

GENERAL ORDERS }
No. 23HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, DC, 20 September 1991

AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR



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

Sergeant First Class Fred W. Zabitosky, RA12587913 (then Staff Sergeant), United States Army, who distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity, at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty within enemy controlled territory in Laos, on 19 February 1968, while serving as an assistant team leader of a nine-man Special Forces long-range reconnaissance patrol. Sergeant Zabitosky's patrol was operating deep within enemy controlled territory when they were attacked by a numerically superior North Vietnamese Army Unit. Sergeant Zabitosky rallied his team members, deployed them into defensive positions, and, exposing himself to concentrated enemy automatic weapons fire, directed their return fire. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Sergeant Zabitosky ordered his patrol to move to a landing zone for helicopter extraction while he covered their withdrawal with rifle fire and grenades. Rejoining the patrol under increasing enemy pressure, he positioned each man in a tight perimeter defense and continually moved from man to man, encouraging them and controlling their defensive fire. Mainly due to his example, the outnumbered patrol maintained its precarious position until the arrival of tactical air support and a helicopter extraction team. As the rescue helicopters arrived, the determined North Vietnamese pressed their attack. Sergeant Zabitosky repeatedly exposed himself to their fire to adjust suppressive helicopter gunship fire around the landing zone. After boarding one of the rescue helicopters, he positioned himself in the door delivering fire on the enemy as the ship took off. The helicopter was engulfed in a hail of bullets and Sergeant Zabitosky was thrown from the craft as it spun out of control and crashed. Recovering consciousness, he ignored his extremely painful injuries and moved to the flaming wreckage. Heedless of the danger of exploding ordnance and fuel, he pulled the severely wounded pilot from the searing blaze and made repeated attempts to rescue his patrol members, but was driven back by the intense heat. Despite his own serious burns and crushed ribs, he carried and dragged the unconscious pilot through a curtain of enemy fire to within ten feet of a hovering rescue helicopter before collapsing. Sergeant Zabitosky's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and



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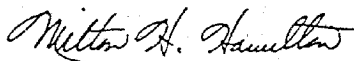
reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (This General Order supersedes the award of the Medal of Honor to Sergeant First Class Fred W. Zabisosky as announced in General Orders Number 27, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, DC., dated 17 April 1969).

[TAPC-PDA]

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:



MILTON H. HAMILTON
Administrative Assistant to the
Secretary of the Army

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