GENERAL ORDERS
No. 9

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, DC *9 March 1971*

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:

Sergeant *John N. Holcomb*, , United States Army, who distinguished himself while serving as a squad leader in Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, on 3 December 1968, during a combat assault mission near Quan Loi in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant *Holcomb*'s company assault had landed by helicopter and deployed into a hasty defensive position to organize for a reconnaissance-in-force mission when it was attacked from three sides by an estimated battalion-sized enemy force. Sergeant *Holcomb*'s squad was directly in the path of the main enemy attack. With complete disregard for the heavy fire, Sergeant *Holcomb* moved among his men giving encouragement and directing fire on the assaulting enemy. When his machine gunner was knocked out, Sergeant *Holcomb* seized the weapon, ran to a forward edge of the position, and placed withering fire on the enemy. His gallant actions caused the enemy to withdraw. Sergeant *Holcomb* treated and carried his wounded to a position of safety and reorganized his defensive sector despite a raging grass fire ignited by the incoming enemy mortar and rocket rounds. When the enemy assaulted the position a second time, Sergeant *Holcomb* again manned the forward machine gun, devastating the enemy attack and forcing the enemy to again break contact and withdraw. During the enemy withdrawal an enemy rocket hit Sergeant *Holcomb*'s position, destroying his machine gun and severely wounding him. Despite his painful wounds, Sergeant *Holcomb* crawled through the grass fire and exploding mortar and rocket rounds to move the members of his squad, every one of whom had been wounded, to more secure positions. Although grievously wounded and sustained solely by his indomitable will and courage, Sergeant *Holcomb* as the last surviving leader of his platoon organized his men to repel the enemy, crawled to the platoon radio and reported the third enemy assault on his position. His report brought friendly supporting fire on the charging enemy and broke the enemy attack. Sergeant *Holcomb*'s inspiring leadership, fighting spirit, conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the cost of his own life were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on himself, and his unit, and the United States Army.

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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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