

The following bio is about Jack Jacobs for whom the Jack Jacobs Congressional Medal of Honor Award Fund was named.

JACK JACOBS

Jack Howard Jacobs (born August 2, 1945) is a retired colonel in the United States Army and a Medal of Honor recipient for his actions during the Vietnam War. He currently serves as a military analyst for MSNBC and previously worked as an investment manager.

Early life

Born on August 2, 1945, in Brooklyn, New York,^[1] Jacobs lived in Queens near LaGuardia Airport. He was born into a Jewish family^[2] with origins in Greece, Poland and Romania. As a child, he moved with his family to Woodbridge Township, New Jersey, in the mid-1950s and in 1962 graduated from Woodbridge High School.^[3]

He then attended Rutgers University, where he earned both Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees. A member of the school's Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program, he entered military service as a second lieutenant in 1966.^[4]

Military service

In the course of his military career, he served as a platoon leader in the 82nd Airborne Division, a battalion executive officer in the 7th Infantry Division (United States), and a battalion commander with the 10th Infantry Regiment in Panama. He spent two tours of duty in Vietnam, both times as an advisor to infantry units in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).^[4]

In his first deployment to Vietnam, Jacobs served as a first lieutenant with Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, in Kien Phong Province, part of the Mekong Delta region.^{[1][5]} By March 9, 1968, he was working as the assistant battalion advisor for the ARVN's 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division. During a mission on that day, 2nd Battalion came under intense fire from an entrenched Viet Cong force. As Jacobs called in air support from his position with the leading company, the company commander was disabled and the unit became disorganized due to heavy casualties.^[1]

Although wounded himself by mortar fragments to the head, Jacobs took command of the company and ordered a withdrawal and the establishment of a defense line at a more secure position. Despite impaired vision caused by his injuries, he repeatedly ran across open rice paddies through heavy fire to evacuate the wounded, personally saving a fellow advisor, the wounded company commander, and twelve other allied soldiers. Three times during these trips he encountered Viet Cong squads, which he single-handedly dispersed. He was subsequently promoted to captain and awarded the Medal of Honor.^[1] The medal was formally presented to him by President Richard Nixon.^[5]

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Jacobs received two Silver Stars, three Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts.^[2]

In his memoir, Jacobs recounts that he had to use subterfuge to return to a combat role in Vietnam after being awarded the Medal of Honor, as the military was unwilling to assign Medal of Honor recipients to combat roles.^[6]

Jacobs was a faculty member at the United States Military Academy in West Point, teaching international relations and comparative politics for three years, and at the National War College in Washington, D.C. He retired from the Army in 1987 as a colonel.^[4]

Business career and later life

After his military retirement, Jacobs began a career in investment banking. He founded and was chief operating officer of AutoFinance Group, Inc., which dealt in the securitization of debt instruments. The company was later sold to KeyBank. He next worked as a managing director of Bankers Trust, overseeing the firm's foreign exchange options and being involved in the institutional hedge fund business until leaving the company in 1996. Jacobs is a principal in The Fitzroy Group, an investment and residential real estate development organization which operates in London. He is also on the board of directors for several smaller corporations.^[4]

Jacobs maintains involvement in several military-related organizations. He is vice chairman of the Medal of Honor Foundation, a member of the board of trustees for the National World War II Museum, and holds the McDermott Chair of Politics at the U.S. Military Academy.^[4]

In October 2008, the Penguin Group published Jacobs' memoir, *If Not Now, When?: Duty and Sacrifice In America's Time of Need*, coauthored with *New York Times* best-selling author, Douglas Century, with a foreword by *NBC Nightly News* anchor and managing editor Brian Williams. The book won the 2010 Colby Award, recognizing a "first work of fiction or nonfiction that has made a significant contribution to the public's understanding of intelligence operations, military history, or international affairs."

He is also a military analyst for NBC/MSNBC. In 2009 he appeared on *The Colbert Report* as part of the Doom Bunker segment.

Jacobs is married, has a grown daughter and two sons, and lives in Far Hills, New Jersey. He has also been a resident of the Millington section of Long Hill Township, New Jersey.^[5]

Medal of Honor citation

Jacobs' official Medal of Honor citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Capt. Jacobs (then 1st Lt.), Infantry, distinguished himself while serving as assistant battalion advisor, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam. The 2d Battalion was advancing to contact when it came under intense heavy machine gun and mortar fire from a Viet Cong battalion positioned in well fortified bunkers. As the 2d Battalion deployed into attack formation its advance was halted by devastating fire. Capt. Jacobs, with the command element of the lead company, called for and directed air strikes on the enemy positions to facilitate a renewed attack. Due to the intensity of the enemy fire and heavy casualties to the command group, including the company commander, the attack stopped and the

friendly troops became disorganized. Although wounded by mortar fragments, Capt. Jacobs assumed command of the allied company, ordered a withdrawal from the exposed position and established a defensive perimeter. Despite profuse bleeding from head wounds which impaired his vision, Capt. Jacobs, with complete disregard for his safety, returned under intense fire to evacuate a seriously wounded advisor to the safety of a wooded area where he administered lifesaving first aid. He then returned through heavy automatic weapons fire to evacuate the wounded company commander. Capt. Jacobs made repeated trips across the fire-swept open rice paddies evacuating wounded and their weapons. On 3 separate occasions, Capt. Jacobs contacted and drove off Viet Cong squads who were searching for allied wounded and weapons, single-handedly killing 3 and wounding several others. His gallant actions and extraordinary heroism saved the lives of 1 U.S. advisor and 13 allied soldiers. Through his effort the allied company was restored to an effective fighting unit and prevented defeat of the friendly forces by a strong and determined enemy. Capt. Jacobs, by his gallantry and bravery in action in the highest traditions of the military service, has reflected great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.^[1]

References

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- ^{a b} Brody, Seymour (October 18, 2006). "Colonel Jack H. Jacobs: Medal of Honor recipient In Vietnam". *Jewish Heroes and Heroines in America*. Florida Atlantic University. <http://www.fau.edu/library/br131.htm>. Retrieved September 3, 2010.
- ^a INTERVIEW WITH JACK H. JACOBS, Rutgers University, November 20, 2000. Accessed July 11, 2008. "JJ: ... Anyway, we moved to New Jersey in the mid-'50s, and my parents still live in the same house in Woodbridge. I went to Woodbridge High School, and then, from there, I went to Rutgers."
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- ^{a b c} James, George (May 28, 2000). "COMMUNITIES; Those Whom We Honor". *The New York Times* (New York). <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE0D8173DF93BA15756C0A9669C8B63>. Retrieved September 3, 2010.
- ^a Jacobs, Jack; Douglas Century (October 2008). *If Not Now, When?: Duty and Sacrifice in America's Time of Need*. New York: Penguin Group. pp. 200. ISBN 9780425223598

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