

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary
For Immediate Release
June 21, 2016

President Obama to Award the Medal of Honor

WASHINGTON, DC – On Monday, July 18, 2016, President Barack Obama will award Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Charles Kettles, U.S. Army, the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry.

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Kettles will receive the Medal of Honor for his actions while serving as a Flight Commander assigned to 176th Aviation Company (Airmobile) (Light), 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, Americal Division. Then-Major Kettles distinguished himself in combat operations near Duc Pho, Republic of Vietnam, on May 15, 1967. He led a platoon of UH-1Ds to provide support to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, during an ambush by a battalion-sized enemy force. After leading several trips to the hot landing zone and evacuating the wounded, he returned, without additional aerial support, to rescue a squad-sized element of stranded soldiers pinned down by enemy fire. He is credited with saving the lives of 40 soldiers and four of his own crew members.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Charles S. Kettles was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, Jan. 9, 1930. Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Kettles was drafted to the Army at age 21 while enrolled in Michigan State Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University) where he studied engineering. Upon completion of basic training at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, Kettles attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and earned his commission as an armor officer in the U.S. Army Reserve, Feb. 28, 1953. Kettles graduated from the Army Aviation School in 1954, before serving active duty tours in Korea, Japan and Thailand.

After leaving active duty, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Kettles established a Ford Dealership in Dewitt, Michigan, and continued his service with the Army Reserve as a member of the 4th Battalion, 20th Field Artillery. Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Kettles volunteered for active duty in 1963. He attended Helicopter Transition Training at Fort Wolters, Texas in 1964. During a tour in France the following year, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Kettles was cross-trained to fly the famed UH-1D "Huey." In 1966 he was assigned as a flight commander with the 176th Assault Helicopter Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, and deployed to Vietnam from February through November 1967. His second tour of duty in Vietnam lasted from October 1969, through October 1970. In 1970, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Kettles went to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, where he served as an aviation team chief and readiness coordinator supporting the Army Reserve. He remained in San Antonio until his retirement from the Army in 1978.

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Kettles completed his bachelor's degree at Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas, and earned his master's degree at Eastern Michigan University, College of Technology, in commercial construction. He went on to develop the Aviation Management Program at the College of Technology and taught both

disciplines. He later worked for Chrysler Pentastar Aviation until his retirement in 1993. Kettles currently resides in Ypsilanti, Michigan, with his wife Ann.

Kettles' awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with Numeral "27," the Army Commendation Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster, the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze service star, the Korean Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with one silver service star and one bronze service star, the Korea Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with bronze hourglass device, the Master Aviator Badge, Marksman Badge with carbine bar, the Valorous Unit Citation, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with bronze star, the United Nations Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with "60" Device, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with palm device.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE MEDAL OF HONOR:

The Medal of Honor is awarded to members of the Armed Forces who distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry above and beyond the call of duty while:

- engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;
- engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
- serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

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. There must be incontestable proof of the performance of the meritorious conduct, and each recommendation for the award must be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/21/president-obama-award-medal-honor>