



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 13, 2011

## Army Ranger Will Receive Medal of Honor

A U.S. Army Ranger who lost a hand while protecting his fellow soldiers from an enemy grenade in Afghanistan will receive the Medal of Honor in a July 12 White House ceremony. The White House announced that Sergeant 1st Class Leroy Petry (left), a native of Santa Fe, New Mexico, will be the second living, active-duty soldier to receive the nation's highest military honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan. Petry was serving with the 75th Ranger Regiment when he was wounded during a mission in Afghanistan.



As reported by [UPI News](#),

During a daytime raid in Paktia province on May 26, 2008, Petry and another Ranger entered a courtyard where enemy fighters shot them. Three other Rangers came to their aid, and when a grenade landed, the already-wounded Petry tossed it away. His right hand was destroyed, and he applied a tourniquet to his own arm before medics arrived.

Petry is the ninth soldier to be awarded the Medal of Honor during the present Afghanistan/Iraq conflict, with all but Petry and Army Staff Sergeant Salvatore Giunta receiving the honor posthumously. Now stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, Petry works with other wounded service personnel and their families.

"It's very humbling to know that the guys thought that much of me and my actions that day, to nominate me for that," he replied upon learning that the soldiers he had served with had nominated him for the Medal of Honor.

The [Medal of Honor](#) is awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces who "distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty." In its statement announcing Petry's nomination, the White House noted that in order to be eligible for the Medal, "the meritorious conduct must involve great personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his or her comrades and must have involved risk of life."

According to the [Army Times](#), Petry and a fellow Ranger, Private 1st Class Lucas Robinson, were in the process of helping to secure an enemy position when they came under fire and both were wounded. When a team leader, Sergeant Daniel Higgins, came to give the soldiers aid, a grenade thrown by one of the enemy wounded both him and Robinson.

As reported by the *Army Times*:

Shortly after the grenade exploded, Staff Sgt. James Roberts and Spc. Christopher Gathercole entered the courtyard, and moved toward the chicken coop. With three soldiers taking cover in the chicken coop, an enemy fighter threw another grenade at them. This time, the grenade landed just a few feet from Higgins and Robinson.



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Recognizing the threat that the enemy grenade posed to his fellow Rangers, Petry — despite his own wounds and with complete disregard for his personal safety — consciously and deliberately risked his life to move to and secure the live enemy grenade and consciously throw the grenade away from his fellow Rangers, according to battlefield reports.

As Petry released the grenade in the direction of the enemy, preventing the serious injury or death of Higgins and Robinson, it detonated and catastrophically amputated his right hand. With a clear mind, Petry assessed his wound and placed a tourniquet on his right arm. Once this was complete, he reported that he was still in contact with the enemy and that he had been wounded again.

After the blast that amputated Petry's hand, Roberts began to engage the enemy behind the chicken coop with small arms fire and a grenade. His actions suppressed the insurgents behind the chicken coop. Shortly after, another enemy on the east end of the courtyard began firing, fatally wounding Gathercole. Higgins and Robinson returned fire and killed the enemy.

Soldiers who were present when Petry picked up the grenade recalled that because he was wounded in the legs he could simply have dragged himself behind a wall and saved himself. Instead, he chose to place himself in danger to save two other soldiers threatened by the grenade. "He will tell you that he was presented with a problem, made a decision and took action," said Master Sgt. Reese Teakell, who was part of Petry's team. "You go to work every day, you train hard; you're building that warrior mentality in everybody. But every once in a while, a guy's tested. It just happened that Leroy was tested that day."

In relating the story of Petry's actions, [CBN News](#) correspondent Chuck Holton wrote that while many Americans "can name the contestants on the hit show 'American Idol,'" very few can name even one of the nine soldiers who have been awarded the Medal of Honor for their heroic actions in battle since September 11, 2001.

In addition to the living Medal of Honor recipients, Sergeants Petry and Giunta, the list of those who paid the supreme sacrifice that resulted in their being awarded the nation's highest military honor, reads as follows:

For actions in Iraq:

Spc. Ross A. McGinnis  
Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith  
Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor  
Marine Corps Cpl. Jason L. Dunham

For actions in Afghanistan:

Staff Sgt. Robert Miller  
Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti  
Navy Lt. Michael P. Murphy

... all names worthy of commitment to memory.



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