

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 44th ADA, participate in the dedication of the Sergeant Mitchell W. Stout Medal of Honor Recipient Memorial on 12 March 1995, the 25th anniversary of Sergeant Stout's death.



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## 'Common Men of Uncommon Valor'

Lieutenant Colonel David M. Casmus, Commander, 2nd Battalion (Air Assault), 44th Air Defense Artillery, Speaks at the Sergeant Mitchell W. Stout Medal of Honor Recipient Memorial Dedication, 12 March 1995

**I want to thank all of you for your gracious hospitality and for inviting the soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, to participate in this special ceremony. Today, you are gathered to honor great soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who gave their lives for their country. How noble, how honorable and how selfless of each of you.**

**But what you may not know is that this hallowed place and these wonderful monuments also honor the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who today stand ready to defend our nations and her national interest, whenever and wherever they may be called.**

**It's a special privilege for me to have the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you on how important this ceremony is for servicemen and women still serving on active duty. Men like James Karnes, Troy McGill and Mitchell Stout were common men of uncommon valor and honor. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, while serving as president of the United States, was talking to a soldier who was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1956 and said, "Son, I'd rather have the right to wear that Medal of Honor than be president of the United States." That quote clearly describes the reverence and esteem the Medal of Honor represents and deserves.**

**Today's soldiers draw inspiration and example from the soldiers whose names adorn these monuments. They suffer the same deprivations and family separations that their fallen comrades shared. They live with the uncertainty that may call them away to a foreign land and place them in harm's way to support and defend our great nation. Today's soldiers accept their responsibilities without complaint and perform every task and every mission asked of them, just like these veterans assembled here today have done, to the fullest point of accomplishment.**

**And why do our nation's best sons and daughters volunteer for this selfless lifestyle? For financial reward? I think not. No soldier is going to get rich on their military pay. For the travel and excitement? For some that might be a motivator, but unless you've experienced pulling up roots and starting all over again and again every two to three years, that's an excitement level many could live without. The reason why young soldiers continue to serve is because communities and ordinary**

**citizens like you have imparted the strong values all soldiers take pride in: courage, competence, commitment, candor and integrity. These are the values reflected in every name, engraved on these monuments and lived every day by men like Buddy White, who took on this mission to immortalize the heroes of Knox and Loudon County. He knew it was tough, he knew it was right, and he knew it would take perseverance, and he wasn't afraid to take or give criticism when it was necessary. You, ladies and gentlemen, are the reason we serve our great nation. and we are proud of you and grateful you have chosen to remember our fallen brothers in this special manner.**

**I recently had the opportunity to hear the full details of the 44th Regiment's action in Vietnam from a former battalion commander of the 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery Regiment. He shared with me one of the traditions of the regiment. He said, as the troops would be protecting convoys up and down the roads of Vietnam or passing one another at key locations, they would acknowledge each other by giving a "thumbs up" sign to one another, and if things were going especially well, you'd get two thumbs up. I might be considered sentimental -- my soldiers would say I'm ancient -- but everyone here today can be assured that this is a two-thumbs up ceremony.**

**I thank you for all you have done, and all you will do in the future. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.**