



TriWest applauds Medal of Honor heroes

Recipients to appear at Naval Medical Center San Diego for ceremony

BY ELIZABETH PERRINE AND RICHARD GRAY
Contributing writers

Medal of Honor recipients are scheduled to attend the opening of a traveling photographic exhibit honoring recipients of the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest honor for valor under fire. The exhibit opens Tuesday at Naval Medical Center San Diego.

Medal of Honor recipients Jay Vargas of San Diego and Robert Modrzejewski, along with special guest recipient John Finn, the oldest living recipient and a Pearl Harbor hero, will attend an opening ceremony and reception. The ceremony begins at 3 p.m., outdoors at Naval Medical Center San Diego. Vargas and Modrzejewski will be available for interviews.

Also attending are Congressman Duncan Hunter, Congresswoman Susan Davis, Mayor Jerry Sanders and senior ranking Naval officers, including Naval Medical Center San Diego commander Rear Adm. Brian Brannman and David J. McIntyre Jr., president and CEO of Department of Defense contractor TriWest Healthcare Alliance, the company presenting the exhibit.

The exhibit is open to the public for free through March 10 at Naval Medical Center San Diego. A duplicate exhibit donated by TriWest Healthcare Alliance to the Pentagon will be on permanent display in the Pentagon's new Hall of Heroes Feb. 3.

"TriWest Healthcare Alliance is proud to present these portraits, taken by photographer Nick Del Calzo, of our nation's Medal of Honor recipients," said McIntyre. "We acquired this exhibit with the express purpose of honoring our nation's greatest heroes and sharing their legacies with America."

Visions of Valor is the first and largest exhibit of its kind in the nation's history to honor the courage, commitment and character of Medal of Honor recipients, whose numbers are declining. Only 117

recipients are still living today. The Medal of Honor has been awarded to 3,460 recipients to date, according to the Alliance.

The traveling exhibit moves to San Diego from Phoenix and will be displayed over the next several months at veteran's facilities and major military bases and posts across the Western United States, including Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, and Fort Lewis in Tacoma, Wash.

The exhibit is intended to educate the public about the Medal of Honor and to perpetuate the patriotism, courage and honor of its recipients.

Vargas, a retired Marine Corps colonel, received the Medal of Honor in Vietnam for braving intense enemy fire to rescue a superior officer and inspiring his men to repel enemy forces during strong counterattacks. He was wounded twice in that action.

Modrzejewski, a retired Marine Corps colonel, received the Medal of Honor in Vietnam for blocking an enemy supply trail. Wounded several times, he crawled 200 meters to provide ammunition to his men and to direct artillery fire, aiming it dangerously close to his position.

Visit www.cmoHS.org to read their full citations and for more information about the Medal of Honor.

TriWest Healthcare Alliance is a Phoenix-based corporation that partners with the Department of Defense to provide access to cost-effective, high-quality health care for 2.7 million members of America's military family in the 21-state TRICARE West Region, which is comprised of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and Western Texas. For more information, visit www.triwest.com.

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