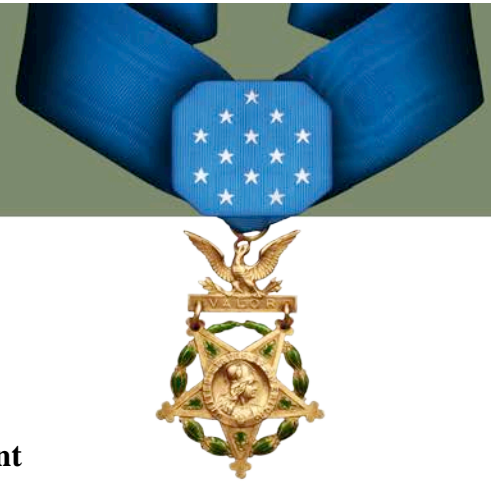




Sergeant First Class Melvin Morris
MEDAL OF HONOR
VIETNAM WAR



LIVING RECIPIENT

Living Recipient

Location of Action: Chi Lang, Vietnam

Date of Action: September 17, 1969

Service Dates: 1959 – 1985

Hometown: Okmulgee, Oklahoma

Residence: Cocoa, Florida

Medal of Honor candidate Sgt. 1st Class Melvin Morris, was born in Okmulgee, Okla., Jan. 7, 1942. Morris entered the Oklahoma Army National Guard in 1959 and later requested to join the active Army. He became one of the first Soldiers to don the 'green beret' at the command of President John F. Kennedy, Fort Bragg, N.C., in 1961. Morris volunteered twice for deployments to Vietnam.

Then-Staff Sgt. Morris is being recognized for his valorous actions on Sept. 17, 1969 while commanding the 3rd Company, 3rd Battalion of the IV Mobile Strike Force near Chi Lang, Vietnam. The 1st and 3rd battalions of the IV Mobile Strike Force were engaged in a search and clear operation, some five kilometers north and east of Chi Lang, in the IV Corps Tactical Zone. Sister companies of his battalion had encountered an extensive enemy mine field and were subsequently engaged by a hostile force. Morris learned that a fellow team commander had been killed and had fallen near an enemy bunker. Immediately reorganizing the strike forces into an effective assault posture, he advanced them and then moved out with two men to recover the body. Observing the maneuver, the hostile force concentrated their fire and wounded both men accompanying Morris. After he assisted the two back to the lines of the main force, he again charged into the hail of fire to approach the nearest enemy bunker, throwing grenades into it. As his men laid a base of suppressive fire, he neared the position of the team leader's body. When a machine gun emplacement directed its strafing fusillade at him, he annihilated the position with hand grenades and continued his assault, eliminating three additional bunkers. Driving the enemy from the entrenchment nearest the fallen team leader, he retrieved his comrade and started to his troop's position. As he neared the strike force he was wounded three times as he ran back toward friendly lines with the American casualties, but did not stop until he reached safety. From the beginning of the encounter, until he was medically evacuated, Morris reacted to each situation with a professionalism, and single-minded determination possessed by few men. Ignoring his personal safety repeatedly, on no less than three occasions he faced insurmountable odds, and finally overcame them. His ability to direct and lead indigenous soldiers into what was for some, certain death has rarely been equaled.

Morris retired at Fort Hood, Texas in May 1985.