



AMERICA'S AIRMEN

An Air Force Enlisted Hall of Fame





America's first enlisted airman reported for duty on Aug. 1, 1907—100 years ago this year. In the century since, the nation's airmen have served at the very forefront of airpower, helping to forge an awesome air weapon and performing conspicuous acts of bravery.

While thousands have gone above and beyond the call of duty, a select few stand out because of the scope and magnitude of their valor, dedication, and leadership. *Air Force Magazine* in these pages spotlights these individuals. Our list is highly selective—only 201 airmen.

In the 60th year of the Air Force and the 100th year of the airman, we dedicate our Hall of Fame to the millions of men and women who have worn stripes. Their stories are the stories of the Air Force.

—Robert S. Dudney, Editor in Chief

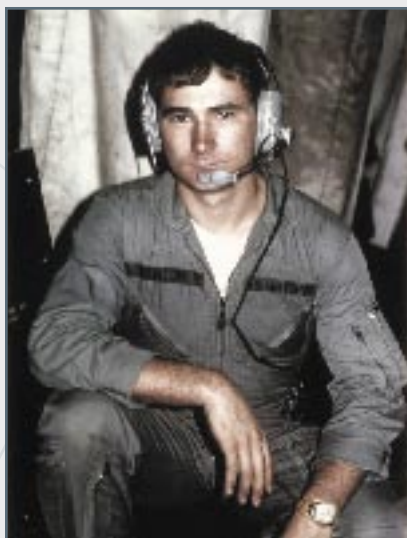


AIR FORCE MEDAL OF



SSgt. Henry E. Erwin

On April 12, 1945, Erwin was radio operator on a B-29 mission over Japan. He was dropping phosphorous smoke bombs through a chute in the floor to guide other B-29s to a rendezvous point, when a faulty bomb blew up and exploded back into the aircraft. It was burning at a temperature of 1,300 degrees and filling the aircraft with smoke. Erwin seized it, felt his way around obstacles and through a narrow passageway to a window, where he threw it out. He was burned severely and was expected to die. His Medal of Honor was rushed through—but he lived to retire as a master sergeant and work for the Veterans Administration for another 37 years. MOH awarded April 19, 1945.



A1C John L. Levitow

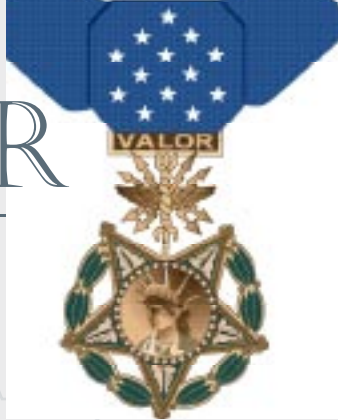
On Feb. 24, 1969, Levitow was loadmaster on an AC-47 gunship that was suppressing a mortar attack on Long Binh Army post in South Vietnam. The aircraft flew into the path of a mortar shell, which blew a hole in the right wing and riddled the fuselage with shrapnel. Levitow and another airman who were dropping magnesium illumination flares from the open cargo door were knocked down. A live flare fell inside the airplane and was seconds away from exploding. Levitow threw himself on the flare, crawled to the door, and tossed it outside, where it exploded. Levitow lived, but he had more than 40 shrapnel wounds. MOH awarded May 14, 1970.

Sgt. Archibald Mathies

On Feb. 20, 1944, Mathies was a gunner on a B-17 mission over Germany. An enemy fighter attack killed the copilot and severely injured the pilot, rendering him unconscious. Mathies was first into the cockpit and brought the airplane under control. He and the navigator guided it back toward England, where other crew members bailed out. Unwilling to abandon the injured pilot, Mathies and the navigator waved off instructions to bail out themselves. They attempted to land the crippled B-17, but it crashed and they were killed. MOH awarded posthumously June 22, 1944.



HONOR



A1C William H. Pitsenbarger

On April 11, 1966, Pitsenbarger, a pararescue jumper, descended from an HH-43 helicopter into the jungle near Bien Hoa in South Vietnam to help US soldiers wounded in an intense firefight. As casualties increased, he passed up an opportunity to get out. He exposed himself to enemy fire at least three times, collecting ammunition from the dead and wounded and redistributing it, pulling soldiers to safer positions, and taking part in defense of the site. He was wounded several times before he was killed. Pitsenbarger was awarded the Air Force Cross in 1966 and, upon reconsideration, the Medal of Honor 34 years later. MOH awarded posthumously Dec. 8, 2000.



Sgt. Maynard H. Smith

On May 1, 1943, Smith was ball turret gunner on a B-17 mission over France. The aircraft took extensive battle damage from flak and enemy fighters. The oxygen and intercom systems were shot out, and fires were burning in several locations. The waist gunners and radio operator bailed out into the sea, but Smith stayed aboard, manning the waist guns, fighting the fires, and aiding the injured tail gunner. When the fire extinguishers ran empty, he wrapped himself in protective clothing and put out fires with his hands. He threw out everything that wasn't bolted down to lighten the structurally weakened aircraft, which made it back—barely—to a landing in England. MOH awarded July 16, 1943.

TSgt. Forrest L. Vosler

On Dec. 20, 1943, Vosler was radio operator and gunner on a B-17 mission over Germany. With two engines lost to flak, the bomber dropped behind the formation and was repeatedly attacked by enemy fighters. The tail gun was destroyed, and although wounded himself, Vosler remained at the top turret gun to defend the airplane. The radio was knocked out. When ditching of the aircraft in the North Sea short of England became inevitable, Vosler—his eyesight impaired by glass fragments—fixed the radio by touch. The distress signal got through and a ship picked up the crew. Doctors were able to restore some of Vosler's sight, and he went on to become one of the first national directors of the Air Force Association when it was founded in 1946. MOH awarded Aug. 31, 1944.



CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE

CMSAF Paul W. Airey. April 3, 1967-July 31, 1969.

During World War II, Airey was a radio operator and waist gunner on a B-24 bomber. He had logged 28 combat missions over Europe when his aircraft was shot down in 1944. He was a prisoner of war until 1945. During the Korean War, Airey was awarded the Legion of Merit—an uncommon decoration for an enlisted man—for devising a corrosion control assembly line that saved radio and radar equipment from deterioration. In 1953, he became a first sergeant, the specialty in which he spent much of his career. In 1967, he was chosen from a field of 21 candidates to be the first Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. At the end of his term, Airey remained on active duty for another year, the only CMSAF to take a follow-on assignment.



CMSAF Paul W. Airey

CMSAF Donald L. Harlow. Aug. 1, 1969-Sept. 30, 1971.

Harlow was an aircraft armament instructor during World War II, but left service and remained in the Reserve until recalled for the Korean War. He transferred to the personnel specialty, where he served for the rest of his career. He served on the committee that shaped the charter for the new office of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. After his tour as CMSAF, Harlow put his abilities to work as senior lobbyist and executive director of the Air Force Sergeants Association. In 1980, Harlow became the only enlisted man to ever receive the Order of the Sword, which is awarded by Air Force enlisted members for outstanding support of the enlisted force. Most recipients have been general officers, but Harlow's contributions stood out as special.

CMSAF Richard D. Kisling. Oct. 1, 1971-Sept. 30, 1973.

Kisling began his military career in the infantry. In 1945, he reached France in time for the last two weeks of World War II in Europe. After VE Day, he remained in Europe, working on repatriation of persons displaced by the war. Thereafter, he served mostly in the personnel field and was senior enlisted advisor for Air Force Security Service when selected in 1971 to be CMSAF. Kisling was known as “the GI’s man in Washington,” a title bestowed on him by *Air Force Magazine*. After his retirement, he remained in the Pentagon in civil service status, retiring just before his death in 1985. Kisling Hall at the Senior NCO Academy is named for him.

CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes. Oct. 1, 1973-July 31, 1977.

Barnes joined the Air Force in 1949 and became a hydraulics specialist on C-54 aircraft. During the Korean War, he flew 750 hours over enemy territory as a flight engineer on C-54s and was awarded the Air Medal. He continued in flight engineer and aircraft maintenance duties. He was a B-52 crew chief and later served in F-4 maintenance in Thailand during the Vietnam War. He was a wing senior enlisted advisor and at the time of his selection to be CMSAF in 1973, he was senior enlisted advisor for Air Training Command. Barnes was CMSAF for four years, being appointed to two one-year extensions at the end of his regular tour.



CMSAF Donald L. Harlow



WARRIORS AND ACHIEVERS



TSgt. Arthur Benko was the highest scoring aerial gunner to be officially recognized as an ace by his command in World War II. He is credited with destroying 18 enemy aircraft, nine in the air and nine on the ground.



SSgt. Esther M. Blake was the first woman to enter the Air Force. She enlisted on the first minute of the first hour of the first day regular Air Force service was authorized for women, July 8, 1948.



Cpl. Vernon L. Burge was the first enlisted pilot. He was the mechanic on the Army's first airplane, learned to fly, and made his first solo flight March 1, 1912. He retired in 1945 as a colonel.



Burge in an Army Wright "B" airplane.



CMSAF Richard D. Kisling



CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANTS OF THE AIR FORCE

CMSAF Robert D. Gaylor. Aug. 1, 1977-July 31, 1979.

Gaylor, who joined the Air Force in 1948, spent the first part of his career as an air policeman, with an intervening tour as a basic military training instructor. After graduating with honors from the 2nd Air Force NCO Academy, he stayed on as an instructor. He subsequently assisted in reopening the SAC NCO Academy. Assigned to US Air Forces in Europe, Gaylor attracted top level attention when he established the USAFE Command Management and Leadership Center. He served as senior enlisted advisor in Europe, and in 1974, he was assigned to the Military Personnel Center as a one-man traveling training and leadership team. From there, he was selected to be CMSAF.

CMSAF James M. McCoy. Aug. 1, 1979-July 31, 1981.

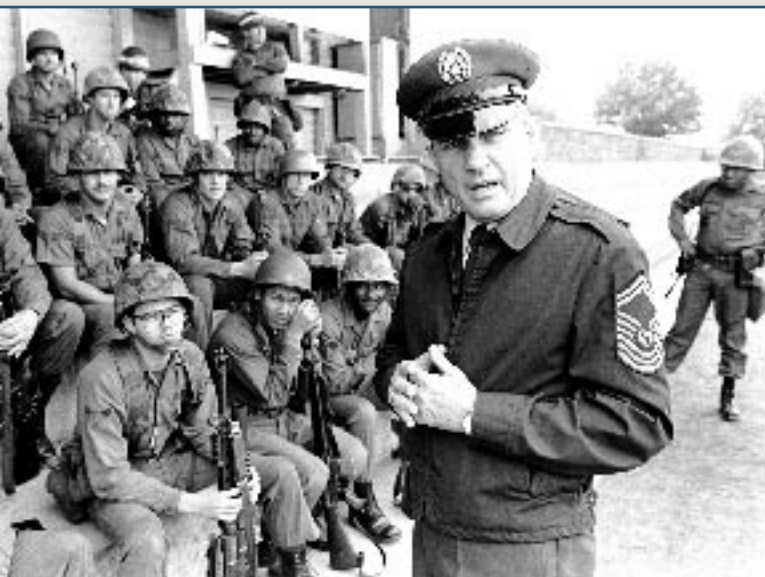
McCoy joined the Air Force in 1951. He was initially a radar operator, but soon moved into training and leadership roles, including tours as a basic military training instructor and in AFROTC at Notre Dame University. In 1960, he became commandant of the SAC NCO Preparatory School and after that, he was sergeant major of the 2nd Air Force NCO Academy. Assigned to SAC headquarters, he established the SAC NCO Academy. McCoy was SAC senior enlisted advisor before his selection as CMSAF. After he retired, he served two terms as president and chairman of the board of the Air Force Association and was the first enlisted chairman of the Air Force Retiree Council.

CMSAF Arthur L. Andrews. Aug. 1, 1981-July 31, 1983.

Andrews enlisted in the Air Force in 1953 and was in the air police for 12 years, eight of them as an investigator. He had a break in service after his first enlistment, but back home in Boston, he found the same people doing the same dead-end things they had been doing when he left to join the service years before, so Andrews decided to return to the Air Force. He became a first sergeant—a job Andrews described as “a laboratory for learning”—in 1967. He moved to senior enlisted advisor when that post was created and was senior enlisted advisor for Air Force Systems Command when selected to be CMSAF in 1981.

CMSAF Sam E. Parish. Aug. 1, 1983-June 30, 1986.

Parish joined the Air Force in 1954 and spent the early part of his career in the weather specialty, including six years in Air Research and Development Command with the 433L weather observing and forecasting system program office. In 1973, he graduated with the first class at the new Senior NCO Academy, where two other future CMSAFs—Tom Barnes and Jim McCoy—were among his classmates. After that, he was senior airman advisor at Air Weather Service. He served three tours in Europe, including assignments as sergeant major of a combat support group and USAFE senior enlisted advisor. He was senior enlisted advisor for SAC before his selection as CMSAF in 1983.



CMSAF James M. McCoy talks with the troops.

CMSAF James C. Binnicker. July 1, 1986-July 31, 1990.

Binnicker was a member of the Civil Air Patrol when he was in high school and he wanted to be a pilot. When a hearing problem ruled that out, he joined the Air Force in 1957. Most of his assignments were in base and wing operations. While he was senior enlisted advisor for 12th Air Force in 1977, he was chosen to represent the Air Force on the President’s Commission on Manpower and Compensation. He spent four years at the Manpower and Personnel Center working on enlisted issues. Binnicker was senior enlisted advisor for Pacific Air Forces and Tactical Air Command before his tour as CMSAF. Today, Binnicker is the head of Air Force Enlisted Village, which provides housing and services for widows of Air Force enlisted retirees.



CMSAF Gary R. Pfingston. Aug. 1, 1990-Oct. 25, 1994.

Pfingston joined the Air Force in 1962 and entered the aircraft maintenance field. He was a crew chief on B-52s and KC-135s before moving up to maintenance management. Throughout his early career, Pfingston continued to play team sports, at which he excelled. A tour as a basic military training instructor led, in 1979, to his assignment as commandant of the Military Training Instructor School. He became a first sergeant in 1982 and served a series of tours as senior enlisted advisor—at the 831st Air Division, 12th Air Force, and PACAF—after which he was selected to be CMSAF in 1990.



CMSAF Arthur L. Andrews in his Pentagon office.

WARRIORS AND ACHIEVERS



Sgt. 1st Class Fred C. Graveline was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for valor as a volunteer gunner on 15 combat missions over France in 1918. On two occasions, he drove off superior numbers of German aircraft. He engaged one of them at a range of 75 yards and shot it down.



MSgt. Roy Hooe was the “airborne mechanic” on the Fokker C-2 *Question Mark*, kept aloft for more than 150 hours by primitive aerial refueling in 1929. At one point during the flight, Hooe went outside the aircraft on a catwalk to make engine repairs.



Question Mark crew: (l-r) Maj. Carl Spaatz, Capt. Ira Eaker, Lt. Harry Halverson, Lt. Elwood Quesada, Sgt. Roy Hooe.



CMSgt. Dick Red, legendary maintenance leader in the Air National Guard, was the first enlisted man to receive the Legion of Merit, awarded for his work in support of air operations in North Africa in World War II. The Air Force Association’s annual award for aerospace maintenance in the Air National Guard is named for him.



CHIEF MASTER SERGEANTS OF THE AIR FORCE

CMSAF David J. Campanale. Oct. 26, 1994-Nov. 4, 1996.

Campanale joined the Air Force in 1970, partly on the advice that “it would be a good way for me to get some direction in my life.” The direction turned out to be strong indeed. Campanale was assigned to the aircraft maintenance field, became a B-52 crew chief, and pulled several tours in Guam supporting B-52 “Arc Light” missions in Southeast Asia. He later became a C-130 crew chief and flight and line chief for FB-111s and KC-135s. He was senior enlisted advisor at the wing level and for Military Airlift Command/Air Mobility Command before his selection in 1994 as CMSAF.



CMSAF David J. Campanale visits the 9th Bomb Squadron.

CMSAF Eric W. Benken. Nov. 5, 1996-July 30, 1999.

Benken joined the Air Force in 1970. His first specialty was administration, and he served in operational, maintenance, and support units at every level from squadron through major command. In 1993, he became senior enlisted advisor for 12th Air Force, moving the next year to USAFE as senior enlisted advisor. While there, he instituted the concept of the NCO professional development seminar to fill the gap between Airman Leadership School and the Senior NCO Academy. Such seminars soon spread and are now held at bases Air Force wide. On Benken’s tour as CMSAF, the titles of senior enlisted advisors changed to command chief master sergeants.

CMSAF Frederick J. Finch. Aug. 2, 1999-July 1, 2002.

Finch joined the Air Force in 1974 and served in the missile maintenance field at every level of command. In 1980, his career emphasis shifted to professional military education. Finch taught at TAC’s NCO Professional Military Education Center for four years and spent another four years in a series of assignments at the Leadership and Management Development Center at Maxwell AFB, Ala. He was superintendent for noncommissioned officer PME at the Military Personnel Center, the commandant of the PACAF NCO Academy, and senior enlisted advisor for 11th Air Force. In 1995, he became command chief master sergeant at Air Combat Command, a position he held for four years before his selection as CMSAF.

CMSAF Gerald R. Murray. July 1, 2002-June 29, 2006.

Murray joined the Air Force in 1977 because, he said, he “needed a job.” He did not intend to remain in service, certainly not for the next 29 years. It soon became apparent that Murray and the Air Force were an excellent match, and he moved ahead steadily. He had 11 assignments in the aircraft maintenance field, working on and supporting F-4, F-16, and A-10 aircraft. After reaching the maintenance superintendent level, he moved into command chief master sergeant roles at two wings, at 5th Air Force, and at PACAF. He was selected in 2002 to be CMSAF.

CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley. June 30, 2006-

McKinley joined the Air Force in 1974 and served his first hitch as a medic. He had a break in service from 1977 to 1982, and when he returned, it was in the aircraft maintenance field. He became a squadron first sergeant in 1991, serving in that capacity in four assignments. He was then command chief master sergeant in airlift, fighter, and air expeditionary wings. In 1999, McKinley earned his master’s degree in human relations. He was command chief master sergeant at PACAF when selected to be CMSAF in June 2006.

WARRIORS AND ACHIEVERS



CMSgt. Bobby G. Renfroe was a pioneer in enlisted professional military education and became, in 1983, the first enlisted commandant of the Air Force Senior NCO Academy. In the years before Renfroe, the commandant had been a colonel.



MSgt. Jake H. Schuffert began drawing Air Force cartoons when he was an airborne radio operator during the Berlin Airlift. He went on to draw his enormously popular “It All Counts for 30” and “Here’s Jake” in *Airman Magazine*, *Air Force Times*, and elsewhere.



CMSgt. Walter E. Scott, a loadmaster with combat tours in Korea and Vietnam, was noted for leadership, in later years, of veterans organizations. He was international president of the Air Force Sergeants Association, 1978-80, and went on to be chairman of the board of the Aerospace Education Foundation 1994 to 1996 and its president from 1996 to 1998.



Cpl. Edward Ward was the first enlisted airman, assigned to the Aeronautical Division of the Army Signal Corps, Aug. 1, 1907. He helped unpack the first military airplane, delivered by the Wright brothers to Ft. Myer, Va., for testing in 1908.



SSgt. Benjamin F. Warmer, waist gunner on a B-17, shot down seven German fighters, Me-109s and Me-110s, on a single mission over Sicily, Italy, July 5, 1943. Lt. Gen. Carl A. “Tooy” Spaatz, commander of Fifteenth Air Force, decorated Warmer with the Distinguished Service Cross and declared him an ace.



CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley in the field with airmen.



Some former Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force gather in 2006. From left, front row: Paul W. Airey, Gerald R. Murray (then serving), Robert D. Gaylor, Gary R. Pfingston. Middle row (l-r): Sam E. Parish, James C. Binnicker, James M. McCoy. Top row (l-r): Frederick J. Finch and Eric W. Benken.

AIR FORCE CROSS



TSgt. Victor R. Adams was an aerial gunner on a UH-1F helicopter that was inserting a special forces team in Southeast Asia on Nov. 27, 1968. The Huey was shot down and crashed in flames. Disregarding enemy fire and his own safety, Adams pulled two people from the burning wreckage. He and four other survivors then escaped and were rescued.

SSgt. Eugene L. Clay was flight engineer on an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopter, attempting a night rescue of a special forces patrol trapped on a hillside in Laos on Nov. 8, 1967. Two helicopters had already been shot down by strong enemy fire, but Clay and his colleagues decided to make an attempt. They had gotten two survivors aboard when their helicopter was shot down, killing Clay and several others.

A3C Arthur Neil Black was the pararescue jumper on an HH-43B rescue mission over North Vietnam on Sept. 20, 1965. Despite intense ground fire and vulnerability of the small Pedro helicopter, the rescue team persisted and was extracting the downed pilot on a hoist when the aircraft was shot down. Black and other members of the crew were held as POWs until 1973.

SrA. Jason D. Cunningham was a pararescueman on an MH-47E helicopter in Afghanistan, March 4, 2002, on a mission to rescue two servicemen who were evading al Qaeda and Taliban forces. The helicopter was shot down, but Cunningham remained in the burning fuselage to treat the wounded. He exposed himself to enemy fire seven times while moving his patients to more secure locations before he was killed.

TSgt. John A. Chapman was a combat controller, part of a team directing close air support for ground forces and attempting to rescue a wounded Navy SEAL in Afghanistan during Operation Anaconda on March 4, 2002. When the team came under intensive attack, Chapman destroyed one enemy position, engaged another, and killed two enemy soldiers before he was mortally wounded.



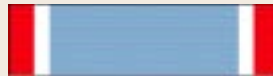
CMSgt. Richard L. Etchberger. On March 11, 1968, the North Vietnamese Army overran Lima Site 85, a secret Air Force radar site on a remote mountaintop in Laos. Some of the Americans survived because Etchberger held the enemy at bay with his rifle until a rescue team arrived. He helped the wounded aboard the helicopter but was mortally wounded as the helicopter was pulling away from the mountainside.



Sgt. Theodore R. Gamlin was a ground radio operator, and on Oct. 25, 1969, he coordinated the evacuation of wounded soldiers in South Vietnam. He was hit by enemy fire but disregarded his wounds, lighted the landing site for a helicopter, got the wounded aboard, and remained to fight side-by-side with the rest of the soldiers until all were brought out the next morning.

Sgt. Michael E. Fish was a pararescue jumper on an HH-43B helicopter on a rescue mission near Tuy Hoa, South Vietnam, Feb. 18-19, 1969. On the ground, he treated and rescued four crewmen from a downed UH-1 helicopter, but the pilot was trapped in the wreckage. Facing the risk of enemy attack, Fish remained with the pilot overnight until both of them were extracted 15 hours later.

AIR FORCE CROSS



A2C Duane D. Hackney was a pararescue jumper on an unarmed HH-43E rescue helicopter operating in North Vietnam on Feb. 6, 1967. The crew had taken a survivor aboard when the aircraft was rocked by flak. Hackney put his own parachute on the survivor, and before he could buckle another one on himself, he was blown out of the aircraft by an explosion. He managed to open the parachute that he held, unbuckled, and descended to the ground. He was subsequently rescued. Hackney is shown in this 1967 photo with AFA Chairman of the Board Jess Larson.



SSgt. Jon D. Harston was a flight mechanic on a CH-53 helicopter shot down off the shore of Cambodia May 15, 1975, during the rescue of crew from the merchant ship *SS Mayaguez*, seized by the Khmer Rouge. Harston was shot in the leg, but helped the survivors out of the burning helicopter, covered their escape with his rifle and handgun, and paddled them to deeper water where they were picked up by a Navy destroyer.



Sgt. Russell M. Hunt was a flight mechanic on a UH-1F helicopter shot down while evacuating ground troops in Vietnam March 31, 1967. Although injured himself, Hunt helped carry the critically wounded aircraft commander some distance to the rescue landing zone. He directed the approach of the recovery helicopters and remained on the ground himself until the other wounded were aboard the helicopters.

Sgt. Nacey Kent Jr. was a flight engineer on an AC-47 gunship, defending Pleiku AB, Vietnam, from attack May 5, 1968. The aircraft was hit by ground fire and crashed. Although his leg was broken in the crash, Kent helped other crewmen out of the burning gunship, then went back aboard to help bring out the severely wounded navigator. He went back in yet another time to help fight the fire.

Sgt. Larry W. Maysey was a pararescue jumper on an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopter, attempting to extract a special forces patrol from a hillside in Laos, Nov. 8, 1967, even though two other helicopters had already been shot down. Exposing himself to enemy fire, Maysey dropped to the ground, recovered two survivors, and lifted them into the helicopter. However, as the HH-3 lifted away, it was shot down. Maysey and several others were killed in the crash.



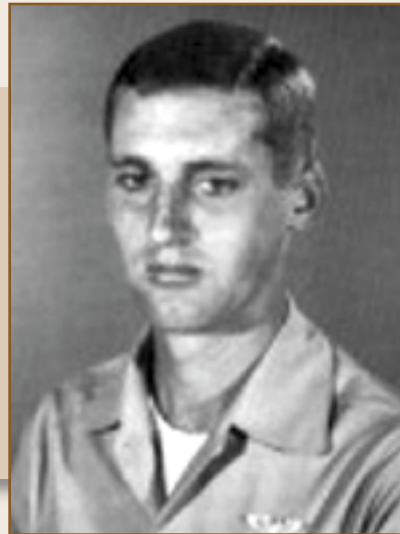
Sgt. Charles D. McGrath, a pararescueman on an HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant, was on the ground in North Vietnam to rescue a pilot who had been injured severely June 27, 1972, when his F-4 was shot down. McGrath dragged the pilot through thick brush to the hoist, but the helicopter was hit by hostile fire and lost the hoist. McGrath directed strikes against the enemy until a backup helicopter arrived.



A1C Charles D. King was a pararescueman on a helicopter attempting to rescue a downed and wounded pilot in Laos, Dec. 25, 1968. He descended to the ground and secured the pilot to the rescue hoist. The enemy opened fire, wounding King and hitting the helicopter. Even though he was not yet on the hoist, King radioed the helicopter to get away. As it did so, the hoist snagged in the trees and pulled loose from its mounting. The search for King was unsuccessful. He was listed as missing and later declared killed in action.



Sgt. Thomas A. Newman was the pararescue jumper on an HH-3E on a night mission to rescue a pilot shot down in Laos, May 30, 1968. Newman went on the jungle penetrator to get him. Hampered by darkness and enemy fire, Newman asked the helicopter to pull away to a safer orbit while he searched for the wounded pilot. Locating the pilot and recalling the helicopter, Newman secured the survivor to the hoist and shielded him on the way up.



A1C William H. Pitsenbarger. See Medal of Honor. His Air Force Cross, awarded in 1966, was not rescinded.

SSgt. Charles L. Shaub was loadmaster on a C-130 dropping ammunition to troops in the Vietnamese jungle April 15, 1972. The aircraft took a hit and fire broke out in the cargo area. Robinson quickly jettisoned the ammunition crates, which exploded in the air seconds later. He was severely burned, but fought the fire and brought it under control. His actions saved the airplane and the crew.

A1C William A. Robinson was a helicopter mechanic on an HH-43B mission to recover a pilot down in North Vietnam on Sept. 20, 1965. Robinson and the crew proceeded with the effort despite intense enemy fire. They were hoisting the pilot aboard when the aircraft was hit by ground fire and went down in Laos. Robinson and his colleagues were captured and held as POWs for seven-and-a-half years.

TSgt. Donald G. Smith was a pararescue jumper who had descended to the ground to pick up a wounded pilot in Southeast Asia Oct. 24, 1969. Hostile fire damaged the hoist, forcing the crew to sever the cable, dropping Smith and the pilot to the ground. He helped the pilot, who had a broken leg, to where the damaged HH-3E helicopter made an emergency landing 1.5 miles away, then took part in defense of the site until a backup rescue helicopter arrived.

A1C Joel E. Talley was a pararescue jumper on a mission to extract an F-105 pilot shot down in North Vietnam July 2, 1968. The enemy had the pilot surrounded and several attempts to bring him out had failed already. The Jolly Green Giant helicopter lowered Talley to the ground, where he found the pilot, who was severely injured. The ground fire was intense, putting 40 holes in the helicopter and forcing it to pull away with Talley and the pilot dangling from the hoist.



TSgt. Timothy A. Wilkinson was a pararescue-man on a team attempting to extract Army Rangers whose helicopter had been shot down in the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, Oct. 3, 1993, in the famous “Black Hawk Down” incident. Wilkinson repeatedly risked enemy fire to reach, treat, and rescue wounded Rangers during the 15-hour firefight.

TSgt. Leroy M. Wright was a flight engineer on an HH-3 rescue helicopter in the raid on the Son Tay POW camp in North Vietnam, Nov. 21, 1970. Enemy fire forced the HH-3 to make a rough landing, in which Wright’s ankle was broken. Rather than slow down the operation by disclosing his injury and pain, Wright used his rifle to lay down covering fire for the search party, took his regular part in the action, and returned to the recovery area on his own.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Before Congress established the Air Force Cross in 1960, the Air Force primarily used the Distinguished Service Cross to honor the heroic actions of its enlisted members. In most cases, the details are not available, but here are the names.

WORLD WAR I

Sgt. 1st Class Fred C. Graveline
Sgt. 1st Class Harold O. Nicholls



Graveline was the first airman to receive the DSC.

WORLD WAR II

SSgt. Johnnie J. Able Jr.
Cpl. Raymond H. Alsip
Cpl. William T. Anderson
SSgt. Michael Arooth
Cpl. Earl D. Ashley
TSgt. Samuel S. Barbiero
Cpl. Vincente R. Barbosa
TSgt. Salvatore Battaglia
TSgt. George H. Bengel
TSgt. Marcus A. Bourdeaux
SSgt. James C. Bright Jr.
Sgt. David W. Brown
SSgt. Walter L. Brown
SSgt. Clayton C. Burdue
Sgt. Wilbert R. Burns
SSgt. James L. Cannon
TSgt. John R. Carrington
SSgt. Albert L. Catallo
SSgt. Edward H. Caton
SSgt. Guy W. Clary
Sgt. James R. Cockriel
SSgt. Howard G. Collett
TSgt. George P. Corl
SSgt. Donald O. Crandall
Sgt. Chester M. Czechowski
SSgt. Pat J. Dadson
SSgt. Malcom C. Dalton
SSgt. Edison K. Danver
1st Sgt. Robert R. Davis
SSgt. Richard C. Decker
TSgt. Forrest E. Dillman
Sgt. Jack D. Dunn
SSgt. Frederick W. Durand
SSgt. Hoy D. Embree
Pvt. Robert J. Endres
SSgt. George D. Faires
SSgt. Robert W. Fegan
SSgt. Joseph J. Forti
TSgt. Edward K. Fox
SSgt. James L. Frazier Jr.
TSgt. Liford E. French
Cpl. Robert A. Fries
TSgt. Paul E. Galloway
SSgt. Richard O. Gettys
TSgt. Harry V. Glades
SSgt. John Gogoj
SSgt. William K. Guilfoil
TSgt. Arizona T. Harris
Sgt. James A. Harrison
MSgt. Alva S. Hascall
Pvt. Ivan W. Henderson
TSgt. Maurice V. Henry
TSgt. Frank A. Herlevic
SSgt. Thomas A. Hoff
Cpl. Robert L. Holliday
TSgt. Anthony Holub
Cpl. Benjamin F. Huefstickler
SSgt. Harold R. Inman
MSgt. John P. Irons
SSgt. Joseph H. James Jr.
SSgt. Theron E. Johnson
SSgt. Thomas E. Johnson
Cpl. John D. Joyce
TSgt. Louis N. Kase
Sgt. Robert P. Kaufman
TSgt. Arthur G. Kelly
TSgt. George E. Kendrick
SSgt. Doyle Kimmey
TSgt. Allen Kosters
TSgt. Steve H. Kovacic
SSgt. Peter Ladisic
SSgt. James V. Lambert
Cpl. Louis A. Lannon



Sgt. Alvar A. Liimatainen
Cpl. Joseph D. Lillis
SSgt. Weston A. Loegering
SSgt. Louis G. Lonsway
TSgt. Nicholas J. Lopresti
SSgt. John F. Mahoney
SSgt. Ernest V. Martin
SSgt. Maynard L. Martinson
Pfc. Ray J. Matchitt
SSgt. Rex J. Matson
Pfc. John E. Matthews
TSgt. Jimmy E. McCurdy
Pfc. Joseph G. McElroy
SSgt. Thomas J. McGrath
Sgt. Stanley A. McLeod
Cpl. Frank L. Melo
TSgt. Joseph E. Mix
TSgt. William A. Mohler
TSgt. Ernest M. Mohon Jr.
Sgt. Carl W. Moore
Sgt. Charles D. Mulligan
Cpl. Philip J. Murphy
SSgt. Slavomir Nepil
Sgt. Fred W. Oettel
SSgt. Eugene B. O'Leary
TSgt. James A. O'Neal
Sgt. Albert E. Owen
SSgt. Augustus R. Patrick Jr.
SSgt. Jacob Petersen
TSgt. Claude B. Phillips
TSgt. Hubert E. Phillips
SSgt. A.J. Potter
TSgt. William H. Prince
Sgt. Herbert W. Pugh
TSgt. Charles T. Reeves
SSgt. Peter J. Ridolfi
SSgt. John R. Roller

Sgt. James T. Sanford
SSgt. Charles H. Sans
SSgt. Lester W. Saunders
SSgt. Roy L. Schellin
Cpl. Bernard C. Seitz
SSgt. Harry R. Shirey
MSgt. Louis T. Silva
TSgt. William E. Skinner
SSgt. Edmond H. Smith
Sgt. Jack E. Smith
SSgt. Mack H. Smith
TSgt. Donald L. Snyder
SSgt. Zerrill J. Steen Jr.
SSgt. Leon D. Stipe
SSgt. John O. Stireman
SSgt. Robert D. Storovich
Sgt. Andrew J. Swain
SSgt. Billy M. Tidwell
SSgt. Winston M. Toomey
SSgt. Edward P. Troy
TSgt. James Vanness
Sgt. William Vaughan
Sgt. James E. Via
SSgt. Charles E. Vondrachek
SSgt. Raymond J. Voss
Cpl. Roy W. Walters
SSgt. Benjamin F. Warmer
SSgt. William T.L. Werner
TSgt. William B. Wherry
TSgt. Raymond S. White
Pfc. Greeley B. Williams
SSgt. Frederick M. Wilson
TSgt. Elmer R. Winters
Sgt. Clifton J. Wright
SSgt. Edward S. Yevich

KOREAN WAR

TSgt. James H. Ledford
Pfc. Desmond R. Wilkerson