March 25, 2019

MEDAL OF HONOR DAY

Honor those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty.
The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty:

While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

There are three distinct versions (one for the Army, one for the Air Force, and one for the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard). (https://valor.defense.gov/description-of-awards/)
President Abraham Lincoln signed two bills introduced into Congress for the Navy Medal of Honor (Dec., 1861) and Army Medal of Honor (July, 1862). In fact, almost half of the Medals of Honor were awarded to recipients from the Civil War. Other historical notes:

*Feb., 1861 - Army Assistant Surgeon Bernard J.D. Irwin rescues the 60 soldiers of 2d Lt. George Bascom's unit at Apache Pass, Arizona. Though the Medal of Honor had not yet been proposed in Congress (and actually wouldn't even be presented to Irwin until 1894), it was the first heroic act for which the Medal of Honor would be awarded.

*May, 1861 - In Alexandria, VA Army Private Francis Edwin Brownell performs the first action of the Civil War to merit the Medal of Honor.

*June, 1861 - Aboard the U.S.S. Pawnee, John Williams courage despite his wounds, his refusal to leave any man behind, and his love for the flag became the first act by a member of the U.S. Navy to merit the Medal of Honor.

*July, 1861 - Eleven soldiers at the Battle of Bull Run perform actions that eventually will make them recipients of the Medal of Honor. The number includes Dr. Mary Walker who was involved in three major battles and became the ONLY woman to get the Medal. (http://www.cmohs.org/medal-history.php)
Although it is the Congressional Medal of Honor, it is the President of the United States who presents the award in the name of Congress. The official name is simply the Medal of Honor.
Criteria to receive the Medal of Honor

What are the guidelines for which the medal could be awarded?

On July 25, 1963 Congress established a set of guidelines under which the Medal of Honor could be awarded:

a.) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;

b.) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or,

c.) while serving with friendly forces engaged in armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.
Three Medals of Honor
Can you tell which is the Medal awarded by the Army?
By the Navy/Marines/Coast Guard?
By the Air Force?

What is similar in all three medals? Why?
Recipients of the Medal of Honor

MEDAL OF HONOR
AT A GLANCE

79
Living
Recipients

19
Double
Recipients

1861
Year Medal of Honor Introduced

3,493
Recipients

3,505
Difference between the Medal of Honor and Purple Heart

The Purple Heart is awarded to a member of the Armed Services who was mortally injured or killed in combat. This award has been given since the Revolutionary War by George Washington until today. The Medal of Honor is given for acts of bravery. Purple Heart Day is August 7th.

Medal of Honor Day is a United States Federal Holiday that is celebrated every year on March 25. Pres. George H. W. Bush signed it into law in Nov., 1990 so it has been celebrated since 1991. The holiday was chosen to be celebrated on March 25 to honor the 23 men who participated in the Great Locomotive Chase and received Medals of Honor for it.

Special Recipients of the Medal of Honor: Youngest

The youngest ever recipient of the Medal of Honor earned the award at age 11 and received it at age 13. His name was **Willie Johnston**. Johnston enlisted in the Union Army alongside his father, in June 1861, as a drummer boy. A year later, their unit -- the 3rd Vermont Infantry -- was overpowered by Confederate Forces and forced to retreat down the Virginia Peninsula. During this famous "Seven Days Retreat," the soldiers and other drummers in Willie's unit shed their weapons and instruments, in an effort to flee faster. Willie, however, held onto his drum and was later asked to play for the entire division on July 4th... an exemplary act, which led President Lincoln to recommend him for the Medal
She was assigned to duty and served as an assistant surgeon in charge of female prisoners at Louisville, Ky., upon the recommendation of Major-Generals Sherman and Thomas, and faithfully served as contract surgeon in the service of the United States, and has devoted herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health, and has also endured hardships as a prisoner of war four months in a Southern prison while acting as contract surgeon.
Special Recipients of the Medal of Honor:

Only President

Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt distinguished himself by acts of bravery on 1 July, 1898, near Santiago de Cuba, Republic of Cuba, while leading a daring charge up San Juan Hill. Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt, in total disregard for his personal safety, and accompanied by only four or five men, led a desperate and gallant charge up San Juan Hill, encouraging his troops to continue the assault through withering enemy fire over open countryside. Facing the enemy's heavy fire, he displayed extraordinary bravery throughout the charge, and was the first to reach the enemy trenches, where he quickly killed one of the enemy with his pistol, allowing his men to continue the assault. His leadership and valor turned the tide in the Battle for San Juan Hill. Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.
Special Recipients of the Medal of Honor:

Like Father, Like Son

Arthur MacArthur, Jr. and his son, General Douglas MacArthur were the first father and son to both be awarded Medals of Honor.
Special Recipients of the Medal of Honor:
Like Father, Like Son

Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. - For gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty on 6 June 1944, in France. After 2 verbal requests to accompany the leading assault elements in the Normandy invasion had been denied, Brig. Gen. Roosevelt's written request for this mission was approved and he landed with the first wave of the forces assaulting the enemy-held beaches (the only General to land on Normandy). He repeatedly led groups from the beach, over the seawall and established them inland. His valor, courage, and presence in the very front of the attack and his complete unconcern at being under heavy fire inspired the troops to heights of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. Although the enemy had the beach under constant direct fire, Brig. Gen. Roosevelt moved from one locality to another, rallying men around him, directed and personally led them against the enemy. Under his seasoned, precise, calm, and unfaltering leadership, assault troops reduced beach strong points and rapidly moved inland with minimum casualties. He thus contributed substantially to the successful establishment of the beachhead in France. (http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-detail/2972/roosevelt-theodore-jr.php)
Special Recipients of the Medal of Honor:

First African American: WILLIAM H. CARNEY

July, 1863 - When the color sergeant was shot down, this soldier grasped the flag, led the way to the parapet, and planted the colors thereon. When the troops fell back he brought off the flag, under a fierce fire in which he was twice severely wounded. (Army - 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry) (http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-detail/224/carney-william-h.php) (This was dramatized in the movie “Glory”)
Corporal Joseph H. De Castro (November 14, 1844 – May 8, 1892), was the first Hispanic-American to be awarded the United States' highest military decoration for valor in combat—the Medal of Honor—for having distinguished himself during Pickett's Charge in the Battle of Gettysburg of the American Civil War on July 3, 1863. During the battle, De Castro attacked a Confederate flag bearer from the 19th Virginia Infantry regiment, with the staff of his own colors and seized the opposing regiment's flag, handing the prize over to General Alexander S. Webb.
Recipients of the Medal of Honor: By Ethnicity

There have been 88 African-American MOH Recipients.
There have been 59 Hispanic-American MOH Recipients.
There have been 33 Asian-American MOH Recipients.
There have been 32 Native-American MOH Recipients.

http://www.cmohs.org/medal-faq.php
Special Recipients of the Medal of Honor: 19 are Double-Recipients!

Five persons received the award from two different branches of service for the same act of courage (example, a Marine who received the award from the Army and Navy because there was no Marine award). 14 Medal of Honor recipients received two awards for two different events! For example:

Robert Augustus Sweeney (seamen) (African American)—
First action: Jumped overboard and assisted in saving from drowning a shipmate who had fallen overboard into a strongly running tide (USS Kearsarge, October 26, 1881)
Second action: Rescued from drowning A. A. George, who had fallen overboard from that vessel (USS Jamestown, December 20, 1883)
In a White House ceremony on October 17, 2018, President Donald Trump awarded the Medal of Honor to Sergeant Major John L. Canley for actions in Vietnam as a Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant.

Canley’s company was detailed to relieve surrounded friendly forces in Hue City, Vietnam, at the end of January 1968. As the unit moved towards their goal, they faced multiple attacks, during which Canley was injured. Despite his wounds, he faced enemy fire to save other wounded members of his team. After his commanding officer was severely wounded, Canley took command and led the charge into the city. In the ensuing days, he led multiple high-risk, necessary attacks against the enemy, repeatedly exposing himself to enemy fire in rescuing injured Marines.
More than half of all Medals of Honor have been awarded posthumously; a testament to the danger of the courageous sort of "beyond the call of duty" acts, which merit the honor in the first place.

Here, Maureen Murphy holds the Medal of Honor that was presented to her by U.S. President George W. Bush, after her son, Lt. Michael Murphy, was posthumously honored during a ceremony at the White House, October 22, 2007. Murphy, a Navy Seal, was the first soldier to be awarded the Medal of Honor for combat in Afghanistan.
Special Recipients: Desmond Doss

When the 1st Battalion assaulted a jagged escarpment 400 feet high in Okinawa (April-May, 1945) but with heavy losses. Pfc. Doss refused to seek cover and remained in the fire-swept area with the many stricken, carrying them 1 by 1 to the edge of the escarpment and there lowering them on a rope-supported litter down the face of a cliff to friendly hands. On 2 May, he exposed himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire in rescuing a wounded man 200 yards forward of the lines on the same escarpment; and 2 days later he treated 4 men who had been cut down while assaulting a strongly defended cave, advancing through a shower of grenades to within 8 yards of enemy forces in a cave's mouth, where he dressed his comrades' wounds before making 4 separate trips under fire to evacuate them to safety. On 5 May, he unhesitatingly braved enemy shelling and small arms fire to assist an artillery officer. He applied bandages, moved his patient to a spot that offered protection from small arms fire and, while artillery and mortar shells fell close by, painstakingly administered plasma. Later that day, when an American was severely wounded by fire from a cave, Pfc. Doss crawled to him where he had fallen 25 feet from the enemy position, rendered aid, and carried him 100 yards to safety while continually exposed to enemy fire.

(continued on next slide)
Special Recipients: Desmond Doss

On 21 May, in a night attack on high ground near Shuri, he remained in exposed territory while the rest of his company took cover, fearlessly risking the chance that he would be mistaken for an infiltrating Japanese and giving aid to the injured until he was himself seriously wounded in the legs by the explosion of a grenade. Rather than call another aid man from cover, he cared for his own injuries and waited 5 hours before litter bearers reached him and started carrying him to cover. The trio was caught in an enemy tank attack and Pfc. Doss, seeing a more critically wounded man nearby, crawled off the litter; and directed the bearers to give their first attention to the other man. Awaiting the litter bearers' return, he was again struck, this time suffering a compound fracture of 1 arm. With magnificent fortitude he bound a rifle stock to his shattered arm as a splint and then crawled 300 yards over rough terrain to the aid station. Through his outstanding bravery and unflinching determination in the face of desperately dangerous conditions Pfc. Doss saved the lives of many soldiers. His name became a symbol throughout the 77th Infantry Division for outstanding gallantry far above and beyond the call of duty. (Adapted from http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-detail/2717/doss-desmond-t.php ) (His story was made famous by the film “Hacksaw Ridge”)
Most Recent Recipient from Florida: Paul Ray Smith, Sgt. First Class

The award was presented to his son David at the White House by President George W. Bush on July 8, 2005 for his heroic actions with an armed enemy near Baghdad International Airport, Baghdad, Iraq on 4 April 2003. On that day, Sergeant First Class Smith was engaged in the construction of a prisoner of war holding area when his Task Force was violently attacked by a company-sized enemy force. Realizing the vulnerability of over 100 fellow soldiers, Sergeant First Class Smith quickly organized a hasty defense consisting of two platoons of soldiers, one Bradley Fighting Vehicle and three armored personnel carriers. As the fight developed, Sergeant First Class Smith braved hostile enemy fire to personally engage the enemy with hand grenades and anti-tank weapons, and organized the evacuation of three wounded soldiers from an armored personnel carrier struck by a rocket propelled grenade and a 60-mm. mortar round. Fearing the enemy would overrun their defenses, Sergeant First Class Smith moved under withering enemy fire to man a .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a damaged armored personnel carrier. In total disregard for his own life, he maintained his exposed position in order to engage the attacking enemy force. During this action, he was mortally wounded. His courageous actions helped defeat the enemy attack, and resulted in as many as 50 enemy soldiers killed, while allowing the safe withdrawal of numerous wounded soldiers. (Although born in Texas, Smith was from Tampa, FL.)
Which Marion County school is named after a Medal of Honor recipient from North Central Florida?

Hammett Lee Bowen, Jr.
On June 27, 1969 while was serving as a staff sergeant in Company C, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, in Bình Dương Province, Republic of Vietnam, Bowen smothered the blast of an enemy-thrown hand grenade with his body, sacrificing himself (age 21) to protect those around him.
Benefits of being a Medal of Honor recipient

*When you get a Medal of Honor, you earn a lifetime of special benefits and privileges.
*For example, your kids are eligible for admission to United States military academies, without having to secure nominations or meet quota requirements.
*Also, if you were not previously eligible for burial in Arlington Cemetery, you are now.
*On top of any military pension, MOH recipients also receive an additional pension over $1,300 per month.
*Medal of Honor recipients also receive invitations to all future presidential inaugurations and inaugural balls.
*As of 2002, in addition to the actual medal, all Medal of Honor recipients also get a special Medal of Honor Flag. The first to receive the flag was Paul R. Smith (posthumously).
History of “Taps”

General Daniel Butterfield, commander of the Third Brigade, First Division, Fifth Army Corps of the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War was camped in Confederate territory at Harrison’s Landing on the banks of the James River in Virginia following the Seven Days Battle in July 1862. Using other songs that he had heard, General Butterfield created a new “lights out” song and asked his brigade bugler, Oliver W. Norton, to play it. The new call spread quickly to other units in both the Union and Confederate armies. It began to be used for funeral ceremonies almost immediately but it was not until 1891 that U.S. Army drill regulations made it mandatory for funerals. Today it is our country’s most revered bugle call. *

*Adapted from: https://www.marineband.marines.mil/About/Library-and-Archives/Taps/
National Medal of Honor Museum
The National Headquarters and Museum for the Congressional Medal of Honor is located at 40 Patriots Point Road, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464, aboard the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown, the centerpiece of Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum.
https://www.patriotspoint.org/explore/medal-of-honor-museum/
Resources

http://www.cmohs.org
https://themedalofhonor.com
https://homeofheroes.com
This PowerPoint presentation is brought to you by Mr. Q aboard the USS Yorktown (at the National Museum of the Medal of Honor).