

# Trump awards Medal of Honor to Army medic 48 years later

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE - Published July 31, 2017 - Associated Press



In this June 9, 2017 photo, former Army medic James McCloughan in South Haven, Mich. (AP)

WASHINGTON – An Army medic who "ran into danger" to save wounded soldiers during a Vietnam War battle despite his own serious wounds on Monday became the first Medal of Honor recipient under President Donald Trump, 48 years after the selfless acts for which James McCloughan is now nationally recognized.

McCloughan mouthed "thank you" as Trump placed the distinctive blue ribbon holding the medal around the neck of the former Army private first class. As the president and commander in chief shook McCloughan's hand, Trump said "very proud of you" before he pulled the retired soldier into an embrace.

"I know I speak for every person here when I say that we are in awe of your actions and your bravery," Trump said, describing McCloughan's actions for a rapt audience that included numerous senior White House and administration

officials. Among them were Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin and retired Marine Gen. John Kelly, sworn in earlier Monday as the new White House chief of staff.

McCloughan said in a brief statement on the White House driveway after the ceremony that it was "humbling" to receive the medal. Now 71, he pledged to do his best to represent the men who fought alongside him "as the caretaker of this symbol of courage and action beyond the call of duty."

Drafted into the Army, McCloughan was a 23-year-old private first class and medic who in 1969 found himself in the middle of the raging Battle of Nui Yon Hill. McCloughan willingly entered the "kill zone" to rescue injured comrades despite his serious wounds from shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade.

In announcing the honor last month, the White House said McCloughan "voluntarily risked his life on nine separate occasions to rescue wounded and disoriented comrades. He suffered wounds from shrapnel and small arms fire on three separate occasions, but refused medical evacuation to stay with his unit, and continued to brave enemy fire to rescue, treat, and defend wounded Americans."

"He ran into danger," Trump said.

McCloughan, who lives in South Haven, Michigan, told The Associated Press in an interview last month that the battle was "the worst two days of my life."

He described the shrapnel as "a real bad sting" and recalled, "I was tending to two guys and dragging them at the same time into a trench line." He said he looked down to see himself covered with blood from wounds so bad that they prompted a captain to suggest he leave the battlefield to seek treatment.

"He knew me enough to know that I wasn't going," McCloughan said.

The combat medic stuck around until the battle ended, coming to the aid of his men and fighting the enemy, even knocking out an enemy RPG position with a grenade at one point. In all, the Pentagon credits McCloughan with saving the lives of 10 members of his company.

The Medal of Honor is given to Armed Forces members who distinguish themselves by going above and beyond the call of duty in battle.

McCloughan left the Army in 1970 and spent the next several decades teaching psychology and sociology and coaching football, baseball and wrestling at South Haven High School. He retired in 2008.

In 2016, Defense Secretary Ash Carter recommended McCloughan for the Medal of Honor. But since the medal must be awarded within five years of the recipient's actions, Congress needed to pass a bill waiving the time limit. President Barack Obama signed the measure in late 2016, but he didn't get the opportunity to recognize McCloughan with the medal before his term ended this year.

"President Donald Trump will be putting that on me for the first time in his experience of doing such a thing," McCloughan said. "That's pretty special."

Below is a link to a video of the award being presented by President Trump;

<https://www.facebook.com/FoxNews/videos/10155751750296336/>