

U.S.

## Army renames air-defense vehicle the Sgt Stout for Vietnam War soldier who earned the Medal of Honor

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The Sgt Stout vehicle pictured in an undated photo. The Army's short-range, air-defense vehicle was previously known as M-SHORAD Increment 1. The vehicle honors Sgt. Mitchell William Stout who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Vietnam War. (Army)

WASHINGTON – An armored vehicle that the Army uses for short range air defense will be named the Sgt Stout to honor an artillery soldier who earned the Medal of Honor, service officials announced Saturday.

Army leaders unveiled the new name for the vehicle during the service's 249th birthday celebration at Fort Belvoir, Va. The vehicle's name honors Sgt. Mitchell William Stout, who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Vietnam War.

Army officials unveiled the M10 Booker, the first new major combat vehicle in two decades, at the service's birthday celebration last year.

"The vehicle is what matters the most but getting to also honor an American hero like Sgt. Stout is pretty cool," Doug Bush, the Army's assistant secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology, told reporters prior to Saturday's announcement.

Stout was born in Knoxville, Tenn., and served with Battery C of the 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery Regiment, 108th Artillery Group. On March 12, 1970, he distinguished himself during an attack by a North Vietnamese Army company on his unit's position at Khe Gio Bridge, according to his medal citation.

Stout was in a bunker with members of a searchlight crew when the position came under heavy enemy mortar fire and a ground attack. When the intensity of the mortar attack

subsided, an enemy grenade was thrown into the bunker.

“Sgt. Stout ran to the grenade, picked it up, held it close to his body and started to get out of the bunker. Upon reaching the door, the grenade exploded,” Bush said. “Having shielded the blast with his body, he protected his fellow soldiers from further injury or death.”



Sgt. Mitchell William Stout pictured in an undated photo. He was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1974. (Army)

Stout’s family received his Medal of Honor in 1974 from then-Vice President Gerald Ford. He is the only air-defense artillery soldier to receive the award.

The Sgt Stout vehicle, which was previously known as M-SHORAD Increment 1, is part of a broader system for short-range air defense. M-SHORAD stands for maneuver short range air defense. The defense system detects, tracks and engages aerial threats such as drones, rotary and fixed-wing aircraft, rockets, artillery and mortars, Bush said.

The Sgt Stout consists of a Stryker armored vehicle equipped with a stinger missile launcher, an XM914 30 mm cannon, an M240 machine gun and a radar system.

“It’s a mixture of many different, vital capabilities that make it very effective on today’s and tomorrow’s battlefield,” said Brig. Gen. Frank Lozano, program executive officer for missiles and space.

Short-range missile defense was a prominent part of the Army strategy in Europe for several decades but became an afterthought with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of counterinsurgency warfare elsewhere in the world.

However, in 2018, the Army re-established an active SHORAD battalion in Germany. The 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment was stood up with Avengers, a Humvee-based system that was developed in the 1980s.

The Army announced in 2019 that it was creating more short-range air defense battalions. Col. Mark Holler, commandant of the Air Defense Artillery School at Fort Sill, Okla., said at the time that Russia’s invasion and takeover of Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula in 2014, which he described as a “wake-up call,” fueled the decision for the new battalions. More so, drones have become a critical battlefield weapon during Russia’s latest invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing war since February 2022.

The 5th Battalion, 4th ADA Regiment based in Ansbach, Germany, was the first to field the M-SHORAD in 2021.

Some versions of the vehicle will incorporate directed-energy weapons, such as a 50-kilowatt, high-energy laser.

“The Army delivered a prototype system in about a year, accelerating the initial operating capability by four years. We are now on the path to field multiple battalions of this capability,” Bush said.

The Army is working on fielding four M-SHORAD battalions, Lozano said. They have fielded the 5th Battalion, 4th ADA in Germany and the 4th Battalion, 60th ADA at Fort Sill, Okla. The Army is working to field the 6th Battalion, 56th ADA at Fort Cavazos, Texas, and eventually field the 2nd Battalion, 55th ADA at Fort Liberty, N.C.

The Army could have as many as 361 Sgt Stout vehicles by no later than fiscal 2031, Lozano said.

The Army announced in February force structure changes that called for four additional M-SHORAD battalions. Lozano said the plan is for those battalions to be part of the National Guard.



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