

NAVY CROSS



JAMES E. MURPHY

Captain, U.S. Marine Corps
Headquarters & Service Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines
Con Thien, Republic of Vietnam, 26 October 1967
Entered service at: Midland, Michigan

Citation:

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to James E. Murphy (0-91159), Captain, U.S. Marine Corps (Reserve), for extraordinary heroism while serving as Air Liaison Officer of the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in the Republic of Vietnam on 26 October 1967. During a search and destroy operation near Con Thien, Captain Murphy was calling in close air support on a fanatical assault by North Vietnamese Army forces when he observed a helicopter shot down 150 meters in front of his position. As the helicopter burst into flames, the enemy troops surrounded the aircraft, and engaged the Marines in a fierce fire fight. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, he dashed alone from the Marine lines, through the enemy positions, to the burning aircraft. While under intense enemy fire, he dragged the two injured survivors to a defilade position. Armed only with a .45 caliber pistol, he shielded the wounded men with his body and attempted to hold off the onrushing enemy, calling in air strikes within 75 meters of his position. Although a rescue mission was attempted, it was beaten back with heavy casualties. For over an hour, Captain Murphy held off the frenzied enemy from his position with air strikes and his pistol. Through combined smoke and interlocking machine-gun fire, a helicopter succeeded in landing to extract the besieged men. After destroying his radio which was left behind he carried the two men aboard the aircraft. By his bold initiative, gallant fighting spirit and loyal devotion to duty, Captain Murphy was instrumental in saving two men from serious injury or possible death, reflecting great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps, and upholding the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.