanistan 11 articles. The number of articles was selected by a fair amount in comparison to the number that showed up in the search that met my criterion.

My initial process was to compare the adjectives that were used throughout the articles, but I found that none of the journalists were that blatant in their descriptions. Thus, I began looking at the language and tone differences throughout the text. Using the phrases that journalists used from each era allowed me to use the media coverage as a reflection of public
opinion. By evaluating the tone from both time 1 and time 2 from several articles and newspapers this allowed me to see how the Medal of Honor transcends original perceptions of U.S. foreign policy and war, through both the eye of the public and the media, and the implications of such.
Results and Discussion

World War II

“WW II, we regard this as the last “good war.” It truly was good vs. evil. We were the good guys, the right guys. What happened with media, correspondents that were covering the war in Europe were essentially behind the lines, they were way back from the front. They were essentially just getting second hand information from leaders. The only guy who really went up to the front was a guy named Ernie Pyle, other than that most of the reporting was second hand. You would be back in the HQ and the information officer would come up and tell you stuff. The material Americans were getting back home was very censored, very carefully censored.”
- Dr. James Gilchrist, University of Tennessee, Political Science

This war was the difference between right (Allied Forces) and wrong (Axis Forces), a morality war if you will. After the embarrassment and defeat that Germany suffered during World War I, they needed to get back on their feet; the man for the job was Adolf Hitler. Although he seemed crazy to most, Hitler provided a plan that included stability for many Germans who were unemployed, starving, and searching for hope. After the signing of a neutrality agreement with Russia, allowing German forces into Poland without interference, the Allied forces started sensing great concern for a potential fascist and communistic take over. France and Britain were both forced to declare war against Hitler and the Nazi forces when they continued to advance their front. President Franklin D. Roosevelt felt that America was called to come to the aid of their allies of both France and Britain, regardless of the popular desire to stay out of war.

There was a sense of denial throughout the United States, the country was on the rise from the fatalities in World War I, wives had their husbands, and mothers had their sons. The country was also still on the mend from the Great Depression. “[William L. Shirer] he and other
reporters would send back their stories about German atrocities, only to find them shoved to the back of the newspaper or the bottom of the broadcast, if they were used at all.” (Willis 120) Once German aggression started heightening for all to see, Government officials knew the fear of a communist regime spread from the Axis forces could not be ignored. Committees across the United States like “The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies” were formed and President Roosevelt told Americans to get ready for war. They were to become “the great arsenal of democracy.” President Roosevelt made a point to persuade American’s on why they should be on the side of the interventionists “a British defeat would mean German domination of Europe as well as Asia, Australia, Africa, and the seas.” (Willis 122) On December 7, 1941 the unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces pushed Americans over the edge. They were not going to stand for an attack on United States soil, and intended to prove to the communists exactly which power reigned supreme.

The following article reviews of both the battles of Iwo Jima and the Normandy Invasion, during World War II, reflect the sentiment of the war and perceptions of the American public at the time. Americans were angry and wanted revenge for the lives lost at Pearl Harbor, Propaganda filled the streets, and everyone was on board to spread democracy and stop the Axis forces from spreading any further. Unlike wars in the future, the wordings throughout the text of these articles are very uplifting and supportive. The loss of life is presented as heroism, which acts as a catalyst to sanitize the war and make the massive loss of life a reflection of the good and the duty that Americans have to defend democracy and this country. Films were made about the United States involvement in World War II, even throughout the time of loss.
“The photo of the flag-raising at Iwo Jima inspired Americans and made them even more grateful for the job their troops were doing overseas. As for the government, they saw in this single photo a chance to raise more funds through the sale of war bonds; enough money that might enable the country to bring a speedier end to the war in the Pacific.” (Willis 123)

Americans were proud of the fact that every dime given and everything their boys over seas did; helped the effort of the world, of the good guys. Even when there was bad news given, the public rallied, Americans were supporting the troops and the effort. The theme that I found throughout the articles that did not mention the Medal of Honor was the same theme that was reflected throughout the articles with mention of the Medal of Honor. There was a reflection of pride, a sense of duty, and a responsibility to a nation. This theme throughout the articles is conducive to the public sentiment during that time.

3/16/1945 “4,000 Marine Dead on Iwo Indicated: Admiral Turner Says Loss Was Less Than Fifth of Japanese Killed – Operation Praised”
- “Because of those who have conquered Iwo Jima, we bow our heads in humble appreciation to those who, never questioning their orders, have made Iwo Jima ours.”
- “I cannot help but express my wholehearted respect and admiration for those fighting troops of the Fifth Amphibious Corps, their steadfast courage is magnificent.”

3/17/1945 “Woman’s Plea to End Iwo Battle Revealed”
- “Having chosen to fight, we had then, and have now, no final means of winning battles except through the valor of the Marine or Army soldier who, with rifle and grenades, storms enemy positions, takes them and holds them. There is no short cut or easy way. I wish there were.”
3/18/1945 “Camera Man Hails Iwo Jima Marines”

- “Joe Rosenthal, Associated Press photographer, who saw Iwo Jima’s bloodiest fighting and took a famous picture, came home today humble, he said, before the gallantry of the marines.”
- “After looking at it, I think it is a good picture, I think it reflects credit on the marines. It symbolizes their gallant actions. That was the toughest fight they ever had.”

4/1/1945 “Twin Sons Named Iwo and Jima”

- “Mrs. Martha Johnson has named her twin sons Iwo and Jima. Their father, George, is in the Navy.”

Looking at the media as a driver of public opinion, the integration of the Medal of Honor proves no change in public opinion during this time period. American pride is just as strong, in fact even more fervent with medals and awards given. In World War II, the medal and recipients were seen as a beacon of hope, honor, and valor. These soldiers were heroes, symbols of the American spirit.

12/18/1944 “Home Town Greets Medal of Honor Man Who Slew 18 Nazis After Brother Was Killed”

- “A crowd of some 200 welcomers joined the hero soldier’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Ethlers, when an Army plan brought him to the municipal airport, ending a trip that began last Wednesday in France.”
- “He went immediately to the home of his parents, to whom he had written that he did not want to come home yet because ‘I have a score to settle with the Jerries in Berlin.’”
- “Other officials promised a parade in his honor and a celebration with speeches and everything.”

10/6/1945 “Top Medal Award is conferred on 14: The President Conferring Nation’s Highest Honor on War Heroes”
President Truman bestowed the highest award of a grateful nation, the Congressional Medal of Honor, on eleven marines and three other Navy heroes of Pacific fighting today and then called on all Americans to fight for a ‘peaceful world so that this war will not have been in vain.’

The youngest man honored was the 17-year-old marine private Jacklyn H. Lucas. In the bloody battle for Iwo Jima he put the lives of his comrades above his own by falling on one Japanese grenade and pulling another under his belly to absorb the full impact of the explosion and came back to tell about it.

His citation tells the story of Feb. 26 this year, the day he killed seventy-five Japanese to destroy sixteen enemy positions on Iwo. Armed with a bazooka gun, Corporal Jacobson charged into the Japanese fire and, in the worlds of the Marine Corps, ‘contributed to essentially the success of his division’s operations against that fanatically defended outpost of the Japanese empire.’

Sout-hearted and indomitable in the face of extreme peril, Private Sigler effected the release of his besieged company from enemy fire and contributed essentially to its further advance against a savagely fighting enemy.

6/15/1946 “The Commander in Chief Congratulating Medal of Honor Recipients”

This article is important because of the photograph. Although no mention of the battles or citations; Shown are the five recipients laughing and joking with President Truman. This reflects the notion that these men were not even affected by the war, giving the public perception that all was good and well.

12/9/1947 “Ships to be Named For 8 War Heroes: General Officers and Winners of Medal of Honor Designated for Honors on Coast”

The names of deceased Army personnel will be given to eight ships as signed to the San Francisco Port. Four transports of the P-2 Class are to be renamed for distinguished general officers of World War II and four victory Class cargo ships will carry the names of Medal-of-Honor soldiers.

6/26/1948 “Honored For Outstanding Heroism in World War II”

“They won the nation’s highest tribute for risking their lives under intense German and Japanese fire. The presentation ceremonies were in the Rose Garden of the White House.”
The citation said his inspiring leadership was largely responsible for keeping the California in action during the attack.

1/26/1955 “Medal of Honor Hero Trades Lieutenancy For Sergeancy ‘to Get Back With Troops’”

Caption: “Jake William Lindsey admires a master sergeant’s jacket. The 33-year-old former infantryman wears Medal of Honor.”

“A rugged, 33 year old war hero who calls his wounds “nicks”-and doesn’t remember how many times he was ‘nicked’-gave up his second lieutenant’s bars in the Army for the stripes of a master sergeant yesterday.”

“He gave as his reason for resigning his commission, ‘I want to get back with the troops.’”

“I suppose once you’re a soldier, you’re always a soldier. I was a sergeant so long; it’s hard to get over it. My sergeant’s tactics don’t go as an officer. In battle, rank doesn’t matter very much.”

“I’ve got thirteen years in and seventeen more to go. This being back in now as a master sergeant and being with my men is the greatest.”

The take away from this examination of the coverage of the battles of Iwo Jima and Normandy within World War II and the examination of the article mentions of the Medal of Honor is to show that the Medal of Honor does not combat the journalists intent for the emotion behind the text, but rather highlights it. Although media coverage does have the ability to alter public sentiment many times, such as this, it also reflects popular opinion. The Medal of Honor does not transcend any perceptions here because it again reflects the sentiment of the time and highlights the already preconceived opinions that the American public had.
Vietnam War

“We lost a lot of people [in Vietnam.] There was one battle that we lost... 155 dead, 125 wounded, in one day. No one wins in war, no one. You try to make the other guy lose so much that he wants to quit.” Lt. Col. Bruce P. Crandall, United States Army

Communism was yet again on the rise, this time in Vietnam. The world had already witnessed the largest loss of life of any war in history with World War II and this newer generation was still witnessing the recovery of that war through their parents. American’s were made aware by Johnson that if they did not support the civilians in South Vietnam, this domino affect of a communist take over of South Vietnam was going to spread quickly. Congress voted to support President Lyndon B. Johnsons request for involvement, with the exception of two Senators. Initially this war was labeled a “conflict” and most were not concerned.

If everyone was on board, then when did tensions begin to get heated? Why were there so many protests throughout the Vietnamese conflict? How did the media play into America’s support of Vietnam? The lack of fervent support from the public did not rise from nothing. The Vietnam War was a very costly war to Americans, but not just in terms of the 58,000 American lives lost. America lost faith in their leadership, their trust in the government’s ability to be open and honest, and the press was helping that. “It became clear to the Johnson and Nixon administrations that the press was fueling public opinion about the war and that conducting the war under such intense media scrutiny was extremely hard.” (Willis 127)

The first wave of public disproval was October of 1965 when the draft went from 3000 monthly to 33,000. If you could afford to wave your involvement in the draft, for example by going to college, you were left alone. Sadly, many of the poor working class Americans were not
afforded that luxury. The dissent of the war began to heat up during the Tet Offensive (Jan. 30, 1968). The Tet Offensive, which was the largest military attack/strategy used by either side up to that point, proved to be a defeat for the communists after the initial stunning of U.S. and South Vietnamese Forces. Yet, this is the turning point when Americans began to realize that they had not been given the entire picture of the loss of life that was occurring, in regards to both United States soldiers and Vietnamese civilians.

As part of this effort to guide the news media into buying into this theme, Johnson brought Westmoreland to Washington, D.C. to address a large gathering of journalists, reporting that America was winning the war and that the end was in sight. This speech was highly publicized, and it seemed for awhile as if much of America was buying the idea, until January 1968 when the North Vietnamese regular army and the Viet Cong launched an all-out offensive (called the “TET” or New Year offensive) against 100 cities in South Vietnam, including Saigon itself. The fury and magnitude of this attack convinced much of America that the war was not being won. (Willis 127)

The Tet Offensive proved that South Vietnam could not defend itself from the Communist north, even with the years of French and American aid; the American public began to question our involvement. The media played a huge role in the public opinion about Vietnam, this was the first conflict where they were given free reign to roam and report their own stories rather than stay with a military supervisor, this was very unlike the heavy censorship in World War II. This was also known as the first television war where Americans could really see the impact of what was taking place in Vietnam, rather than just look at words on paper. The government began to
see that the press were fueling the public opinion about their war. The presses ability to release all information made it very difficult to conduct wartime decisions with the public protesting at every turn. “… the press is a big determinant of the American public opinion, and this was certainly the case with the Vietnam War ... They became aware that what the government and military were saying, as opposed to what was happening before their eyes in Vietnam, were not one and the same.” (Willis 128)

The inside information from the press, turned into an outcry of dissent which led to protests, but not just toward our government. Soldiers returning home began to serve as punching bags to the public’s dissatisfaction of their government. “War leaves those who fought with scars, but the scars Vietnam veterans bear are different from those who fought in other wars for the United States. In no other conflict were those who fought in it scorned by their fellow Americans upon their return. The latest Gallup poll shows 72% of Americans believe that the people of the United States have not treated Vietnam veterans well in the years since the war.” (Gillespie) The following article comparisons highlight the disproval of American involvement in the war. I specifically looked at instances of IA Drang and the Tet offensive. With a series of negative connotations underlying throughout the text you can see that this was the first time that the press became gutsy enough to raise questions, and the public answered. I have the following articles listed by date so that you can tell the advancement in press/public dissent throughout the progression in time of the war.

The following compare titles and a few statements from the text(s):
11/26/1965 “Death Struggle Seen in Highlands”

- “…Total Community Strength in the Highlands is believed to exceed the command allied strength. Even the most optimistic estimate holds that it takes five government or allied troops to counter each guerrilla in this kind of war.”

- “Despite the infusion of an American division into that section of the Annamese Cordillera, the Western position seems deteriorating because of more rapid North Vietnamese reinforcement and a heavy toll among government troops in intermittent clashes.”


- “Initiative seems more important to the Communists than their casualties. ‘Our losses are not important. What was important at Loc Ninh was that we demonstrated we have the ability to attack, to gain the initiative when we want to.’”

- “This war cry has been made before, but never has the response been so evident.”

- “We know there are big clouds in the sky around here, but we don’t know where the rain will fall. That’s our problem with the communists.”


- “The Administration often before has displayed optimism only to see it proved unfounded, and of course the Administration constantly faces a temptation to put the best interpretation upon the worst news.”

- “Admittedly, Communist thinking actually may be headed in the opposite direction [of peace]. If Hanoi can muster the strength for a prolonged large-scale offensive, it could be aiming at stirring a big surge of end-the-war sentiment in the U.S. and, even if it’s aiming at early peace talks, it could be a long road to a peace agreement.”

- “The attacks proved that the seven-day truce the communists had [Tet] proclaimed was a hoax and a fraud.”

- “The military opinion that the attacks were primarily for purposes of harassment was bolstered by the size of the Vietcong forces used.”

- “Unless we are prepared to let the communists take over South Vietnam, we shall have to keep many more troops there than the 50,000 we now have in South Korea, more than 14 years after the armistice. There will be repeated humiliations of the United States in the South China Sea like the seizure of the Pueblo in the Sea of Japan, and there will be more Koreas, more Vietnams. Thailand, which we are committed to defend, is next on the communist ‘liberation’ program.”

- “Undoubtedly this spectacular show of strength was intended to paralyze the will of the United States for continued support of South Vietnam against communist aggression and create conditions for a negotiated settlement on the enemy’s terms.”

4/21/1968 “Security Procedure Criticized”

- “The Defense Department reacted quickly, as it does to any sign of dissent in its ranks.”

- “The patients supervisor will determine his fitness for duty. If he is fit, it means he no longer disagrees with U.S. policy. If he isn’t fit, then he must leave.”

- “He [the doctor] was prepared to give a verdict on the fit for duty question. The trouble about this is that a psychiatrist does not get paid if he does not reveal all the information requested by the Defense Department.”

8/12/1968 “Saigon: Off Stage Center and Uneasy”

- “A mood of unease and of anger seems to have descended on Americans here during the past few weeks, complementing the hot, humid summer that also is settling in.”

- “… the news here now is more implicit in the questions not being asked than in the answers not being given; the significance is more in the silences than the statements.”

- “Tens of thousands of homeless, destitute Vietnamese still crowd emergency refugee camps throughout the country, yet human misery has become a tiresome topic.”

- “Peace, after all, is not a very likely prospect and the hopes will fade. Perhaps peace pressures will produce an explosion here, another coup d’etat. If peace contacts fail, the war could sharply escalate.”
An interesting aspect of the reporting are the articles that are released that are direct quotes from the military. They carry an entirely different tone than those mainly written by the journalists. The tone is more uplifting throughout with a definite “America is in the right” prose. Especially the articles referencing the Tet Offensive, the military spokesperson acts as if America still has the upper hand, which is not reflective of the sentiment of the public.

11/20/1965 “Air Blows Smash North Viet Human Wave Assaults”

- “A U.S. Spokesperson said a Vietnamese paratrooper detachment heading south toward the valley ran into a stiff fight. He reported heavy fire from North Vietnamese regulars inflicted light causalities and help up the reinforcements.”
- “It was hand to hand combat, a real infantry action. So you can expect these causalities.”
- “…they took on a large force and did a great deal of damage.”
- “I would say they performed like you hoped green soldiers would perform. They all fought like pros, whether they were draftees or regulars.”
- “It renews your faith in man’s ability to stay alive.”
- “It was a risk to take. It worked beautifully.”

11/22/1965 “Home are the Heroes… Boys Now Men”

- “The brave young boys who left their youth behind in the fighting of Ia Drang Valley came home like men …”
- “You met tough, professional, capable enemy troops and you gave them a mauling they will never forget.”
- “But there would be no empty tents for the battalion. Fresh replacements arrived Saturday and have been assigned to the cots of the fallen … ‘Try not to wake them up,’ a captain said half-heartedly, ‘they just got here and they are tired.’”

2/2/1968 “Westmoreland: Foe’s Biggest Push To Come”
• “Not completely. I felt there would be fireworks during the Tet lunar New Year period.”

• “‘He apparently hoped the people would join his ranks,’ Westmoreland said. He said the ‘popular reactions seems to be one of outrage.’”

• “The next phase of this master plan we have seen unfold during the past several days. D-day for this plan was set at Tet despite the fact that the Communists had made quite a point that they would observed a cease-fire at Tet.”

• “The second phase of the campaign was a bold one. It was characterized by treachery and deceitfulness. It showed a callous disregard for human life and it brought about considerable disruption in a number of towns and cities. The enemy has paid dearly.”

• “There is, however, evidence to suggest that he’s about to run out of steam. On the other hand, he does still have some reserves that are yet to be committed. We are aware of these. I’m confident that nay further initiatives can be blunted.”

• “When he does attack, he will have to accept great risk because of the preparation we have made and the fire power available to us.”

8/12/1972 “Pride Worn Thin as Yanks Leave Viet”

• “Now as the last American infantrymen have stood down—with determination dissipated to boredom, pride worn thin.”

• “By then it was too late and the American public was aroused about the war. The military wanted to push the American troop level over the 600,000 mark. That attempt failed, and the stage was set for gradual withdrawal.”

Viewing the media as a driver of public opinion, the integration of the Medal of Honor into the conversation proves no change in public perception about the war or conflicts. American pride during this time is just as weak; the Medal does not act as sanitization of war or affirmation of pride and triumph. In fact, Medal of Honor recipients were not portrayed the same way that they were throughout World War II. Rather than heroes, these recipients were a reflection of the
battles and rigid nature of the conflict in Vietnam. They were not given the welcome home, the parade of pride and honor that they deserved; that the men of the Second World War received. Lt. Col. Bruce P. Crandall, United States Army commented, “The way they [the American public] treated us when we came back from Vietnam was totally unacceptable, but today you see the troops in the airport; they’re in their uniforms and everyone is saying “Thank you for your service.” During our day we couldn’t come off of the military installation in uniform [for the potential of harassment].”

The presentation of the Medal is transformed throughout the articles as the dissent of war grows over time. The recognition of the Medal and the recipients is strong in the first few years (mentions) but as the American public grows wary of the conflict and dissatisfied with the government, the praise begins to decrease.

*These articles were a random selection through multiple databases.

11/25/1965 “Charges Viet Foe To Show Way To Mates: Yank is Credited with 18 Killed”
- The article begins “I may as well go up and do it myself, I wouldn’t ask my men to do anything I wouldn’t do."
- The illustration in the article is of Lt. Joe Marm with his mouth sewn shut showing a dedication of sacrifice courage and resilience.

- The illustration of this article is President Lyndon B. Johnson holding the daughter of First Lieut. Charles Q. Williams out side of the White House following the Medal of Honor Ceremony, reflecting a sentiment of family and honor.
- There was a reflection of light humor throughout the article. The Lieut. Stated, “As President Eisenhower said, with all due respect to you, sir, and your duties, he would
rather have the Medal of Honor than be President of the United States. These are my sentiments.”

- “The lieutenant had words of praise for the members of the Army Special Forces group and the Navy Seabees.”

- “For our deceased comrades who are not with us today from Dong xoai, if I may offer some small condolence o loved ones, these brave and courageous men did not die in vain, but for a true and just cause which makes our great country what it is today.”

- “a patriot’s gift to his country.”

12/20/1966 “Lieutenant, Iadrang Hero, Wins the Medal of Honor”

- The illustration of this article is the parents of Lieut. Walter J. Marm Jr. after the Medal of Honor ceremony with their son smiling proudly at his Medal.

- “By your courage and skill, you have set an example which will bring new strength and resolution to all American fighting men.”

- This excerpt reflects the dedication that the military and the public initially had for those honored with the medal. “The Army provided a full honor ceremony with a 19- gun salute for the young officer from Washington, PA., who was wounded in the battle that brought him the Medal of Honor.”

- “Personal courage is a magnificent thing. The ability to lead other men in the face of extreme danger is a rare gift.”

- “… in a situation that demanded all a fighting man could give, he responded with total disregard for self.”

12/20/1966 “Hero Eager to Fight again”

- “… the nation’s newest congressional Medal of Honor winner, said today that he thinks “it’s about time” he went back to Vietnam.”

- “… he had decided to make the army his career and that he would like to go back to Vietnam. He was asked why, but, before he could reply, his mother Mrs. Dorothy Marm, cut in and said, only half in jest, ‘That’s what I’d like to know.’”
• “I’m a professional soldier and that’s how I can best fulfill my obligation, either by fighting or by training others.”

• “Then, despite wounds in the face and neck, he killed the remaining machine gunners with rifle fire.”


• “Ruffles, flourishes, honor guards and 21 salvos of salute-the kind normally offered only to visiting chiefs of state- were offered to the 39-year-old soldier who was the first medic to be so honored in Vietnam”

• “He heard himself praised for gallantry that saved the lives of many men and inspired the performance of many more.”

POST TET- OFFENSIVE: A reflection of the turning point in the war of American Public Opinion on Vietnam

11/19/1968 “Johnson To Present 5 Medals of Honor”

• This article is incredibly basic. It lists the soldiers citations, dates of actions, using no words of gallantry or heroism as in the last group of articles.

1/17/1969 “Johnson Awards Medal of Honor to Four Heroes of Vietnam War”

• The first fourth of this article is about the fact that this is President Johnsons last medal presentation while in office. The rest of the article just lists the citation and reflects upon the fact that two of the recipients are from the same hometown. The word hero is used in the article title, but there was no public display for these men as there was previously.

3/30/1969 “Medal of Honor Winner Enlists Again After Year”
• Unlike the display and full length article that Lieut. Joe Marm received prior to the change in American perception of the war, about the same thing that Sgt. Dolby is doing; Sgt. Dolby received an article two paragraphs long including a statement from the Sgt.

• “Sergeant Dolby of Suburban Oaks said he felt he was better suited to helping his fellow man in the army.”
War In Afghanistan

has become America’s longest war, continuing over 12 years since our first entrance in 2001 following the attacks of September 11th. Gallup polls show that Americans were more supportive of our entrance into this war than any since World War II.

Four Wars: Timeline Until Plurality Said War Was a Mistake

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<td>Jun 21-23, 2004**</td>
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<td>Oct 6-11, 1967**</td>
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<td>Aug 20-25, 19509</td>
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<td>Jan 1-3, 1951**</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38</td>
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* First survey asking if military involvement was a mistake
** First survey in which a plurality said military involvement was a mistake

GALLUP

Figure 3

The War In Afghanistan is an entirely different beast than the Vietnam War. This difference is predominantly seen in the nature of the United States being on the defense after September 11th, much like America during World War II with the attacks on Pearl Harbor. Americans were already opinionated about war, which was evident from the remnants of Vietnam; they no longer blindly trusted the government. With the introduction of Internet, extremely fast technology, camera availability around every corner; nothing was kept under lock and key, including American perception and opinions of war. Americans, now more than ever,
have an opinion about everything and need not rely fully on the news anymore to form those. Although we do rely some on the interpretation, we are more wary to blindly trust the media due to their bias (Fig. 4).

“In many instances, journalists were acting too: doing reports which were based, not on any actual newsgathering, but on press releases and agency stories which had been read to them down the satellite phone from studios in London or Washington prior to their live pieces to camera. Yet if the media were guilty, as Air Marshal Burridge suggested, of turning war into ‘reality TV’ and ‘infotainment’ (The Telegraph, 7 April 2003), so too were the military.”

(Hammond)

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\caption{Americans' Perceptions of Media Bias}
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Yet, because of this reflection of bias, the media seemed to truly reflect the perceptions of all Americans and argued both sides with the introduction of opinion segments on television and political leaning news networks such as Fox News and CNN. Because of the means and willingness of travel from foreign correspondents working in the multimillion dollar media companies, Americans were able to get a first hand view with consistent video, pictures, and
interpretation daily. “Despite the administrations’ best efforts to put a positive face on the war and to ask Americans for patience, the daily media reports focused mostly on the negative aspects of the war: the steady drumbeat off the dead and wounded U.S. troops the increased fighting in the provinces, the toll on civilians, and the questionable results from all of it.” (Willis 133)

Although the visual facets of coverage are easier for the public to understand and conceptualize, the written interpretations were just as strong in Afghanistan coverage as they were in both World War II and the Vietnam War. The text speaking out about what happened in Afghanistan was now more detailed than ever before, American society was different. This was no longer the keep your head down and say nothing society of the past. Americans had a voice; soldiers had a voice. Although older generations reflected this sentiment as well, citizens during this era were very vocal about wanting to know what was really happening overseas and what their tax dollars and the sacrifice of their family and friends were going toward and they weren’t afraid to ask questions to get it.

It took eight years before the majority Americans started questioning the involvement in Vietnam; with Afghanistan it took a matter of minutes. One can see the change in culture from the smallest textual comparisons. During WW II and Vietnam, many Medal of Honor recipients did not speak out about the medal or who they were wearing it for, now practically every recipient that has been given the medal takes a public stance on the fact that they are wearing the medal for their friends that they lost in conflict, that none of them like war, that no one should like war. This sentiment is reflected throughout the text bellow and furthermore in the articles listed in the Appendix. These are our heroes now; just as brave and gallant as those of the past conflicts, but with a generational change that is evident in more than the weaponry that they use.
The following text comparisons show yet another defense that public perception and media coverage go hand in hand, the only difference with this “new media” and “new war” is that all sides of an opinion are publicly reflected through coverage. An element of this new war, as reflected in the following text, shows that rather than just labeled as soldiers; they are now referred to as Americans throughout most of the media coverage. The new type of coverage allows us to put a face to the war and the loss, which no longer sanitizes the coverage of war.

8/14/2005 “Marines and Afghans Drive Against Rebels Tied to Deadly Attacks”

- “United States Marines and Afghan troops launched an offensive on Saturday to take from insurgents a remote mountain valley that was tied to the deadliest blow against American forces since the Taliban government was ousted nearly four years ago.”
- “The offensive came at the end of a deadly week for American forces in Afghanistan. Seven Americans have died.”
- “We want them running for their lives way up in the hills where they can't attack polling stations. We want to isolate them from the community.”

2/24/2008 “Battle Company is Out There”

- “The counterinsurgency in Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley is one day after another of difficult decisions and bloody consequences. Hearts and minds are hardening.”
- “He had been in Iraq and told me he had gone emotionally dead there with all the dying and killing, and stayed that way until the birth of his son a year ago. His hardest day in Iraq was when a close friend, Rob Shaw, was severely wounded by an improvised explosive device that killed his first sergeant and a bunch of their friends – and the next thing he knew their colonel was asking Kearney to step in for Shaw and lead the company. But as hard as Iraq was, he said, nothing was as tough as the Korengal.”
• “‘My guys would tell me they didn’t know which houses they’re shooting from, and I’d tell them they can’t shoot back into the villages, they hated me.’ The insurgents were testing the new captain, he suspected, by deliberately shooting from homes.”

• “The insurgents regularly use civilians as shields, children as spotters and women as food suppliers, NATO killing civilians is great propaganda for the Taliban.”

• “It was a lot to ask of young soldiers; play killer, cultural anthropologist, hearts-and-minds winner, then kill again.”

10/31/08 “McCain and Obama Advisers Briefed on Deteriorating Afghan War”

• “The group was there to deliver a grim message: the situation in Afghanistan is getting worse.”

• “American intelligence officials believe that Taliban commanders are convinced that they are winning. Not only are they establishing themselves in larger swaths of the country, but their campaign of violence is shaking the will of European countries contributing troops to the NATO mission.”

• “Of more than 400 major tribal networks inside Afghanistan, the general said recently, most have been ‘traumatized by over 30 years of war, so a lot of that traditional tribal structure has broken down.’”

10/4/2009 “The Difference Between ‘We Must’ and ‘We Can’”

• “This summer, Mr. Obama described the effort in Afghanistan as “a war of necessity.” In such a war, you do whatever you need to do to win. But now, as criticism mounts from those who argue that we war in Afghanistan cannot, in fact, be won with more troops and a better strategy, the President is having second thoughts.”

• “The idea that American foreign policy must be founded upon a prudent recognition of the country’s capacities and limits, rather than its hopes and wishes, gained currency after World War II, possibly the last unequivocally necessary war in American history.”

• “Americans broadly agree that their government must at all costs prevent major attacks on American soil by Al Qaeda. But there the consensus ends, and their questions begin.”
• “What if the fall of Kabul would constitute not only an American abandonment of the Afghan people, but a major strategic and psychological triumph for Al Qaeda, and a recruiting tool of unparalleled value? … In that case – and perhaps only in that case – Afghanistan really would be a war of necessity.”

The most interesting aspect of the new type of war that is fought is the way the Medal of Honor and its coverage ties in. For the first time throughout my research, the Medal is not simply a reflection of a public opinion, but serves to transcend and uphold a stronger symbol and example of valor and sacrifice, something that is long over due in terms of public perception and media coverage. Movies like ‘We were soldiers’ and ‘Medal of Honor’ highlights the sacrifice of these men and show the courage that they displayed. Every single text that I found showed the dedication of these men to their country. I have not figured out if it is because of our culture or because of the media coverage. At some point throughout history the men that received the Medal for actions during WW II and Vietnam were all recognized and honored, but never before have the Medal of Honor recipients served as such a beacon in the public eye. This is seen through every day facets of our society such as social media, public presence, and their openness about war.

11/14/2010 “In One Moment, Heroism and Heartbreak”

• “None of this had been part of the plan for Rock Avalanche, Battle Company’s six-day mission to tame the valley before the onset of winter. But then again, that is what war is, the mocking of plans. The reaction in those moments of mockery is why we have the Medal of Honor.”

• “And then Giunta said, “All my feelings are with my friends and they are getting smaller. I have sweat more, cried more, bled more in this country than in my own.””
• “On Tuesday Giunta will become the first living soldier to receive the Medal of Honor since Vietnam. He has said that if he is a hero then everyone who goes into the unknown is a hero. He has said he was angry to have a medal around his neck at the price of Brennan’s and Mendoza’s lives.”

11/17/2010 “Rare Honor for a Living Service Member”

• “In an emotional ceremony, President Obama on Tuesday awarded the Medal of Honor to an Army staff sergeant who placed himself in the line of fire in Afghanistan to try to save his squad mates and to protect and comfort a dying American soldier.”

• “By now, the East Room was so silent you could hear a rustle from across the room. One Army Officer took out a handkerchief and wiped his eyes.”

• “He crested a hill alone with no cover but the dust kicked up by the storm of bullets still biting into the ground.”

• “I lost two dear friends of mine, I would give this back in a second to have my friends with me right now.”

2/12/2014 “Obama awards Medal of Honor for valor in Afghan battle”

• “The investigation also found that Combat Outpost Keating ‘was tactically indefensible’ but that was what these soldiers were asked to do, defend the indefensible.”

• “He added: I accept this tremendous honor on behalf of all soldiers who have served with me that day. This award is for the eight soldiers that didn’t make it and for the rest of the team that fought valiantly and magnificently that day. I will forever be humbled by their bravery, their commitment to service and their loyalty to one another.”

• “That’s what these soldiers did for each other in sacrifice drive by pure love.”

8/26/2013 “Obama awards Medal of Honor to Staff Sgt. Ty Carter for heroism in Afghanistan”

• “… hopes to use the award to help others suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.”

• “…absolutely critical to put an end to any stigma that prevents troops from getting treatment.”
• “Mace later died in surgery at a field hospital, and Carter blamed himself, believing that he had “failed” because he could not save the young specialist he had carried to safety.”

• “I’m hoping that I can help people through what I have to say, what I’ve experienced, to help them go seek help, or else we’re going to have more out there who self-medicate and end up taking their own lives.”

10/15/2013 “Former Army Capt. William Swenson receives Medal of Honor at White House”

• “Swenson’s path to the White House ceremony was a rocky one. After he criticized his army superiors, saying they failed to provide enough air and artillery support during the 2009 engagement, his medal nomination was delay for years. Army officials said his nomination packet was lost in a computer system for 19 months.”

• “It does not really belong to me; it belongs to that event and the people I stood with,” he said of the medal … You could have told me it happened, and I wouldn’t have believed you. But it did, and it was captured on film. And it offered a glimpse of the humanity that does occur on battlefields.”
Conclusion

Throughout my analysis I have found that whether the Medal of Honor transcends American perceptions of US Foreign Policy and war is not the question. The way the public views the Medal of Honor is completely reflective of the current sentiments of the public opinion on that war and the publics direct relationship with the media.

Initially I expected to find that the mention of the Medal of Honor would act to change the perception of the war at hand, just like it changes the way that journalists write about the war in their articles. What I found is that although journalists change their language and voice when writing about the Medal of Honor, to that of more respect, that integration of the Medal into the war does not alter the overall public perception of that war.

To break it down:

In terms of World War II battles, the public was already in full support of the Allied Powers and their fight against the Axis Powers. Everything that took place in regards to battles about that war, American patriotism, consumption of steel, sacrifices the public made were in reflection with the public support of the involvement in World War II. Even during the mention of a negative situation, such as a mass loss of life, the underlying tone seemed to hint that although sad, the soldiers dying were not in vain because of the goal and mission of the war. Any mention of the Medal of Honor in the articles continued to build pride about America’s involvement in the war. The Medal of Honor recipients were viewed as heroes and icons for younger soldiers and citizens alike to look up to.
Throughout Vietnam, the public sentiment of the war was not strong or encouraging. There was much dissent toward our involvement and many Americans did not see the point in sending so many to die for a cause that did not directly affect us. Due to, in part, the media coverage and the way in which it altered public opinion, any recognition of Medal of Honor recipients was not highlighted or given attention to like the soldiers of World War II that were so respected, admired, and labeled as American figure heads for the war.

Afghanistan’s coverage was also reflective of both World War II and Vietnam’s coverage in its unique way. The coverage was similar to World War II due to the public pride for the brave men that fight for us on a daily basis. In terms of the Vietnam War coverage similarities, public opinion is vocal and widely known and is reflected throughout the media and vice versa. Although many are proud of the Medal of Honor recipients, no one is jumping for joy over the recognition of the medals.

Throughout my research I have found that the mention of the Medal of Honor in the newspaper articles does not transcend public opinions about the war or individual battles mentioned. The recognition that the Medal of Honor receives and the tone in which it is mentioned is highly indicative of the current sentiment of the war that is reflected by the public in general.
Bibliography


Appendix A: World War II
WASHINGTON, March 15 (AP)—
The Navy released today an exchange of correspondence between Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal and an unidentified woman who protested the heavy toll of life in the taking of Iwo Island. Said the Secretary: "There is no short cut or easy way. I wish there were."

Navy spokesmen said the letter it made public was typical of a number the department had received. It read:

"Please for God's sake stop sending our finest youth to be murdered on places like Iwo Jima. It is too much for boys to stand, too much for mothers and homes to take. It is driving some mothers crazy. Why can't objectives be accomplished some other way. It is most inhuman and awful—stop, stop."

Secretary Forrestal replied:

"On Dec. 7, 1941, the Axis confronted us with a simple choice: Fight or be overrun. There was then, and is now, no other possibility.

"Having chosen to fight, we had then, and have now, no final means of winning battles except through the valor of the Marine or Army soldier who, with rifle and grenades, storms enemy positions, takes them and holds them. There is no short cut or easy way. I wish there were."

Navy officials said it had no information whether the writer of the letter had a son or other close relative at Iwo Island. They declined to divulge her identity.
CAMERA MAN HAILS

TWIN IWO JIMA MARINES

Rosenthal Turns Acclaim of His
Flag-Raising Picture to
Tribute to Our Fighters

SAN FRANCISCO, March 17
Up—Jos Rosenthal, Associated
Press photographer, who saw Iwo
Jima's bloodiest fighting and took
a famous picture, came home to-
day humble, he said, before the
gallantry of the marines.

Mr. Rosenthal, member of the
war-time still picture pool, made
the historic picture of the marines,
raising the Stars and Stripes at
the crater rim of Mount Suribachi.
He had no chance to see the pic-
ture which he had taken of the
flag raising or of the original land-
ing operation. All films were sent
undeveloped to a forward base.

When a radio message came
from the base, “Fine pix flag rais-
ing,” Mr. Rosenthal was pleased,
but he thought the message re-
flected credit on the marines.
It symbolizes the gallantry
of our troops.

After looking at it, I think it is
good picture,” he said. “I think it
reflects credit on the marines.
It symbolizes the gallantry
of our troops. That was the toughest
test they ever had.”

Mr. Rosenthal hit the beaches
with the marines at Iwo Jima, as
he had previously in other island
assaults.

On D-day plus 4, the photogra-
pher continued, “we got back to the
beaches from the communi-
cation ship, a man pointed to
the cliff of Suribachi. Marine, he
said, were going up to plant the
flag, it was a very impor-
tant strategic point, and it was,
most significant that it had been
captured.

So ashore, I chiseled through the
texture marked mine fields. Near
the base of the mountain we met
two Marine Corps photographers,
and the three of us started up.”

Men were preparing to raise the
six-foot, Thirty-nine foot banner
with its twenty- foot staff, the symbol for which
America.

“[I] pushed over to the inner edge
of the crater rim,” Mr. Rosenthal
said, “and to get a full angle of
the pole being raised. I put two
men down on the pole, and we
ran a pole up on top, a place on
which to stand so obstructions
would be cleared.

“I waited and as the men swung
the pole upward I took one shot
at a fast exposure of the pole
and then another as they
maimed up at their accom-
plishments, and a third of the
full group gathered at the base,
cheering.”

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TWIN SONS NAMED IWO AND JIMA

WASHINGTON, March 31 (UP)
—Mrs. Martha Johnson has named
her twin sons Iwo and Jima. Their
father, George, is in the Navy.
Home Town Greets Medal-of-Honor Man Who Slew 18 Nazis After Brother Was Killed

MANHATTAN, Kan., Dec. 17—Lieut. Walter Ehlers, aged 23, and winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, came home today to spend a thirty-day leave from fighting on the western front.

A crowd of some 200 welcomes joined the hero soldier's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Ehlers, when an Army plane brought him to the municipal airport, ending a trip that began last Wednesday in France.

He went immediately to the home of his parents, to whom he had written that he did not want to come home yet because "I have a score to settle with the Jerrys" in Berlin.

His brother, Sgt. Roland A. Ehlers, 28, was fatally wounded storming the beaches of Normandy June 6.

Mayor R. E. Bosenbark said there would be a public welcoming ceremony tomorrow when "the lieutenant has had time to rest up a bit." Other officials promised a parade in his honor and a celebration with "speeches and everything."

Lieutenant Ehlers was decorated with the country's highest military award in Paris Dec. 11 by another Kansan, Lieut. Gen. John C. H. Lee, for his feats near Caumont, France, June 8-10, when he cleaned out two machine-gun nests, silenced two mortar positions, killed four Germans with his bayonet and accounted for "at least eighteen altogether." Then a sergeant, he was wounded by a sniper, killed the German as he fell, rescued a companion and covered a withdrawal of his unit.

Lieutenant Ehlers was cited Dec. 6 by another Kansan, Gen. Clarence Huebner, commander of the First Infantry Division, who dedicated the six months' anniversary observance of D-day to Lieutenant Ehlers and the men living and dead who had tried to follow his example.
TOP MEDAL AWARD IS CONFERRED ON 14:
THE PRESIDENT CONFERRING NATION'S HIGHEST HONOR ON WAR HEROES

November 11, 1945

THE PRESIDENT CONFERRING NATION'S HIGHEST HONOR ON WAR HEROES

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THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF CONGRATULATING MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

Associated Press Wirephoto Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF CONGRATULATING MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS


WASHINGTON, June 14—President Truman bestowed the Congressional Medal of Honor today upon five war heroes in a ceremony on the White House lawn attended by their relatives and by attack by Marines on Iwo Jima, high military and Government officials, and the following Army enlisted men who were cited for bravery in action.

The recipients were First Lieut. on Okinawa and Leyte: Tech. John H. Leims of Chicago, who Sgt. Beauford T. Anderson of distinguished himself in a night of fighting at Soldiers Grove, Wis., and John Meagher of Jersey City, N. J.; Sgt. Alejandro R. Ruiz of Bar-

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SHIPS TO BE NAMED FOR 8 WAR HEROES

General Officers and Winners of Medal of Honor Designated for Honors on Coast

Special to The New York Times.
SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 5—The names of deceased Army personnel will be given to eight ships assigned to the San Francisco Port of Embarkation. Four transports of the P-2 Class are to be renamed for distinguished general officers of World War II and four Victory Class cargo ships will carry the names of Medal-of-Honor soldiers.

Brig. Gen. N. H. McKay, commander of the port, said that rechristening ceremonies would be held for each of the vessels when they next visited this port. The four to be renamed for Army officers are undergoing conversion at Newport News, Va., to make them "the finest and most comfortable transports afloat," and are expected to go back into service in the spring.

The Port of Embarkation issued the following data on the ships:


Admiral W. S. Benson—Renamed USAT Gen. Daniel I. Sultan, honoring the former commanding general of the China-Burma theatre who died while serving as inspector general of the Army.

Admiral W. L. Capps—Renamed USAT Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey, honoring the former commanding general of the Fourth Armored Division, killed in an airplane accident in 1944.

Waterville Victory—Renamed USAT Lieut. George W. G. Boyce, honoring a Highland Fails, N. Y., cavalryman in whose honor the Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously for bravery in action in New Guinea in 1943.

Stetson Victory—Renamed USAT Sgt. Sylvester Antolach, honoring a St. Clairsville, Ohio, soldier who received the Medal of Honor posthumously for bravery in action in Italy in 1944.

Radcliffe Victory—Renamed USAT Sgt. Andrew Miller, honoring a Manitowoc, Wis., infantryman who won the Medal of Honor posthumously for bravery in action in Germany in 1944.

Appleton Victory—Renamed USAT Pvt. John R. Towle, honoring a Cleveland soldier to whom the Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously for bravery in action in Holland in 1944.
HONORED FOR OUTSTANDING HEROISM IN WORLD WAR II

WASHINGTON, June 25 (AP)—President Truman today presented Congressional Medals of Honor to three heroes of World War II. They won the nation's highest tribute for risking their lives under intense German and Japanese fire.

The presentation ceremonies were in the Rose Garden of the White House.

The names of the three heroes, along with a brief résumé of their deeds that won the medals for them, follows:

Mr. Truman placing the Congressional Medal of Honor on Francis J. Pierce, former Pharmacist's Mate, at ceremony at the White House yesterday. Looking on are the other recipients, Lieut. Comdr. Jackson Charles Pharris and Sgt. John R. Crews.

Former S/Sgt. John R. Crews of Golden, Okla.—During the fighting in Germany in April, 1945, he rushed single-handedly a German machine-gun position near Lohenberg, disposed of the gun crew with point-blank rifle fire and then, although seriously wounded, charged and silenced an emplaced automatic rifle.

Pharmacist Mate 1/C Francis J. Pierce of Bartsville, Iowa — He pulled wounded marines out of rifle range of Japanese defenders on Iwo Jima. Wounded and exhausted he was hailed by his commanding officers for "suicidal" valor.

Lieut. Comdr. Jackson C. Pharris, USN (retired) of Columbus, Ga. — When the battleship California was hit by a Japanese torpedo at Pearl Harbor he was seriously wounded but he set up a hand-supply train for his anti-aircraft gun. Repeatedly risked his life entering flooded compartments to carry unconscious shipmates to safety. The citation said his "inspiring leadership" was "largely responsible" for keeping the California in action during the attack.

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A rugged, 33-year-old war hero who calls his wounds "nicks"—and doesn't remember how many times he was "nicked"—gave up his second lieutenant's bars in the Army for the stripes of a master sergeant yesterday.

He gave as his reason for resigning his commission, "I want to get back with the troops."

Jake Williams Lindsey of Bubuia, Minn., the 19th infantryman to win the Medal of Honor during World War II, explained it this way at the recruiting station yesterday: «I am a master sergeant and these bars just don't seem right on me. I'm just a soldier at heart.»

Mr. Lindsey, married and the father of two children, won the nation's highest award for action in Germany in 1944. While wounded, he killed twenty Germans, wounded many more, captured three others and destroyed a machine-gun nest.

"For his nicks, many of which he said he never reported, he wore the Purple Heart with three clusters. In June, 1942, he won his officer's bars with a battlefield commission in Korea. "Somehow they just never fit me," he said. "It isn't once you're a soldier, you're always a soldier. I was a sergeant as long as they said so. I'm a master sergeant in the Army and as a master sergeant I don't go as an officer. In battle, rank doesn't matter very much."

A slight itch developed in the war hero's re-enlistment when a physiologist found excessive sugar in Mr. Lindsey's system. For a time it appeared he would have to go to the hospital at Fort Jay, Governors Island, for rest and the re-enlistment ceremony would have to be postponed.

But a recruiting sergeant discovered a regulation on enlistment that waives physical disqualifications incurred while on the rolls of the service, and Mr. Lindsey was re-enlisting the next day. He was re-enlisting in the rank of first lieutenant to Capt. William N. O'verview, during World War II Mr. Lindsey saw action in Africa, Italy, Normandy and Germany. In Korea, grenades exploded wounded both his hands—just their wounds, you understand," he said.

"For a year and a half after the end of World War II, he said, he was out of the Army. "I was home long enough to be out," he said. "I had to get back in. The Army has secured, I've got thirteen years in and seventeen more to go. This being back in now as a master sergeant and being with my men is the greatest."

His hope in the future is to be a paratrooper just as he was in Korea. The next step in his life will be taken at the First Army Replacement Center, Fort 106, N.J., where he will be assigned to duty in the airborne branch.
Appendix B: VIETNAM

Death Struggle Seen in Highlands

By JOHN T. WHEELER
SAIYON, VIET NAM (AP)

A death struggle is going on in the Central Highlands, where an estimated 55,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese guerrillas are regularly roaming the area.

The division is the American division that operates the American Command Center, the Western provincial headquarters for the more rapid North Vietnamese offensives, and a key supply point for the adjacent 1st Indochina Region.

The Kampar Valley, where the bloodbath took place, is in the Central Highlands area of the Republic of Vietnam. The valley is a narrow, steep-sided mountainous area with many small villages.

The Americans claim that both sides are using civilians as a human shield.

Two of its battalions were ambushed by the NVA in early January, and another battalion was ambushed by the Viet Cong in late January.

Several regions are key to the North Vietnamese offensive. The Northern Highlands and the Central Highlands are key to the success of the offensive.

North Vietnamese forces are believed to have crossed the Laotian border and are now in the Central Highlands, where they have been fighting the National Liberation Front and the Viet Cong.

Recent reports indicate that the North Vietnamese have been using heavy artillery and air support in their offensive.

These reports are based on the best available information and are believed to be accurate.

The battle is expected to continue for several more days, with both sides suffering heavy losses.
Buildup in Ground Warfare Reflects Red Determination

Arnett, Peter
Pg. 4

The buildup in ground warfare reflects Red determination.

—B. PETER ARNETT
SAIGON — November has always been the bloodiest month on the Vietnam war calendar. This year is no exception. But the rash of battles cropping across the face of the country lately has some unusual aspects. Experienced observers see this as portents:

The Communists are still capable of seizing the initiative.

—For the first time they have been able to coordinate military activity on a nationwide scale.

—Infiltration of enemy troops and supplies continues despite air raids against North Vietnam and the 160 miles of border, and the intensified border surveillance over South Vietnam.

—The fighting posture of the U.S. is striking United States troop resources. If the current level of enemy military action continues much longer, the all-important pacification program, already underwriting the northern 1st Corps area, will start deteriorating elsewhere.

The Communists still believe that by making inroads against the allied war machine in South Vietnam they can win political capitulation by the United States in a French Indochina.

The pendulum seems to have swung away from the position a year ago when U.S. forces gained the initiative by striking hard into War Zone C northwest of Saigon in Operation Attleboro and mounted an enemy attempt at major infiltration into the DMZ in Operation Hastings. The Communists grabbed the initiative last 1965 with their campaigns against them Plei Me Special Forces camp and the highlands that controlled the La Drang Valley battle, where 310 Americans and 1,104 foes were killed.

Initiative seems more important to the Communists than their casualties. A senior member of the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) said Cambodia a few days ago: "Our losses are not important. What was important at Long Xuyen was that we demonstrated we have the ability to attack, to gain the initiative when we want to."

The current campaign apparently was planned by the general committee of the Central Office several weeks ago. That, radio Hanoi and the Viet Cong radio exhorted forces to "attack and continue to attack; destroy." This war cry has been made before, but never has the response been so evident.

—Tactics some weeks now resemble those used in successful campaign against French ports along the Chinese border in 1951, particularly at Long Son. Anti-French forces laid down heavy mortar and artillery barrages, moved up under machine-gun fire, and then stormed fortifications with human - wave attacks.

This tactic was favored by Premier’s defense minister, Lin Piao, who earlier led Communist forces against the Nationalist troops of Chiang Kai-shek.

—Most recent Communist

attacks, including massive assaults against the Los Minh district headquarters, were beaten back. But increasing quantities of heavy mortars and rockets seem to be moving down the Ho Chi Minh trail.

—Roads laboriously capped through eastern Laos for that supply - the complex apparently have improved the North Vietnamese capacity to infiltrate.

—Whereas in 1965 most infiltrators moved South groups of 100 or 200, intelligence officers believe they now come South in formation of 400 or 500 men.

Allied commanders have faced a crucial question: What percentage of available manpower should be deployed against the major enemy forces, and what percentage should continue with pacification?

This may become academic if the North Vietnamese keep the pressure on. By constantly hammering at the DMZ this year, the Communist forced the U.S. Marine Corps to deploy forces away from pacification to basically static defense.

One American intelligence officer, asked to appraise the enemy’s capabilities and intentions in this region said: "We know there is great activity over there, but we don’t know what will happen. That’s our problem with the Communists."

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Washington Views Latest Red Assaults In Vietnam as Prelude to Peace Moves

By HENRY GEMMER Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Wall Street Journal (1923 - Current file); Jan 31, 1968;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Wall Street Journal (1889-1996)

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Washington Views Latest Red Assaults In Vietnam as Prelude to Peace Moves

By HENRY GEMMER Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Johnson's Vietnam advisers are urging him to consider a return to the peace talks with the North Vietnamese as the only way to end the war. The advisers are warning that the situation in Vietnam is deteriorating rapidly, and they believe that the United States should take a more active role in the negotiations.

Top American military commanders in Vietnam have repeatedly emphasized the need for a political settlement to end the war. They believe that the Vietnamese communists are close to achieving their goal of destroying the South Vietnamese government and winning control of the country. The Vietnamese communists have made significant gains in recent months, and they have shown a willingness to use force to achieve their objectives.

The American military commanders have been urged by President Johnson to take a more active role in the negotiations. They believe that the United States should be willing to make some concessions in order to achieve a political settlement.

One of the major issues in the negotiations is the status of Saigon. The Vietnamese communists are demanding that Saigon be returned to the control of the southern government. The American military commanders believe that this is a non-starter, and they have been urging President Johnson to take a firm stand on this issue.

The American military commanders have also been urging President Johnson to consider a political settlement that would involve some level of autonomy for the southern government. They believe that this would be more acceptable to the Vietnamese communists and would be more likely to lead to a political settlement.

The American military commanders have been urging President Johnson to be flexible in the negotiations. They believe that the United States should be willing to make some concessions in order to achieve a political settlement. They believe that this is the only way to end the war.

The American military commanders have been urging President Johnson to take a more active role in the negotiations. They believe that the United States should be willing to make some concessions in order to achieve a political settlement.
TIME FOR DECISION IN VIET NAM

The Communists are pressing the United States to withdraw its forces, which are considered by many as the biggest threat in the region. They are demanding a negotiated settlement and are prepared to hold talks with the United States representatives, even though considerable progress has been made in the past few weeks.

Unfortunately, this situation has led to the belief that the time has come for the United States to withdraw its forces. This is not just a matter of concern for the Americans, but also for the Vietnamese, who are facing a difficult situation.

The United States must consider the situation carefully and make a decision that will benefit both sides. It is crucial that the United States takes a step towards peace and diplomacy, rather than continuing to engage in military action.

The United States should consider the possibility of negotiating a truce and ending the war. This will not only benefit the United States, but also the Vietnamese, who are suffering greatly.

In conclusion, the United States must take a decisive action and consider the situation carefully. It is important that the United States does not rush into any decision, but rather takes the time to consider all options and make a decision that will benefit both sides.

[End of text]
Saigon: Off Stage Center and Uneasy
By PETER R. KANN

Wall Street Journal (1923 - Current file); Apr 12, 1968;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Wall Street Journal (1889-1996)
Pg. 8

Saigon: Off Stage Center and Uneasy

By PETER R. KANN

SAIGON—A mood of unease and of langour seems to have descended on Americans here during the past few weeks, complementing the hot, humid summer that also is setting in.

Reporters are equipped to deal with facts and figures, not moods and states of mind, but the news here now is more implicit in the questions not being asked than in the answers not being given; the significance is more in the silences than the statements.

There seems to be a spreading sense here that Saigon has been shifted off the center of the world stage, a vaguely disconcerting feeling that major events for once are being shaped not in Vietnam—not in the jungled hails of the DMZ, nor in the pacification projects of coastal hamlets, nor in the political maneuverings at the presidential palace—but in Washington and Chicago, Moscow and Hanoi, and maybe Geneva.

The unease reflects not only the prospects of peace talks, though that is surely a part of it. It also reflects the gathering momentum of American politics, with the possible death of Martin Luther King, and the fires that burned in American cities. All are too distant to be fully comprehended here except as larger, more ominous events overshadowing the Saigon and a second wave, post-Tet recovery and the Thi-Qy conflict, at Saigon's cocktail parties and in its private conversations.

Reports and Rumors

The malaise is found among embassy officials, U.S. aid officers, Saigon soldiers and among fellow correspondents and other Saigon fixtures. People begin conversations with the latest war report or political rumor and end up swapping information on the U.S. political campaign from week-old newspapers that have just arrived. They talk about black riots and white backlash and then stop and wonder if they have been away from home too long to know how deep the racial divisions have become. They discuss peace prospects and realize they know nothing more than they hear from radio announcements out of Washington and other "world capitals."

Saigon had a taste of this last summer. Newark and Detroit temporarily overshadowed the war and the Vietnamese election campaign. Then, as now, there was the irony of combat soldiers writing worried letters home to their endangered families. The Middle East war, too, was a topic of conversation here for several days. Arab jokey were in fashion briefly and Americans spoke wistfully of winnable wars that could be plotted on a map.

Those, however, were diversions; the present mood seems different and somehow deeper. Even the jokes fall flat: President Johnson is asking General William Westmoreland for more troops, the Marines have opened route one from Washington to Baltimore, the U.S. is 66% pacified.

No one here really believes the war is over. The daily press briefings continue as usual with reports of bombing raids and media of bunker destroyed, meeting engagements and casualty counts. But the maps, diagrams and statistics all seem further from reality than usual. Even this week's relief of Khe Sanh, focus of world attention for so many months, has caused few ripples here. In part this may reflect the antilimatic ease with which the relief column reached the base, but even the reasons for the enemy pullback are going largely undebated in this mecca of military analysts.

Tens of thousands of homeless, destitute Vietnamese still crowd emergency refugee camps throughout the country, yet human misery has become a tiresome topic. Pacification chief Robert Kommer bumbles with new confidence, and maybe even some new ideas, for pushing his programs back into the countryside. But even the skeptics and the cynics respond. Saigon seems all but immune to enthusiasm these days.

Before Têt Mr. Kommer's computerized hamlet evaluation system was a topic of much controversy. For several weeks after the Têt offensive correspondents badgered Mr. Kommer's office for the latest computer survey. None has been issued in the 2½ months since Têt. Few, if any, correspondents seem to care.

Gen. Westmoreland announced in Washingom this week that "militarily we have never been in a better relative position in South Vietnam." The judgment is shared by few officials here. A month ago the statement would have prompted a spirited, maybe bitter, Saigon debate. Yet this week the statement was greeted with more yawns than yelps.

President Thieu's government has been highly active the past several weeks, calling reservists, drafting teenagers, replacing province chiefs and centralizing administration. These are reforms American officials have relentlessly pressed for several years. Yet there is little shouting of the triumphs in official U.S. circles now. It's as if they had waited too long for a much-advertised meal, and meanwhile lost their appetites.

Saigon has always been a city divorced from its own country, yet it has nearly constantly been a center for the world's attentions. For a few brief days at Têt Saigon truly became the war-torn capital of a war-ravaged nation. On one of those now-memoryable days, while fireights soared across the city, then-Defense Secretary Robert McNamara was quoted as saying that Saigon was no more dangerous than Washington, where his daughter had been accosted by a purse-snatcher. Saigon laughed.

Outwardly Normal

The Secretary has emerged as something of a prophet. While Washington burned last weekend, Saigon was safe and secure—outwardly back to normal. Pretty Vietnamese girls in white ao dais strolled in the park, shielding themselves from the sun with painted parasols. Flags, an orphaned ten-year-old tour guide, led groups of camera-clicking GIs around the shabby Saigon zoo. On hokey-tok Tu Do Street the pornography peddlers and money changers pried their trades. At the Carols Sportifs, the local country club, French businessmen exchanged misfortunes, while American diplomats and Vietnamese functionaries played lazy sets of tennis.

The 8 p.m. curfew remains a minor annoyance, as does the presidential order shutting down all bars, but most Saigon-based soldiers know by now which ones stay open as secret all-night speakeasies. Civilians plan little curfew parties to which they take air mattresses and toothbrushes so they can spend the evening together on rooftop terraces, sipping cocktails and watching the planes light up the sky over the airport.

The conversation switches awkwardly from Vietnam to black riots to U.S. politics to peace and back to Vietnam. The riots in American cities will soon be over and the summer, after all, could be a quiet one at home. The election campaign in the states will focus more and more on events taking place in Vietnam. Peace, after all, is not a very likely prospect and the hopes will fade. Perhaps peace pressures will produce an explosion here, another coup d'etat. If peace contacts fall, the war could sharply escalate. Maybe the enemy will launch its second-wave attack. So the comments run here, and some or many may prove true. But for the moment, American Saigon idly meanders in the summer heat.

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Air Blows Smash North Viet Human Wave Assaults
Mannock, Robin
Boston Globe (1960-1982); Nov 20, 1965; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Boston Globe (1872-1982)
pg. 2

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Boys Now Men

Hardest-Hit GI Unit Returns From Death Valley Battle

BY HUGH MULLIGAN

AN KHR, Viet Nam (AP)—The brave, young boys who left their youth behind in fighting at a distant battlefield, returned last week to their old regiment, the 1st Cavalry Division, at headquarters in Saigon.

The 3rd Battalion of the 15th Regiment, which bore the brunt of the fighting and suffered the heaviest casualties in the battle, was home in triumph to cheers in the muddy streets of Saigon.

The battalion paraded in a victory parade in the streets of the city, and the 15th Division Band played "The Army's Song" as they passed by.

Captain John M. Wright, the battalion commander, lauded the bravery of his men.

"Your country is proud of you," he said. "The men of the 1st Cavalry Division are proud of you, and your families are proud of you.""
WESTMORELAND: Foe's biggest push to come

General

(See on back page)

SAIGON, Viet Nam, Feb. 1 (d)

—Gen. William C. Westmoreland predicted today that the Communists will follow up their current campaign against key cities of South Viet Nam and "gos for broke" with their biggest offensive of the war, a

[Image of Gen. William Westmoreland]

drive in the northern end of the country.

It will be the enemy's 'main effort,' said the commander of United States forces in South Viet Nam, and 'it could come at any time.'

The four star general said at a press conference this would be the third phase of a three-phase plan hatched in Hanoi last September by North Vietnamesse leaders.

Not fully surprised

Asked if he was surprised by the sudden, widespread offensive, Westmoreland replied: "Not completely. I felt these would be forthcoming during the Tet holiday this year period."

In anticipation of this, Westmoreland said, allied troops were redeployed in several populated areas.

In response to a reporter's question, Westmoreland said "the enemy was counting on a general uprising of the population."

Reactions: One of Anger

"He apparently hoped the people would join his ranks," Westmoreland said. He said the popular reaction seems to be one of outrage.

Following is a partial text of (Continued on page 2, col. 5)
Pride Worn Thin as Yanks Leave Viet

BY PETER ARNETT

SOUTH VIET NAM (AP) — The first American combat troops to leave Viet Nam are heading home after years of fighting in the country. The announcement of the troops' departure comes as the American military is facing a crisis of morale in the face of growing anti-war sentiment in the United States.

Many American soldiers have expressed frustration at being forced to leave a country where the war is far from over. Some have voiced concerns about the safety of their comrades and the prospects of their mission.

The end of American involvement in the Vietnam War marked a significant shift in the course of the conflict. The withdrawal of American forces allowed the North Vietnamese to consolidate their control over the South, leading to the eventual reunification of the country.

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Yank is credited with
18 killed.

Le Joe Marm

spoke with some difficulty be-
cause his jaw is wired. He was
shot in the jaw and neck during
the battle last week.

"It was getting late," he
said, "and they [the com-
mmanding machine gunnery]
seemed to be holding everyone
up. So I went ahead.

The first thing I did was
pick a grenade launcher at
the bunker. Then I took two gre-
ades and an M16 rifle and
went straight up."

Le Joe Marm
Medal of Honor Awarded Fourth Veteran of Vietnam


Medal of Honor Awarded Fourth Veteran of Vietnam

President Johnson, First Lieut. Charles Q. Williams and daughter Shannon outside the White House following the ceremony at which he received the Medal of Honor.

WASHINGTON, June 23—President Johnson awarded today the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military decoration, to an Army first lieutenant who said he would rather have it than be President.

Lieut. Charles Q. Williams received the medal for heroism in South Vietnam.

A tough, wiry, taciturn professional soldier, Lieutenant Williams spoke briefly at the ceremony in the East Room of the White House.

Addressing Mr. Johnson, he said:

"As President Eisenhower said, with all due respect to you, sir, and your duties, he would rather have the Medal of Honor than be President of the United States. These are my sentiments."

The lieutenant had words of praise for the members of the Army Special Forces group and the Navy Seabees who were with him at Donggoal in South Vietnam on June 9 and 10, 1965. Several of the Special Forces men were present for the ceremony.

Five Americans were killed in the action and Lieutenant Williams recalled them with these words:

"For our deceased comrades who are not with us today from Donggoal, if I may offer some small condolence to loved ones, these brave and courageous men did not die in vain, but for a true and just cause which makes our great country what it is today."

Lieutenant Williams received the medal for directing the defense of a Special Forces camp at Donggoal against a 14-hour attack by the Vietcong, who outnumbered his men by five to one. He was wounded but nevertheless managed to direct an evacuation by helicopter.

The lieutenant was the fourth to win the Medal of Honor in Vietnam. Two were awarded posthumously.

Mrs. Williams stood by her husband as Army Secretary Stanley K. Resor read the citation. The Williams's four children were there, too, with Lieutenant Williams's mother, Mrs. Izora Hill of Vance, S. C.

In remarks at the ceremony, the President called Lieutenant Williams's act "a patriot's gift to his country."

He introduced Brig. Gen. John T. Kennedy, 81, Columbus, S. C., one of the oldest living holders of the Medal of Honor. General Kennedy was awarded the medal for heroism in action against insurgent Moros in the Philippines in 1909.

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Lieutenant, Iadragh Hero, Wins the Medal of Honor

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19 (AP) — In a numbing wind outside the Pentagon, 1st Lieut. Walter J. Marm Jr. of the Army received today the military prize of a lifetime — the nation's Medal of Honor — for action in Vietnam.

Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor draped the medal around the neck of the 25-year-old Pennsylvania native and said:

"By your courage and skill, you have set an example which will bring new strength and resolution to all American fighting men."

Lieutenant Marm is the seventh United States serviceman in the Vietnam War to receive the award. He received it for courage during the battle of Iadragh Valley in November, 1965.

The Army provided a full honor ceremony with a 19-gun salute for the young officer from Washington, Pa., who was wounded in the battle that brought him the Medal of Honor. He is credited with killing 18 North Vietnamese soldiers who were firing on his platoon.

Those attending the ceremony included Lieutenant Marm's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Marm of Washington, Pa.; several other relatives, and top military and civilian officials.

"Personal courage is a magnificent thing. The ability to lead other men in the face of extreme danger is a rare gift," Secretary Resor said.

Lieutenant Marm, he continued, met the test of combat early in his military career and "in a situation that demanded all a fighting man could give, he responded with total disregard for self."

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By Fred Farrar

Washington, Dec. 19—Army Lt. Walter J. Marm Jr., the nation’s newest congressional medal of honor winner, said today that he thinks “It’s about time” he went back to Viet Nam.

In saying so, he risked, and received, a maternal chiding.

Marm, 26, of Washington, Pa., made the statement at a press conference after ceremonies in front of the Pentagon. In the ceremonies, Stanley B. Resor, secretary of the army, presented the nation’s highest award for gallantry to Marm on behalf of the President.

Joining as Enlisted Man

Ten medals of honor have been awarded in the Vietnam war. This was the first not presented by President Johnson, who is at his Texas ranch for the holiday season.

At the press conference, Marm, who joined the army as an enlisted man in June, 1964, said that he had decided to make the army his career and that he would like to go back to Viet Nam.

He was asked why, but, before he could reply, his mother, Mrs. Dorothy Marm, cut in and said, only half in jest, “That’s what I’d like to know.”

“I’m a professional soldier,” the young officer said, “and that’s how I can best fulfill my obligation, either by fighting or by training others.”

In Training for Year

“I’ve been training for a year now, and it’s about time I went back,” either as a platoon leader or company commander.

Asked what she thought about her son wanting to go back, his mother said:

“I’m not too happy about it, to tell the truth. I would like him to come home.”

Marm is an instructor in the infantry school at Fort Benning, Ga.

The lieutenant was decorated for heroism displayed Nov. 16, 1965, in the Ia Drang valley battle.

Kills Fear Reds

Marm was in command of a platoon of the 1st air cavalry division. The platoon was assigned to go to the aid of another platoon surrounded by a communist regiment.

When heavy enemy fire forced them to take cover, Marm braved enemy fire to kill four Reds moving into position to fire upon them.

By that time, his platoon had begun to draw fire from a concealed machine gun. So Marm deliberately exposed himself to its fire in a successful attempt to pinpoint the gun’s position.

He attempted to silence it with an anti-tank weapon. But when it continued to fire, he charged more than 30 yards through heavy fire to attack the position with hand grenades, killing some of the eight-man crew.

Then, despite wounds in the face and neck, he killed the remaining machine gunners with rifle fire.

Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor presents medal of honor to Lt. Walter J. Marm Jr., of Washington, Pa., for valor in Viet Nam.

(AP Photo)
President Gives Medal of Honor to Medic: Paratrooper Hailed as a Selfless Hero in Vietnam War
Special to The New York Times
New York Times (1923-Current file); Mar 10, 1967;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)
PP. 20

President Gives Medal of Honor to Medic
Paratrooper Hailed as a Selfless Hero in Vietnam War

WASHINGTON, March 9—President Johnson draped the Medal of Honor today around Specialist 6 Lawrence Joel, a paratrooper medic, and remarked that the soldier's heroism in Vietnam "indicates as nothing else could the willingness of his country to sacrifice to stand and to persist in freedom's cause."

Mr. Johnson moved swiftly through that sentence in his brief prepared address. It was, to make that point and to reinforce his message that he had arranged an elaborate military ceremony on the White House lawn.

Ruffles, flourishes, honor guards and 21 salvos of salute—the kind normally offered only to visiting chiefs of state—were offered to the 39-year-old soldier who was the first medic to be so honorized in Vietnam.

Specialist Joel is one of 10 children of a family in Winston-Salem, N.C.

At the age of 8, he was delivered by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Trenton Joel, who were too poor to care for him, to foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Samuel, who had five daughters but no son.

After high school, in 1946, he enlisted for three years, then tried civilian life for four years and re-enlisted in 1953.

Today, after service in Germany as well as Vietnam, Specialist Joel stood at the White House beside his wife, in a miniskirt, and the President and Vice President of the United States. He heard himself praised for gallantry that saved the lives of many men and inspired the performance of many more.

Behind him walked a 16-year-old son, Tremaine Cornelius, who wants to go to West Point and follow his father into the Army, a 14-year-old daughter, Deborah Lois, his foster parents, six sisters, a brother, in-laws, nephews, aunts, a dozen friends and his pastor, the Rev. A. S. Johnson of Fayetteville, N.C.

Specialist Joel, a husky six-foot-six, had his hat and his tercuss morphine...to command trembled while he saluted.

"After being struck a second

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JOHNSON TO PRESENT 5 MEDALS OF HONOR

WASHINGTON, Nov. 18 (UPI) — President Johnson will award Medals of Honor tomorrow to five Army men, including the first chaplain to receive one for extraordinary heroism in Vietnam.

The chaplain, Capt. Angelo J. Litely, 37-year-old Roman Catholic from Washington, D.C., will receive the nation's highest award for valor for helping to save wounded servicemen.

Sgt. Sammy L. Davis, 22, of Martinsville, Ind., will be honored for single-handedly manning a howitzer and firing it into enemy positions, then after being wounded joining another howitzer crew until the enemy force retired.

Capt. James A. Taylor, 31, of Fort Knox, Ky., will be honored for rescuing five wounded men from a burning assault vehicle despite heavy Communist fire and exploding ammunition within the vehicle.

Specialist 5 Dwight H. Johnson, 21, of Detroit, who killed several Communist soldiers with a pistol and submachine-gun after he was forced to abandon his disabled tank, will also get a medal.

The fifth to be honored is Specialist 4 Gary G. Wetzel, 21, of Oak Creek, Wis., who rescued wounded members of his helicopter crew and then fought off Communist soldiers after his arm had been blown off by a rocket explosion.
Johnson Awards Medal of Honor to Four Heroes of the Vietnam War

New York Times (1923-Current file); Jan 17, 1969;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)
Pg. 3

Johnson Awards Medal of Honor to Four Heroes of the Vietnam War

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16 (AP) — President Johnson gave Medals of Honor to four Vietnam war heroes today at the White House.

The medals went to men from each of the armed services, two of them from Newnan, Ga., where Mr. Johnson noted their families were friends.

All four won the nation's highest honor for heroism in rescue operations at different places and times in Vietnam.

From Newman were Lieut. Col. Joe M. Jackson, 40 years old, of the Air Force and Major Stephen W. Fless, 30, of the Marine Corps. The others were S. Sgt. Drew D. Dix, 24, of the Army and West Point, N.Y., and Lieut. Clyde E. Lassen, 20, a naval officer from Fort Myers, Fla. Members of their families and their Congressmen were present for the awards, as were Mr. Johnson's daughters, Mrs. Charles S. Robb and Mrs. Patrick J. Nugent, whose husbands are serving in Vietnam.

The medals brought to 70 the number Mr. Johnson has presented personally in the last five years.

"For a final time during my Presidency," he said, "this house is graced by the company of heroes who have scaled heights known only to the bravest of men."

With a smile, the President added he did not know what there was in the Georgia water. He said he did not know of any other town with a population under 5,000 that had produced two medal winners.

After the ceremony, he insisted on special pictures with the Georgians.

Mr. Johnson said that the four men shared one distinction.

"Each man heard the call of duty in an hour of hard challenge and each man answered that call beyond duty," he said. "Their deeds will live forever in the records of battle."

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, former United States commander in Vietnam and now Army Chief of Staff, was present, along with the other Joint Chiefs. The Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force read the citations for the medals before Mr. Johnson hung them with their blue ribbons around the necks of the men.

Sergeant Drew got his award for heroism in action at Chuauby Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 of 1968. The citation said that time and again he led rescue missions that resulted in the saving of 14 civilians, the capture of 20 of the enemy and the killing of at least 14 enemy and possibly 25 more.

Major Fless landed a helicopter under intense enemy fire and evacuated four American soldiers who had been bayoneted and beaten by the Vietcong on a beach near Quang Ngai Aug. 19, 1967.

Lieutenant Lassen saved two drowned American fliers during a midnight helicopter rescue mission to a steep, tree-covered hill last June 19. It took two attempts, and Lieutenant Lassen had only five minutes of fuel left when he landed aboard the U.S.S. Jouett.

Colonel Jackson was cited for rescuing a three-man Air Force combat control team from an overrun Army Special Forces camp at last May 12.

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Medal of Honor Winner Enlists Again After Year

PHILADELPHIA, March 28 (UPI)—Sgt. David C. Dolby, a 22-year-old Medal of Honor winner, re-enlisted yesterday after a year in civilian life and asked for reassignment to Vietnam.

Sgt. Dolby of Suburban Oaks said he felt he was better suited to helping his fellow man in the Army. He said after signing for a three-year hitch that friends advised him against it because it was pushing his luck.

Sergeant Dolby, who has spent the last year working in the construction trade and attending colleges, said he would not be "reckless."

"I never was,” he said. “I just tried to do my job.”

He received the Medal of Honor Sept. 28, 1967, for action on May 21, 1966, when he took command of a 50-man unit whose leaders were dying, and rallied it in the face of heavy enemy fire.

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Appendix C: AFGHANISTAN

Marines and Afghans Drive Against Rebels Tied to Deadly Attacks

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)
pg. 13

RANDAGAL, Afghanistan, Aug 13

United States and Afghan forces launched an offensive against Taliban and insurgents in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, driving them from their positions and killing scores of Taliban fighters. The operation was expected to last at least two weeks.

The Taliban had been under pressure from the Afghan government and its allies, including the United States and its NATO partners. The operation was part of a broader strategy to strengthen the Afghan government's control over the country.

The operation was launched in the eastern province of Nangarhar, where the Taliban had stronghold. The operation involved a combination of aerial and地面 forces, including Afghan commandos and special forces from the United States.

The operation was supported by air strikes and artillery fire, which helped to clear the area of Taliban fighters. The operation was expected to be a major test of the Afghan government's ability to fight the Taliban and to stabilize the country.

The operation was welcomed by the Afghan government and its allies, who believed it was a necessary step to strengthen the Afghan government's control over the country. The operation was also welcomed by the international community, who believed it was a necessary step to stabilize the country and to fight the Taliban.
Battle Company Is Out There
Rubin, Elizabeth
New York Times (1923-Current file); Feb 24, 2008;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)
pg. M38

The counterinsurgency in Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley one day after another of difficult decisions and bloody consequences. Hearts and minds are hardening.

By Elizabeth Rubin
Photographs by Lynsey Addario

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McCain and Obama Advisers Briefed on Deteriorating Afghan War

Mazzetti, Mark; Schmitt, Eric

New York Times (1923-Current file); Oct 31, 2008;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)

pg. A11

By MARK MAZZETTI and ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON - Two weeks ago, senior Bush administration officials gathered in secret with Afghan leaders and officials from the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, just a few blocks from the White House. The group was there to deliver a grim message: the situation in Afghanistan is getting worse.

Their warnings came from the presidential campaigns of John McCain and Barack Obama.

Over two days, according to participants in the discussions, the experts told the Bush administration that the United States could lose control of the war in Afghanistan and that the situation was rapidly deteriorating. They urged the officials to tell the president that he needed to be prepared to send more troops to Afghanistan to avoid a major setback in the war against al Qaeda and the Taliban.

With American casualties rising and the United States facing a new political and military challenge, the meeting in Kabul was a key moment in the administration's efforts to forge a strategy for the war in Afghanistan.

The senior officials acknowledged that the administration was facing a difficult decision about how to respond to the growing threat posed by the Taliban and its allies, who are believed to have gained control of large swaths of territory in Afghanistan.

The New York Times

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The Distance Between 'We Must' and 'We Can'  
Trab, James  
New York Times (1923-Current file); Oct 4, 2009;  
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)  
pg. WK1

On Afghanistan, a classic debate on how to win is underway. A new surge of American troops to win will be inconsequential unless we also decide whether to win.

By JAMES TRAB

WASHINGTON, Oct. 4—Five weeks ago, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates decided that more American troops were needed in Afghanistan to win the war against the Taliban. But to do so, he said, he would need to change the strategy. And to change the strategy, he said, he would need to change the war.

The war is not going well. The Taliban are not going to go away. And the anti-Taliban forces are not going to go away. The war is not going to go away. And the anti-Taliban forces are not going to go away.
Afghan War: In One Moment, Heroism and Heartbreak The first Medal of...

Rubin, Elizabeth

New York Times (1923-Current file); Nov 14, 2010;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)

pg. WK3

The first Medal of Honor to be presented to a living American since Vietnam reveals a lot about the Afghanistan...

By ELIZABETH RUBIN

Three years and three weeks ago, a U.S. soldier taking fire on the Korengal Valley, was awarded the medal posthumously. It was a move to the right place at the right time. The first medal presented to a living American since Vietnam, it was an emotional moment for the soldiers and their families.

At the time of the award, the soldier was described as a hero who gave his life in the line of duty. The medal was presented to the soldier's family at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. The ceremony was attended by high-ranking military officials and the soldiers' families.

The Korengal Valley was not destined to be named by American fighting men and their weaponry. Later, in service of each other, the men and their weapons were named.

The only reason they didn't take fire from the date, was the date set by the date. They were Protocol, Protocol, Protocol. The Protocol made it clear that it was protocol to

...
Rare Honor for a Living Service Member
Cooper, Helene
New York Times (1923-Current file); Nov 17, 2010; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010) pg. A21

Staff Sgt. Salvatore A. Giunta received the Medal of Honor from President Obama on Tuesday.

By HELENE COOPER
WASHINGTON — In an emotional ceremony, President Obama on Tuesday awarded the Medal of Honor to an Army staff sergeant who placed himself in the line of fire in Afghanistan to try to save his squad mates and to prevent and comfort a dying American soldier.

The young staff sergeant, Salvatore A. Giunta, now 25, of Hawi, Hawi, was an Army specialist when he took part in the firefight in eastern Afghanistan three years ago. He is the first living American soldier to receive the medal, the military’s highest honor, for an action in any war since Vietnam.

Sergeant Giunta and the other soldiers of Company B, Second Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, were part of a campaign to provide food, winter clothing and medical care to Afghans in remote villages. They were ambushed in the Korengal Valley in a coordinated attack from three sides.

In a packed ceremony in the East Room before Sergeant Giunta’s family, squad mates and the parents of two soldiers who were killed in the ambush, Mr. Obama recounted the events on the night of Oct. 25, 2007.

“The moon was full; the light was enough to travel by without using their night-vision goggles,” Mr. Obama said, with Sergeant Giunta standing at his side, looking straight ahead. “They had not traveled a quarter-mile before the silence was shattered. It was an ambush so close that the tracks of the grenade and the whines of the bullets were simultaneous.”

The two lead squad men went down. So did a third who was struck in the helmet. Sergeant Giunta charged into the wall of bullets to pull him to safety, Mr. Obama said. Sergeant Giunta was hit twice, but was protected by his body armor.

The sergeant could see the other two wounded Americans. Mr. Obama recounted:

By now, the firing was so intense you could hear a rattle from across the room. One Army officer took out a handkerchief and wiped his eyes.

Sergeant Giunta looked down as the president described how he and his squad mates threw grenades, which they used as cover to run toward the wounded soldiers. All three, they did under constant fire, Mr. Obama said. Finally, they reached one of the men. As another soldier tended to him, Sergeant Giunta sprinted ahead.

“He crested a hill alone with no cover but the dust kicked up by the storm of bullets still biting into the ground,” Mr. Obama said.

And there Sergeant Giunta saw “a chilling sight” — the silhouettes of two insurgents carrying away the other wounded American — his friend, Sgt. Joshua C. Brennan. Sergeant Giunta leaped forward, and fatally shot one insurgent while wounding the other. Then he rushed to his friend. He dragged him to cover and stayed with him, trying to stop the bleeding 12 minutes, until help arrived.

Sergeant Brennan died later of his wounds. So did Specialist Hugo V. Mendoza, the platoon medic. Five others were wounded.

Speaking to reporters after receiving the award, Sergeant Giunta said the medal was “bittersweet.”

“I lost two dear friends of mine,” he said. “I would give this back in a second to have my friends with me right now.”

The outposts in the Korengal Valley were dismantled this spring after months of patrols that cost the American military dearly. Forces were moved to provide security to larger population centers.
President Obama awarded the nation's highest military honor Monday to a U.S. soldier who led a counterattack in Afghanistan after he and his comrades were asked to "defend the indefensible."

Clinton Romesha, a former Army staff sergeant, earned the Medal of Honor for leading the defense of a plywood-and-concrete outpost dangerously placed in a valley of the Afghanistan mountains, and staffed by only 53 American troops.

More than 300 Taliban fighters attacked Combat Outpost Keating from above on Oct. 3, 2009. Throughout a day-long firefight, Romesha led efforts to beat back the Taliban after some of its fighters penetrated the camp.

The outpost "sat at the bottom of a steep valley," Obama said, and a later investigation determined that the surrounding mountain terrain "gave ideal cover for insurgents to attack."

That investigation also found that Combat Outpost Keating "was tactically indefensible," Obama said. "But that's what these soldiers were asked to do, defend the indefensible."

Eight soldiers died in the battle and 22 were wounded, including Romesha. CNN anchor Jake Tapper wrote about the attack in his book, The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor.

Romesha, 31, who sustained shrapnel words, cited the "loss of our battle buddies" in a statement to reporters after the Medal of Honor ceremony, saying he has "mixed emotions of both joy and sadness," and is "feeling conflicted with this medal I now wear."

He added: "I accept this tremendous honor on behalf of all soldiers who have served with me that day. This award is for the eight soldiers that didn't make it and for the rest of the team that fought valiantly and magnificently that day. I will forever be humbled by their bravery, their commitment to service and their loyalty to one another."

At the White House ceremony, Obama described Romesha as "a pretty humble guy" who was born in Lake City, Calif., a town of less than 100 people. No longer in the military, Romesha works in the oil fields of North Dakota.

This is not even the biggest event of Romesha's week, Obama joked, as he and his wife celebrate their 13th wedding anniversary.

In describing why Romesha deserves the Medal of Honor, Obama said he "gathered up his guys" after the Taliban invaded the outpost, "and they began to fight their way back -- storming one building and then another, pushing the enemy back, having to actually shoot up at the enemy in
the mountains above."

Amid fire and smoke, Obama said, "Clint stood in the doorway calling in airstrikes that shook
the earth all around them."

In saluting all of the Americans at Combat Outpost Keating, Obama repeated that one of the
lessons "is that our troops should not -- ever -- be put in a position where they have to defend the
indefensible."

He added: "That's what these soldiers did for each other in sacrifice driven by pure love."
President Obama on Monday awarded the Medal of Honor to Army Staff Sgt. Ty M. Carter, who hopes to use the award to help others suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Carter, 33, has struggled with PTSD since a 2009 battle in eastern Afghanistan that cost eight fellow soldiers their lives. The Washington state resident is the fifth living recipient of the nation’s highest military honor for heroic actions in Iraq or Afghanistan.

In bestowing the medal at the White House, Obama hailed Carter’s gallantry in combat and “his courage in the other battle he has fought” — a reference to coping with PTSD. Obama said it was “absolutely critical ... to put an end to any stigma” that prevents troops from getting treatment.

Carter, then a specialist, distinguished himself when more than 300 Afghan insurgents launched a coordinated attack at dawn on Oct. 3, 2009, in an effort to overrun Combat Outpost Keating, a vulnerable position surrounded by peaks of the Hindu Kush mountains in the remote Kandesh district of Afghanistan’s Nuristan province. Of his 53 fellow 4th Infantry Division soldiers who defended the outpost that day, eight were killed and more than 25 were injured, according to the Army.

“Without regard to his own safety, Spc. Ty Michael Carter ... resupplied ammunition to fighting positions, provided first aid to a battle buddy, killed enemy troops, and valiantly risked his own life to save a fellow Soldier who was injured and pinned down by overwhelming enemy fire,” the Army said in its medal citation.

Carter, who was wounded in the fighting, became the second survivor of that battle to receive the Medal of Honor. In February, Obama awarded the medal to Staff Sgt. Clinton L. Romesha for actions in another part of the outpost. It was the first battle to produce two living Medal of Honor recipients since the 1967 Battle of Ap Bac during the Vietnam War.

What became known as the Battle of Kandesh exposed flaws in the military’s counterinsurgency strategy and failures in addressing an increasingly untenable situation for isolated U.S. troops near the Pakistani border. A Pentagon review found that the outpost, which was closed immediately after the attack, should never have been established because it was too difficult to defend.

Carter braved fire from insurgents armed with recoilless rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, antiaircraft machine guns, mortars, sniper rifles and small arms as he repeatedly ran across open ground to deliver ammunition to comrades and to rescue a badly wounded soldier, Spec. Stephan
L. Mace, 21, of Lovettsville.

Carter ran into “the blizzard of bullets and steel” not once or twice, “but perhaps 10 times,” Obama said.

Mace later died in surgery at a field hospital, and Carter blamed himself, believing that he had “failed” because he could not save the young specialist he had carried to safety.

Obama noted Monday that another survivor of the battle who struggled with PTSD, Spec. Edward W. Faulkner Jr., “eventually lost his own life back home.” Faulkner, 27, of Burlington, N.C., died in 2010 of an accidental methadone overdose, with PTSD a “contributing” condition, according to his death certificate.

Carter’s experiences led him to become active in helping veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars deal with PTSD. He is now stationed with the 7th Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, in his home state.

In an article published on the Army’s Web site, Carter said that until the battle at Combat Outpost Keating, he believed “myths” that PTSD was not a real disorder but was “a reason for soldiers to get out of work.”

Now, he said, “I’m hoping that I can help people through what I have to say, what I’ve experienced, to help them go seek help, or else we’re going to have more out there who self-medicate and end up taking their own lives.”

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Former Army Capt. William Swenson receives Medal of Honor at White House

By David Nakamura, Published: October 15, 2013

It was a tender moment that demonstrated the brotherhood of the U.S. servicemen who fought for their lives in a remote Afghanistan province four years ago. In the heat of battle, Army Capt. William Swenson leaned in and kissed the head of a severely wounded comrade while loading him into an evacuation helicopter.

On Tuesday, President Obama cited that moment — captured in a video taken by a medevac crewman — as he presented Swenson, 34, with the Medal of Honor for heroic service in the Ganjgal valley in eastern Afghanistan. Swenson, who has since left the military, is credited with risking his life to help save other U.S. troops and Afghan allies and retrieve the bodies of four Americans who were killed Sept. 8, 2009.

“Amidst the whipping wind and the deafening roar of the helicopter blades, he does something unexpected. He leans in and kisses the wounded soldier on the head — a simple act of compassion and loyalty to a brother in arms,” Obama said of Swenson during a ceremony attended by 250 guests, including Vice President Biden, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, first lady Michelle Obama and several previous medal recipients.

Obama said that the nation has awarded the Medal of Honor, its highest military decoration, nearly 3,500 times, and that the video of Swenson “may be the first time that we can actually bear witness to a small fraction of those actions for ourselves.”

Swenson, who lives in Seattle, did not speak during the White House ceremony. Afterward, an Army spokesman confirmed that Swenson had asked to return to active duty more than two years after he left the service. “We are currently reviewing his request and processing it within established policy,” said the spokesman, George Wright. Swenson would have to undergo a routine drug test and background check.

A return to active service would be a remarkable turnabout.

Swenson’s path to the White House ceremony was a rocky one. After he criticized his Army superiors, saying they failed to provide enough air and artillery support during the 2009 engagement, his medal nomination was delayed for years. Army officials said his nomination packet was lost in a computer system for 19 months.

Swenson became the second service member to be awarded the Medal of Honor for the Ganjgal battle. The other recipient, former Marine Cpl. Dakota Meyer, who accepted the award in 2011, was not in attendance Tuesday. Swenson has expressed skepticism about the accuracy of Meyer’s account of the battle.
Two other Marines — Ademola Fabayo and Juan Rodriguez-Chavez, who helped Swenson and Meyer in the rescue effort — attended Tuesday’s ceremony. They both have received the Navy Cross for their actions.

During an interview with The Washington Post, Swenson said he would accept the medal to honor fellow soldiers and Marines and the family members of those who died. “It does not really belong to me; it belongs to that event and the people I stood with,” he said of the medal.

In the interview, he said he had no memory of kissing the head of Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Westbrook, who had been shot in the cheek and shoulder, until he saw the video this year. “You could have told me it happened, and I wouldn’t have believed you,” he said. “But it did, and it was captured on film. And it offered a glimpse of the humanity that does occur on battlefields.”

Westbrook, the father of three, died about a month after the battle of complications from a blood transfusion. His wife, Charlene Westbrook, was in the audience at the White House on Tuesday. “Charlene will always be grateful for the final days she was able to spend with her husband,” Obama said.

Swenson and Westbrook had been working for a year as embedded trainers with the Afghan Border Police in Kunar province in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border. They were trying to prepare the Afghan forces to patrol remote tribal areas often teeming with insurgents and beyond the control of the Afghan national government.

On the day of the battle, about 11 U.S. trainers and 80 Afghan troops set out to meet with town elders. As soon as they reached the valley, they were ambushed by Taliban fighters hidden on the higher terrain that ringed the valley on three sides. Five Americans, 10 Afghan troops and an Afghan interpreter were slain.

Looking back on his last moments with Westbrook, Swenson said of the video: “To see him and to see me in that situation gives me comfort. . . . I would trade anything for that not to be our last moment, but that was our last moment, and I’ll always have that now.”