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HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, DC, *19 May 2000*

## AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

By direction of the President, under the Joint resolution of Congress approved 12 July 1862 (amended by act of 3 March 1863, act of 9 July 1918, and act of 25 July 1963), the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, is awarded by the Department of the Army in the name of Congress to:

Specialist Four Alfred Rascon, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate), who distinguished himself by a series of extraordinarily courageous acts on 16 March 1966 while assigned as a medic to the Reconnaissance Platoon. While moving to reinforce its sister battalion under intense enemy attack, the reconnaissance platoon came under heavy fire from a numerically superior enemy force. The intense fire from crew-served weapons and grenades severely wounded several point squad soldiers. Specialist Four Rascon, ignoring directions to stay behind shelter until cover fire could be provided, made his way forward. He repeatedly tried to reach the severely wounded point machine-gunner lying on an open enemy trail, but was driven back each time by withering fire. Finally, he jumped to his feet and, with total disregard for his personal safety, he raced through heavy enemy fire and exploding grenades to reach his wounded comrade. He then intentionally placed his body between the soldier and the enemy machine guns, sustaining numerous shrapnel injuries and a serious wound to the hip. Ignoring his own wounds, he dragged the larger soldier from the fire-raked trail. Hearing a second machine-gunner yell that he was running out of ammunition, Specialist Four Rascon, still under heavy enemy fire, crawled back to the wounded machine-gunner, stripped him of his bandoleers of ammunition, and gave them to the machine-gunner who continued his suppressive fire. Later, Specialist Four Rascon, fearing the abandoned machine gun, its ammunition, and spare barrel would fall into enemy hands, made his way to retrieve them. On his way, he was wounded in the face and torso by grenade fragments, but continued to recover the abandoned machine gun, ammunition and spare barrel items, enabling another soldier to provide added suppressive fire to the pinned-downed squad. While searching for additional wounded, he saw the point grenadier wounded by small arms fire and grenades. With complete disregard for his own life, Specialist Four Rascon covered the wounded soldier with his body thereby absorbing the blasts from the exploding grenades, and saving the soldier's life. As grenades were being thrown at the wounded point squad leader, Specialist Rascon again, in complete disregard for his own life, covered the soldier with his body, absorbing the full force of the grenade explosions. Once more, Specialist Four Rascon was critically wounded by shrapnel, but again he continued to search for and aid the wounded. Although severely wounded, he remained on the battlefield, inspiring his fellow soldiers to continue the battle. After the enemy broke contact, he disregarded aid for himself, and continued treating the wounded and directing their evacuation. Only after being placed on the evacuation helicopter did he allow aid to be given to himself. Specialist Four Rascon's extraordinary valor in the face of deadly enemy fire, his heroism in rescuing the wounded, and his gallantry by repeatedly risking his own life for his fellow soldiers are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

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Louis Caldera
*Secretary of the Army*

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