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Army renames air defense system after Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient

By Christopher Hurd, Army News Service June 15, 2024



1 / 4 – A Stinger missile launches from the new Maneuver Short Range Air Defense system on Oct. 7, 2021. 5-4 ADAR became the first Army unit to live-fire M-

SHORAD at the tactical unit level and the first-ever to live-fire the system in Europe.

The week-long training took place at a Bundeswehr range on the Baltic Sea coast of

Germany. *(Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Maj. Robert Fellingham)*



2 / 4 – The Maneuver-Short Range Air Defense system was renamed for Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout during an Army birthday festival June 15 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Stout, an artilleryman with the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense

Artillery Regiment, was killed during the Vietnam War protecting fellow

Soldiers. *(Photo Credit: U.S. Army)*



3 / 4 – The Maneuver-Short Range Air Defense system was renamed for Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout during an Army birthday festival June 15 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Stout, an artilleryman with the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, was killed during the Vietnam War protecting fellow Soldiers. *(Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Henry Norton)*



4 / 4 – Air Defenders from 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery conducted a culminating Field Training Exercise with both their legacy Avenger and new Maneuver Short Range Air Defense systems at Grafenwoehr Training Area in Germany October 17-21, 2022. This FTX provided an opportunity for each platoon to react to mock contact, movement and maneuver techniques. During the exercise Air Defenders also conducted extraction of a stuck vehicle, calling up a 9-line medical evacuation request, evacuating personnel by air, navigation in low visibility conditions, and responding to enemy fire. *(Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt.*

Erin McCarthy)

WASHINGTON — The Army renamed the Maneuver-Short Range Air Defense system for Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout during an Army birthday festival today at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Stout, an artilleryman with the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, was killed during the Vietnam War protecting fellow Soldiers. He grabbed a grenade thrown into their bunker and ran for the exit. As he reached the door the grenade exploded, but by holding it close to his body, he was able to shield the other Soldiers from the blast.

“Naming this game-changing air defense capability after Sgt. Stout was appropriate and well-deserved, given his heroic efforts to protect fellow Soldiers from danger,” said Doug Bush, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics, and technology. “The M-SHORAD was designed to do the same against a variety of airborne threats.”

The system uses a mix of guns, missiles, and onboard sensors attached to a Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicle to defend against unmanned aircraft systems, rotary wing, and fixed-wing aircraft.

Soldiers with the 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Regiment were the first to receive and test four of the increment one defense systems. They successfully conducted live-fire tests at the Putlos Bundeswehr range on the Baltic Sea coast of Germany in 2021 and became fully equipped with the systems in 2023.

The Army plans to field 144 air defense systems to four battalions by fiscal year 2025 with an additional 18 systems for training, operational spares and testing.

Incremental upgrades to the system will feature enhanced effects including directed energy, and improved missiles and ammunition. The Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office completed the delivery of four

directed energy systems to the 4th Battalion, 60th Air Defense Artillery Regiment last fall.

“The M-SHORAD family of systems adds commensurate mobility or survivability to maneuvering forces and joint maneuvering forces through protection against enemy air threats,” Bush added. “Its flexibility and versatility provide a best value for the nation and increases Soldier capabilities through performance and training capabilities.”

The M-SHORAD will now be named the SGT STOUT.

Vietnam War Hero



1 / 5 – Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout an artilleryman with the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, was killed during the Vietnam War protecting fellow Soldiers. He

grabbed a grenade thrown into their bunker and ran for the exit. As he reached the

door the grenade exploded, but by holding it close to his body, he was able to shield

the other Soldiers from the blast. *(Photo Credit: Courtesy photo)*



2 / 5 – Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout, from Loudon, Tennessee, joined the Army in August

1967 at 17 years old after dropping out of high school. He is the only Army air

defense artilleryman to earn the award.

(Photo Credit: Courtesy photo from Susan Tyler)



3 / 5 – Mary Faye Thomas accepts the Medal of Honor for her son, Sgt. Mitchell W.

Stout, from then Vice President Gerald R. Ford during a ceremony July 17, 1974.

Stout, an artilleryman with the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, was

killed during the Vietnam War protecting fellow Soldiers. (Photo Credit: Courtesy photo

)



4 / 5 – Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout's mother and two sisters stand with then Tennessee Congressmen John J. Duncan and William E. Brock following the Medal of Honor ceremony July 17, 1974. Stout, an artilleryman with the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, was killed during the Vietnam War protecting fellow Soldiers. *(Photo Credit: U.S. Army)*



5 / 5 – Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout's family visits the Medal of Honor display at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes July 17, 1974. Stout was killed March 12, 1970 in Vietnam when he shielded his fellow Soldiers from a grenade thrown into their bunker. *(Photo Credit: Courtesy photo)*

Sgt. Mitchell W. Stout, from Loudon, Tennessee, joined the Army in August 1967 at 17 years old after dropping out of high school. He completed paratrooper school before the Army realized he was too young when he joined and discharged him.

By that time, he had already turned 18. He went to a recruiter's office the very next day and signed up again, this time as an artilleryman.

"He wanted to be where he was needed," said his sister, Susan Tyler. "That's the way we grew up. If your country needs you, you do what you can and volunteer."

Stout completed a tour in Vietnam and returned home in 1969. After speaking with friends and family, he volunteered to return to Vietnam to help the young Soldiers still fighting.

"I think he had a calling, I really do," Tyler said. "I think he knew somehow in his heart that if he went back, he could help someone in some way."

A few weeks after returning to Vietnam, on March 12, 1970, a North Vietnamese company attacked his unit's firing position at the Khe Gio Bridge. Stout and a crew of Soldiers went into a bunker as they came under heavy mortar fire.

When the firing stopped, the enemy threw a grenade into the bunker, prompting Stout to act and save the lives of his fellow Soldiers.

"He cared about those Soldiers that put their boots on every day, who shine their brass and do their best," Tyler said. "And that's what he died for, he died for them."

Stout was posthumously presented with the Medal of Honor on July 17, 1974. He is the only Army air defense artilleryman to earn the award.