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*ADA'S Medal of Honor Recipient  
No Longer 'Unknown Soldier'*  
SERGEANT MITCHELL W. STOUT

Sergeant Mitchell W. Stout is Air Defense Artillery's only Medal of Honor recipient but, for decades, he's also been something of a mystery. "We get frequent request for information about Sergeant Stout," said Air Defense Artillery historian Patricia Rhodes. "I was surprised to discover how little the branch actually knows about him. Fort Bliss named the Sergeant Mitchell W. Stout Physical Fitness Center, one of the installation's most prominent structures, after him, but there's nothing in the files except a blurry photograph and the Medal of Honor citation. Perhaps, earlier historians thought the citation was sufficient. Mitchell Stout, the soldier, has been obscured by the aura that surrounds the Medal of Honor. In a sense, he's been Air Defense Artillery's 'Unknown Soldier.'"

Sergeant Stout was killed in action in 1970 while his Duster unit guarded the Khe Gio Bridge. Located near a frequently beleaguered Marine outpost called The Rockpile, the vital bridge spanned a stream just below the demilitarized zone that separated South

**Vietnam from North Vietnam. The Medal of Honor citation, below, describes Sergeant Stout's actions during a sapper attack on his unit's firing position:**

**The Department of the Army awards the Medal of Honor posthumously to Sergeant Mitchell W. Stout, 243-86-7173, United States Army, Battery C, 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery, who distinguished himself on March 12, 1970, during an attack by a North Vietnamese Army sapper company on his unit's firing position at Khe Gio Bridge, Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Stout was in a bunker with members of a searchlight crew when the position came under heavy enemy mortar and ground attack. When the intensity of the mortar attack subsided, an enemy grenade was thrown into the bunker. Displaying great courage, Sergeant Stout ran to the grenade, picked it up, and started out of the bunker. As he reached the door, the grenade exploded. By holding the grenade close to his body and shielding its blast, he protected his fellow soldiers in the bunker from further injury or death. Sergeant Stout's conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action, at the cost of his own life, are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon his unit and the United States Army.**



Sergeant Mitchell W. Stout, a Duster squad leader, died in a bunker similar to this sandbagged searchlight position at An Khe, South Vietnam.

**Sapper attacks usually began with a mortar barrage designed to drive defenders into bunkers. As mortar rounds impacted inside defensive positions, sappers carrying satchel charges and grenades slithered through the tanglefoot and concertina wire. Once inside the perimeter, they hurled their explosives into bunkers. Sometimes the defenders, mistaking the blast of exploding satchel charges and grenades for impacting mortar rounds, never realized they were under ground attack until it was too late.**

**Sergeant Mitchell Stout grew up in Tennessee, the same state as Sergeant Alvin York, World War I's most famous combat soldier. The Medal of Honor citation leaves no doubt that Sergeant Mitchell Stout, like Sergeant York, was an authentic hero, at least during one adrenaline-charged moment, but it leaves a lot of questions unanswered. What type of soldier, really, was Sergeant Mitchell Stout?**

**The U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery School asked the Vietnam Duster, Quad 50, Searchlight and Hawk Association to help fill in the blanks. The association furnished the name of James R. (Buddy) White, a friend of Mitchell Stout's since high school days.**



As a squad leader, Sergeant Mitchell W. Stout commanded a self-propelled Duster track. Above, a Duster belonging to the 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery Defense Artillery, maneuvers in South Vietnam. (Photo by Bruce Geiger)

**They don't call Tennessee the "Volunteer State" for nothing. When Congress asked Tennessee to furnish 3,000 volunteers to fight the Mexican War, 30,000 Tennesseans rushed to volunteer. But the Vietnam War split Tennessee, like the rest of the nation, into pro-war and anti-war factions. Buddy White, one of Mitchell Stout's high school buddies, found himself straddling the line. "I had my doubts about the American involvement in Vietnam," said White. "I advised Mitchell, when he was home on leave, not to volunteer for a second tour. 'Why?' I asked. 'Maybe I can help someone,' he answered. Mitchell thought the Army's replacement system sent soldiers with too little training straight into combat in Vietnam."**

**"I thought that the GIs who served in Vietnam got a rotten deal," said White. "They never got the recognition they deserved." Outraged over the treatment accorded returning veterans and determined that Mitchell Stout's sacrifice would not be forgotten, White conceived and spearheaded a drive to convert Mitchell Stout's burial place into a memorial.**

**Today, White has to keep reminding people that he never served in Vietnam, but ADA soldiers who pulled combat tours in Vietnam regard White as an "honorary" Vietnam vet. "I'm not one of them, but they are sort of like cousins," White says.**

**Thanks to Buddy White, the Sergeant Mitchell W. Scott file at Fort Bliss is no longer an almost empty folder. The list below contains links to articles, documents and speeches about Mitchell Stout that White has compiled over the years. They reveal that Sergeant Mitchell Stout's Medal of Honor was no fluke. A typical American youth, Mitchell Stout became an outstanding soldier who exemplified the Army's Core Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage.**