

PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans Advocate Medal of Honor for Heroic Helicopter Pilot Who Saved Their Lives 55 Years Ago.

Background:

On January 25, 1969, over ninety Soldiers of Charlie Company were engaged in a fierce battle with a battalion of the North Vietnamese Army near the village of Phu My in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. In the early moments of battle, Charlie Company's commander and four other Infantry Soldiers are dead – many others wounded. Pinned down for over two hours by a fortified enemy machine gun bunker, the Soldiers cannot maneuver against their aggressors.

When the beleaguered Soldiers were running low on ammo, First Lieutenant Ace Cozzalio arrived in a small scout helicopter to aggressively attack the bunker with machine guns blazing. Then Cozzalio lands his helicopter on top of the bunker while his gunner tosses a hand grenade in the bunker's rear entrance. The brave Lieutenant pulls in power, and his helicopter lifts into the air as a massive explosion destroys the bunker and its enemy combatants – the battle is over, saving the lives of over ninety Infantry Soldiers.

October 29, 2021:

Senator Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma submitted the recommendation to upgrade 1LT Ace Cozzalio's Distinguished Service Cross to the Medal of Honor (posthumous) to the U.S. Army for review and approval. Senator Inhofe retired in January 2023, and the responsibility for the Cozzalio Medal of Honor recommendation transferred to Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

Today:

Eighteen Charlie Company survivors of the Battle of Phu My have signed a letter to Senator Cruz stating they owe their lives to 1LT Ace Cozzalio and advocate his receiving the Medal of Honor. Two Texas Gold Star family members whose brother was killed in the Battle of Phu My have also submitted a letter to Senator Cruz in support of the highest honor for 1LT Cozzalio. All share a heartfelt desire to see the Medal of Honor bestowed on 1LT Cozzalio in their lifetimes.

Charlie Company Reunion:

On June 7-8, 2024, Charlie Company, 5th of the 60th Infantry, will meet at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel in St. Louis, MO, for their reunion. Here, the Battle of Phu My survivors will pay tribute to the heroic helicopter pilot who saved their lives fifty-five years ago: 1LT Ace Cozzalio. A reunion highlight is a one-hour presentation titled *Ace Cozzalio and the Battle of Phu My*, which tells the story of Cozzalio's heroic battle actions that justify an award upgrade to the Medal of Honor.

Contact Information

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