

GENERAL ORDERS }  
 No. 79

HEADQUARTERS  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
 WASHINGTON, D.C., 10 December 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 by the Department of the Army in the name of Congress to:



Specialist Four *Gary G. Wetzel*, RA16860289 (then Private First Class), United States Army, 173d Assault Helicopter Company, who distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty, near Ap Dong An in the Republic of Vietnam. On 8 January 1968, Specialist *Wetzel* was serving as door gunner aboard a helicopter which was part of an insertion force trapped in a landing zone by intense and deadly hostile fires. Specialist *Wetzel* was going to the aid of his aircraft commander when he was blown into a rice paddy and critically wounded by two enemy rockets that exploded just inches from his location. Although bleeding profusely due to the loss of his left arm and severe wounds in his right arm, chest, and left leg, Specialist *Wetzel* staggered back to his original position in his gun-well and took the enemy forces under fire. His machinegun was the only weapon placing effective fire on the enemy at that time. Through a resolve that overcame the shock and intolerable pain of his injuries, Specialist *Wetzel* remained at his position until he had eliminated the automatic weapons emplacement that had been inflicting heavy casualties on the American troops and preventing them from moving against this strong enemy force. Refusing to attend his own extensive wounds, he attempted to return to the aid of his aircraft commander but passed out from loss of blood. Regaining consciousness, he persisted in his efforts to drag himself to the aid of his fellow crewman. After an agonizing effort, he came to the side of the crew chief who was attempting to drag the wounded aircraft commander to the safety of a nearby dike. Unswerving in his devotion to his fellow man, Specialist *Wetzel* assisted his crew chief even though he lost consciousness once again during this action. Specialist *Wetzel* displayed extraordinary heroism and intrepidity at the risk of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty, in his efforts to aid his fellow crewmen. His gallant actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the armed forces of his country.



**GO 79**

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

Official:

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

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

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