

## LESSON NUMBER 11

**TASK:** “THE MEDALS – SSG CLIFFORD C SIMS – SPC FRANK A. HERDA.”

**CONDITION:** In a small group discussion environment.

**STANDARD:**

- All participants will become acquainted with the circumstances, which led to this Medal of Honor being granted.
- All participants will be able to relate SSG SIMS or SPC HERDA’S actions to today’s Army values.

*Notes to instructor: This lesson may be taught using any Medal of Honor citation as the basis. They are generally available in unit libraries, or may be obtained through the Center for Military History or on the Internet at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/mohom.htm>.*

*You should conduct this lesson by explaining what the Medal of Honor is, setting the scene for these specific awards (in these cases, explaining or providing a little background about the Vietnam War), reading the actual citation, and then engaging in discussion. You might also mention to those present that these two soldiers were members of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault).*

*SSG CLIFFORD C. SIMS*



His actual citation for the Medal of Honor reads:

*(Read actual citation out loud:)*

*“Staff Sergeant Clifford C. Sims, United States Army, who distinguished himself on 21 February 1968, while serving as a squad leader with Company D, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 501<sup>st</sup> Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, near Hue, in the Republic of Vietnam. Company D was assaulting a heavily fortified enemy position concealed within a dense wooded area when it encountered strong enemy defensive fire. Once within the woodline, Sergeant Sims led his squad in a furious attack against an enemy force, which had pinned down the 1<sup>st</sup> platoon and threatened to overrun it. His skillful leadership provided the platoon with freedom of movement and enabled it to regain the initiative. Sergeant Sims was then ordered to move his squad to a position where he could provide covering fire for the company command group and to link up with the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon, which was under heavy enemy pressure. After moving no more than thirty meters Sergeant Sims noticed that a brick structure in which ammunition was stocked was on fire. Realizing the danger, Sergeant Sims took immediate action to move his squad from this position. Though in the process of leaving the area two members of his squad were injured by the subsequent explosion of the ammunition, Sergeant Sims prompt actions undoubtedly prevented more serious casualties from occurring. While continuing through the dense woods amidst heavy enemy fire, Sergeant Sims and his squad were approaching a bunker when they heard the unmistakable noise of a concealed boobytrap being triggered immediately to their front. Sergeant Sims warned his comrades of the danger and unhesitatingly hurled himself upon the device as it exploded, taking the full impact of the blast. In so protecting his fellow soldiers, he willingly sacrificed his own life. Staff Sergeant Sims conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism and intrepidity at the cost of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.”*

**SPC FRANK A. HERDA**



His actual citation for the Medal of Honor reads:

*(Read actual citation out loud:)*

*“Specialist Four Herda, (then Private First Class), who distinguished himself on 29 June 1968 while serving as a grenadier with company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Airborne), 506<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Airmobile) near Trang Bang, Republic of Vietnam. Company A was part of a battalion-size night defensive perimeter when a large enemy force initiated an attack on the friendly units. While other enemy elements provided diversionary fire and indirect weapons fire to the west, a sapper force of approximately thirty men armed with hand grenades and small charges attacked Company A’s perimeter from the east. As the sappers were making a last, violent assault, five of them charged the position defended by Specialist Herda and two comrades, one of whom was wounded and lay helpless in the bottom of the foxhole. Specialist Herda fired at the aggressors until they were within ten feet of his position and one of their grenades landed in the foxhole. He fired one last round from his grenade launcher, hitting one of the enemy soldiers in the head, and then, with no concern for his own safety, Specialist Herda immediately covered the blast of the grenade with his body. The explosion wounded him grievously, but his selfless action prevented his two comrades from being seriously injured or killed and enabled the remaining defender to kill the other sappers. By his conspicuous gallantry at the risk of his own life in the highest traditions of the military service, Specialist Herda has reflected great credit on himself, his unit and the United States Army.*

*Discussion Questions:*

Which were the primary Army values that you think that SSG Sims and or SPC Herda exhibited? (i.e. Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage)

Why do you think he was able to act with such heroism? (Training, courage, loyalty or concern for others, etc.?)

Do you think that SSG Sims and SPC Herda took care of their soldiers?

How do you think you might react in the same situation?

Have you known other Army soldiers or leaders, in your own career, who you think would make the same sacrifice as SSG Sims or SPC Herda did?

Who have you known in your Army career who has set the example for you; professionally, personally, or in terms of courage?