GENERAL ORDERS
No. 49

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., *14 September 1968*

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 posthumously by the Department of the Army in the name of Congress to:

Private First Class *Billy L. Lauffer*, RA19748034, United States Army. While participating in combat operations against a strong enemy force near Bong Son in Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 21 September 1966, Private First Class *Lauffer*'s squad, a part of Company C, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry, was suddenly struck at close range by an intense machinegun crossfire from two concealed bunkers astride the squad's route. Private *Lauffer*, the second man in the column, saw the lead man fall and noted that the remainder of the squad was unable to move. Two comrades, previously wounded and being carried on litters, were lying helpless in the beaten zone of the enemy fire. Reacting instinctively, Private *Lauffer* quickly engaged both bunkers with fire from his rifle, but when the other squad members attempted to maneuver under his covering fire, the enemy fusillade increased in volume and thwarted every attempt to move. Seeing this and his wounded comrades helpless in the open, Private *Lauffer* rose to his feet and charged the enemy machinegun positions, firing his weapon and drawing the enemy's attention. Keeping the enemy confused and off balance, his one man assault provided the crucial moments for the wounded point man to crawl to a covered position, the squad to move the exposed litter patients to safety, and his comrades to gain more advantageous positions. Private *Lauffer* was fatally wounded during his selfless act of courage and devotion to his fellow soldiers. His conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the cost of his life served as an inspiration to his comrades and saved the lives of an untold number of his companions. His actions are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

W. C. WESTMORELAND,
General, United States Army,
Chief of Staff.

Official:

KENNETH G. WICKHAM,
Major General, United States Army,
The Adjutant General.

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