GENERAL ORDERS
No. 40

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, DC, *23 July 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 by the Department of the Army in the name of Congress to:

Sergeant (then Specialist Four) *Richard A. Penry*, , United States Army, who distinguished himself on 31 January 1970 while serving as a rifleman with Company C, 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry, 199th Infantry Brigade, during a night ambush mission in Binh Tuy Province, Republic of Vietnam. As the platoon was preparing the ambush position, it suddenly came under an intense enemy attack from mortar, rocket, and automatic weapons fire which seriously wounded the company commander and most of the platoon members, leaving small isolated groups of wounded men throughout the area. Sergeant *Penry*, seeing the extreme seriousness of the situation, worked his way through the deadly enemy fire to the company command post where he administered first aid to the wounded company commander and other personnel. He then moved the command post to a position which provided greater protection and visual communication and control of other platoon elements. Realizing the company radio was damaged and recognizing the urgent necessity to reestablish communications with the battalion headquarters, he ran outside the defensive perimeter through a fusillade of hostile fire to retrieve a radio. Finding it inoperable, Sergeant *Penry* returned through heavy fire to retrieve two more radios. Turning his attention to the defense of the area, he crawled to the edge of the perimeter, retrieved needed ammunition and weapons and resupplied the wounded men. During a determined assault by over thirty enemy soldiers, Sergeant *Penry* occupied the most vulnerable forward position, placing heavy, accurate fire on the attacking enemy and exposing himself several times to throw hand grenades into the advancing enemy troops. He succeeded virtually single-handedly in stopping the attack. Learning that none of the radios were operable, Sergeant *Penry* again crawled outside the defensive perimeter, retrieved a fourth radio and established communications with higher headquarters. Sergeant *Penry* then continued to administer first aid to the wounded and repositioned them to better repel further enemy attacks. Despite continuous and deadly sniper fire, he again left the defensive perimeter, moved to within a few feet of enemy positions, located five wounded soldiers, and led them to safety. When evacuation helicopters approached, Sergeant *Penry*

voluntarily left the perimeter, set up a guiding beacon, established the priorities for evacuation, and successively carried eighteen wounded men to the extraction site. After all wounded personnel had been evacuated, Sergeant *Penry* joined another platoon and assisted in the pursuit of the enemy. Sergeant *Penry*'s conspicuous gallantry and extraordinary heroism at the risk of his life are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army. This award supersedes the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to Sergeant *Penry* for extraordinary heroism in action on 31 January 1970, as announced in United States Army Vietnam General Orders Number 1718, 11 June 1970.

By the Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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

Official:
VERNE L. BOWERS,
Major General, United States Army,
The Adjutant General.

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