



MEDAL OF HONOR:

Spc. 5 Dennis M. Fujii



Biography



Hometown: Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii
Unit: 61st Medical Battalion, 67th Medical Group
Military Occupation (MOS): Crew Chief 67-N20
Enlisted: December 1967
Deployments: Vietnam War (1968 and 1970)



Spc. 5 Dennis Fujii was born in Hanapepe, Territory of Hawaii. He was one of six children and his stepfather, Charles, was a mechanic in the National Guard. Fujii enlisted in the Army in 1968 and was able to get his high school diploma while in the service.

Fujii deployed to Vietnam in 1968, he spent his first nine months assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division as an assistant machine gunner.

In February 1971, the 21-year-old Soldier was on his second Vietnam combat tour as a "dust off" medivac UH-1 helicopter crew chief with the 237th Medical Detachment, 61st Medical Battalion, 67th Medical Group, where he evacuated the wounded out of Laos.

Fujii returned to Hawaii on Feb. 28, 1971, and was given a hero's welcome by Gov. John A. Burns. He later transferred to the Hawaii Army National Guard and the Pacific Army Reserve. He went on to work as a utilities and logistics technician for Global Associates at the Johnston Atoll Wildlife Refuge Island in the North Pacific.

Fujii was inducted into the Army Aviation Museum's Hall of Fame at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and into the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii's Gallery of Heroes. He received the Distinguished Service Cross, two Purple Heart medals and one Silver Star.





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Battle Narrative

Spc. 5 Dennis M. Fujii distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity beyond the call of duty while serving as crew chief aboard a helicopter ambulance during rescue operations in Laos and the Republic of Vietnam from Feb. 18, 1971 to Feb. 22, 1971.

Fujii was serving with the 237th Medical Detachment, 61st Medical Battalion, 67th Medical Group. The team's mission was to evacuate seriously wounded Vietnamese military personnel from the midst of a raging battlefield.

During the second landing attempt, the enemy concentrated a barrage of flak at the air ambulance, which damaged the aircraft and caused it to crash, injuring Fujii.

A second helicopter was able to land and load all of his fellow downed airmen. However, Fujii was not able to board because the enemy directed fire on him. Rather than endanger the lives aboard the second helicopter, Fujii waved it off to leave the combat area. Subsequent attempts to rescue him were aborted due to the violent anti-aircraft fire. Fujii secured a radio and informed the aviators in the area that the landing zone was too hot for further evacuation attempts. Fujii remained as the lone American on the ground, treating the injuries of South Vietnam troops throughout the night and the next day.

On the night of Feb. 19, the allied perimeter came under ruthless assault by a reinforced enemy regiment supported by heavy artillery. Once again obtaining a radio transmitter, Fujii called in American helicopter gunships to assist the small unit in repelling the attack.

For a period of over 17 consecutive hours, Fujii repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire as he left the security of his entrenchment to better observe enemy troop positions and to direct air strikes against them. At times, the fighting became so vicious that Fujii was forced to interrupt radio transmittal in order to place suppressive rifle fire on the enemy while at close quarters.

Though wounded and severely fatigued by Feb. 20, the specialist bore the responsibility for the protection and defense of the friendly encampment until an American helicopter could land and attempt to airlift him from the area. As his air ambulance left the still blazing battlefield, it received numerous hits and was forced to crash land at another South Vietnamese Ranger base approximately four kilometers from his original location.

The exhausted Fujii remained at the allied camp for two more days until yet another helicopter could return him to Phau Bai for medical assistance on Feb. 22.

Fujii's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

