

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**MAJOR  
JOHN J. DUFFY**  
*U.S. Army, Medal of Honor*

Inducted April 20, 2023



Major John J. Duffy was born in New York City, New York on March 16, 1938. He was presented the Medal of Honor on July 5, 2022, by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. at the White House in Washington, D.C.

His citation reads:

Major John J. Duffy distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as the Senior Advisor to the 11th Airborne Battalion, 2d Brigade, Airborne Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam in the Republic of Vietnam, during the period of 14 to 15 April 1972. In the two days preceding the events of 14 to 15 April 1972, the commander of the 11th Airborne Battalion was killed, the battalion command post was destroyed, and Major Duffy was twice wounded but refused to be evacuated. Then on 14 April, Major Duffy directed the defense of Fire Support Base Charlie, which was surrounded by a battalion-size enemy element. In the morning hours, after a failed effort to establish a landing zone for resupply aircraft, he moved close to enemy anti-aircraft positions to call in airstrikes. At this time, Major Duffy was again wounded by fragments from a recoilless rifle round and again refused medical evacuation. Shortly thereafter, the enemy began an artillery bombardment on the base and he remained in an exposed position to direct gunships onto the enemy positions which eventually silenced the enemy fire. Following the bombardment, Major Duffy assessed the conditions on the base and personally ensured the wounded friendly foreign soldiers were moved to positions of relative safety and the remaining ammunition was appropriately distributed to the remaining defenders.

Shortly thereafter, the enemy resumed indirect fire on the base, expending an estimated 300 rounds. Nevertheless, he remained in an exposed position to direct gunship fire on the enemy positions. In the late afternoon hours, the enemy began a ground assault from all sides of the firebase and Major Duffy moved from position to position to adjust fire, spot targets for artillery observers, and ultimately to direct gunship fire on a friendly position which had been compromised. As the evening wore on, it became clear that the defenders could not withstand the overwhelming enemy forces and he began to organize an evacuation of the firebase under the cover of night. With the goal of a complete withdrawal, Major Duffy was the last man off the base, remaining behind to adjust the covering fire from gunships until the last possible moment. When the acting battalion commander was wounded, he assumed command of the evacuation and maintained communication with the available air support to direct fire on the enemy.

In the early morning hours of 15 April, the enemy ambushed the Battalion inflicting additional casualties and scattering some of the able-bodied soldiers. Major Duffy organized defensive positions during the ambush and ensured the friendly foreign forces could successfully repulse the enemy. After withstanding the ambush, he led the evacuees, many of whom were significantly wounded, to an established evacuation area, despite being continually pursued by the enemy. Upon reaching the exfiltration site, Major Duffy directed gunship fire on enemy positions and marked a landing zone for the helicopters. Only after ensuring all of the evacuees were aboard, did Major Duffy board while also assisting a wounded friendly foreign soldier in with him. Once on board, he administered aid to a helicopter door gunner who had been wounded during the evacuation.

Major Duffy's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.