NERAL ORDERS
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HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., *17 April 1969*

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 the Congress to:

Sergeant First Class *Fred W. Zabitosky*, (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 in the Republic of Vietnam, 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 and grenades. Rejoining the partol 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 10 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 reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (This award

supersedes the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to Sergeant First Class *Fred W. Zabitosky* for extraordinary heroism on 19 February 1968 as announced in General Orders 2506, Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam, dated 27 May 1968.)

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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