**War of 1812**

**200th Anniversary Suggested Activities**

This document provides guidance and suggested activities for utilizing selected information and materials related to this historic event. It was developed to assist individual Sailors with a personal interest in the topic, or for junior officers and NCOs tasked with training Sailors. It is also a good resource for any individuals interested in exploring the topic in greater detail. Additional resources are available through the Naval History and Heritage Command website, <http://www.history.navy.mil>.

The following script is a suggested way of introducing the topic and materials to your audience. The subsequent categories provide suggestions and links to pertinent materials.

* **Script**
	+ Two hundred years ago, a young coastal nation, experiencing the growing pains of its recent independence, found itself at war with its former colonial master—the most powerful nation in the world. The United States, independent for less than 30 years, went to war with Great Britain again in 1812 to preserve its economy, its way of life and its independence. The U.S. Navy emerged as the key to victory. The U.S. Navy, in its infancy, took on the world’s mightiest fleet and proved to be a force of innovation, technology, esprit, and expert seamanship. The U.S. Navy kept the sea and America free during the War of 1812, and continues to do so today. This was the “Second War of Independence,” when Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the “Star Spangled Banner.” The Navy proved that it was essential to our nation’s defense and prosperity by protecting national commerce, enforcing trade laws, and ensuring freedom of the seas. The bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812 and the Star Spangled Banner honors this legacy and reminds Americans that freedom of the seas and the free flow of commerce remain as important to our nation today as they were 200 years ago. Today we’re going to review the people, battles, technology, and significance of the War of 1812 as a part of Navy Heritage Week and in celebration of the 237th birthday of the U.S. Navy.
* **Introduction**
	+ Show the [War of 1812 Introduction Video](http://www.ourflagwasstillthere.org/), narrated by Richard Dreyfuss
		- Discuss the challenges and importance of the U.S. Navy keeping the waterways open and safe for 200 years, and how it’s still a vital mission today
	+ View the main War of 1812 page on the [Naval History and Heritage Command](http://www.history.navy.mil/commemorations/1812/1812-index.htm) website
	+ Read and discuss the War of 1812 category in the [Naval History Blog](http://www.navalhistory.org/category/wars/war-of-1812/) and perhaps write a blog entry
* **Technology**
	+ Read and discuss the [America’s Naval Technological Surprise in the War of 1812](http://www.navalhistory.org/2010/10/15/america%E2%80%99s-naval-technological-surprise-in-the-war-of-1812/) entry in the Naval History Blog, and perhaps write a blog entry
* **Movies**
	+ View the movie “Master and Commander”
		- Use the [CHINFO Movie List Discussion Points](#MovieList) to foster discussion
* **Videos**
	+ Show the [War of 1812 video series](http://www.navy.mil/1812/videos.asp)
* **Books**
	+ Read *Six Frigates: The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy*, by Ian W. Toll (2006)
		- Use the [Six Frigates Book Discussion Points](#BookDiscussion) to foster discussion
	+ Read other titles from the [Navy Professional Reading Program](http://www.navyreading.navy.mil/Navy-Reading.aspx)
* **Additional Resources**
	+ Incorporate stories of decorated warfighters from the [Plan of the Day Notes](#PODNotes) into your daily activities
	+ View War of 1812 images posted on the [Naval History and Heritage Command](http://www.history.navy.mil/commemorations/1812/1812-index.htm) website
	+ Read other materials in the Interesting Reads section of the Naval History and Heritage Command’s [War of 1812 page](http://www.history.navy.mil/commemorations/1812/1812-index.htm)
* Read how our national anthem came to be: [The Star Spangled Banner Story](http://www.ourflagwasstillthere.org/the-star-spangled-banner.html)
* Review the posted event that occurred [200 Years Ago Today](http://www.ourflagwasstillthere.org/the-war-of-1812/200-years-ago-today.html) and discuss
* **Scuttlebutt**
	+ Name and discuss famous naval personnel from the era at [Officers of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps in the War of 1812](http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/war1812/1815list.htm)
		- Do you recognize any of the names?
		- Do you know of any monuments, buildings, ships, or places named for any of these people?
	+ Review the [Navy Regulations from 1814](http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq59-19.htm#anchor111807) and discuss how they are similar or different today
	+ Consider the strategies and tactics used during these famous battles in the War of 1812:
		- [USS Constitution escapes from a British Squadron, July 1812](http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/war1812/atsea/const-es.htm)
		- [USS Constitution captures HMS Guerriere, 19 August 1812](http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/war1812/atsea/con-guer.htm)
		- [USS Hornet sinks HMS Peacock, 24 February 1813](http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/war1812/atsea/hnt-peck.htm)
		- [HMS Shannon captures USS Chesapeake, 1 June 1813](http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/war1812/atsea/ches-sn.htm)
		- [USS Hornet captures HMS Penguin, 23 March 1815](http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/war1812/atsea/hnt-peng.htm)
	+ Identify particularly interesting or humorous [Navy terms](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/traditions/html/navyterm.html) and discuss

**CHINFO Movie List**

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**Discussion Points**

1. How does Hollywood portray the Navy in this film? How does it differ from or reflect your perspective and experience?
2. Does today’s Navy have the same battle rhythm as that shown in this movie?
3. How are the Navy’s three tenets (Warfighting First, Operate Forward, Be Ready) depicted in this movie?
4. What traditions or ways of doing things are seen in the movie that you, as part of today’s Navy, do as well? In what ways are the tasks of sailors timeless?
5. What aspects of the movie inspire you?
6. How does the movie represent the warfighting standard of its time?

**War of 1812**

**Book Discussion Points**

*Six Frigates: The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy,* by Ian W. Toll (2006)

1. What do you think of the level of responsibility among Sailors at the time of this book? How is it different from today?
2. A lot of the details of the early naval engagements were documented in the log books of naval assets engaged in them. These logs inform us today of the tension and choreography among the French, British, and American fleets as well as friendly forces movements. What does a deck log have to do with warfighting? How can a logbook influence the future?
3. The U.S. Navy ships operated with a higher level of independency of command during this time than is practiced today. Why do you think that was so? Do you think junior officers and senior enlisted personnel exercise their authority to a lesser extent now? What options are there or changes can be made—at your level, unit level, and up the chain—to give greater individual authority?
4. Technological advances contributed to fledgling America’s successful build-up of the fleet of six frigates. How does the technology that your unit has contribute to the Navy’s warfighting effort?
5. The overt rationale in 1794 to establish a navy was to protect sea lanes. Has the primary mission of the U.S. Navy changed? (p. 42 para 5)
6. Why was the establishment of the Navy so contentious? How does the tension among the “doves,” the “hawks,” and special-interest groups and well as the Republican and Democratic National Parties impact the military? How does political activity directly or indirectly influence warfighting?
7. How did the expectation of battle drive the design of the first of America’s ships? Is this still how ships and other weaponry are developed today? (p. 50 para 3)
8. What lessons can be learned from the life of U.S. naval leader Commodore Thomas Truxton—good and bad? (p. 92 para 4)
9. Service in the original U.S. Navy was voluntary, as it has been in our military since 1973. How are the motivations for enlisting the same now as then? How does the reason for joining—and whether or not it’s a volunteer or draft crew—affect a unit’s ability to train and fight? (p. 94)
10. What recruitment problems did USS *Constitution* face that have also challenged our all-volunteer Navy? (p. 98)
11. Were Thomas Jefferson’s three conditions for the need for an American Navy—that its purpose be defensive, that it not be exploited as a source of patronage and corruption, and that it be affordable—realistic in his time, and for today? (p. 164 para 2)
12. How did the United States’ use of tributes to the Algiers and other countries relate to our practice of international relations today?
13. How does improper government spending impact military warfighting ability, short- and long-term? (p. 127 para 5)
14. Why was the build-up of a naval force as opposed to a land force viewed as at cross-purposes in the early years of our government? (p. 124 para 4) Is there still interservice rivalry? Does it serve to strengthen or detract from our military?
15. Why would President Quincy Adams repeat as a mantra: “The trident of Neptune is the scepter of the world”? (p. 143 para 4) How does this concept pertain to our traditional world view as Americans, before 9/11?
16. How would Thomas Jefferson’s idea of fighting piracy apply to today’s international climate? (p. 262)
17. The weather continues to vex warfighters, regardless of sophisticated construction or weaponry. Other natural factors such as geography, time, sea currents, are also beyond a sailor’s control. Select one of the sea battles described in *Six Frigates* and discuss the turn of events with these natural factors in mind. Discuss a current example of how these have affected your warfighting experience. (p. 232)
18. “By 1800, The United States was the largest neutral maritime power in the world, and by a considerable margin.” (p. 271 para 2) In what way does—or does not—this statement from *Six Frigates* still ring true today? How does it influence our warfighting capability?
19. Thomas Jefferson argued for a fleet of small gunboats in the defense of our inland waters and harbor defense (pp. 284–285). Riverine warfare was employed during the War of 1812 as well as later conflicts. How does this heritage unite our Sailors?
20. Commodore Edward Preble was lauded as a national hero, in part for carrying “the fight to the enemy” for the first time. (p 257 para 2) How does “carrying the fight to the enemy” define our role as warfighters?
21. What do you think of the espionage or intelligence gathering techniques described in *Six Frigates*? (p. 343)
22. What aspects of the sailor’s life as depicted in *Six Frigates* resonate with you?
23. How does the battle rhythm described in the bookcompare to yours?
24. How does shipboard life described in *Six Frigates* compare to yours?
25. A submarine and “floating mines” were some of the new components of warfighting in 1813. (pp. 422–423) How does technology challenge us as Sailors? Are we more separated from warfighting having such a high level of sophisticated weaponry?
26. Comment on the fog of war as described in *Six Frigates.* (p. 415 para 2)
27. How does the public support or disdain of a military action or war effort impact your sense of mission? (p. 419)
28. The author of *Six Frigates* concludes that“no other foreign war has ever divided the American people so bitterly. . . .” (p. 458 para 1) What do you think?

**PLAN OF THE DAY NOTES**

**A Selection of Navy Recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Honor**

*The Medal of Honor, our nation’s highest award for valor, traces its roots to the Civil War when Congress passed a bill on 21 December 1861, authorizing the distribution of 200 “medals of honor” for Navy petty officers, seamen, landsmen and marines who distinguished themselves in action during the war. The following year, Congress passed a similar bill authorizing a medal of honor for Army noncommissioned officers and privates. Over the years, a series of congressional acts signed by U.S. presidents defined the nature and qualifications for the award. Before the Civil War, Congress awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for particular act of bravery or success in battle. Thus, a sampling of those award recipients who fought so valiantly in the War of 1812 is included herein.*

*Some wording and punctuation quoted from the selected citations may seem outdated or peculiar, but the material comes from original citations. See Bureau of Naval Personnel,* Medal of Honor, 1861­–1949 *(Navy Department, 1950)* *and* [*www.history.army.mil/moh.htm*](http://www.history.army.mil/moh.htm) *for the Civil War and later. Please note, many commercial websites (.com) mistakenly include the word “Congressional” before “Medal of Honor.”This is an error.*

**WAR OF 1812: A SELECTION OF NAVY CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL RECIPIENTS**

1. Recipient: Isaac Hull

Date of Action: 19 August 1812

Commodore Isaac Hull of Derby, Connecticut, was serving as commander of the U.S. frigate *Constitution* when she engaged HMS *Guerriere* in the Atlantic Ocean on 19 August 1812. For his actions in that fight, the Congressional Gold Medal citation states, “Soon after the vessels fell apart, *Guerriere*’s main-mast fell into the sea, bringing down the fore-mast, and an enormous weight of yards and rigging. Captain [James] Dacres reluctantly surrendered and [*Guerriere*] was too badly injured to be saved. *Guerriere* was set on fire and blown up after her men were removed.” In this way, Commodore Hull stood the watch for our country.

2. Recipient: William Bainbridge

Date of Action: 29 December 1812

Captain William Bainbridge of Princeton, New Jersey, was serving as commander of the U.S. frigate *Constitution* when the ship engaged HMS *Java* off the coast of Brazil on 29 December 1812. *Java* counted the governor general-designate of Bombay among its nearly one hundred passengers being transported to India. The disparate ratio of 4 or 5 to 1 in casualties sustained proved the greater firepower and gunnery skill of *Constitution*’s crew. After removing the passengers and crew of *Java,* Bainbridge burned the vessel at sea. He was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for his actions that day.

3. Recipients: William Burrows and Edward McCall

Date of Action: 5 September 1813

Lieutenant William Burrows of Kentucky and Midshipman Edward McCall of South Carolina were serving aboard the U.S. brig *Enterprise* when it engagedHMS *Boxer* off the coast of Portland, Maine, on 5 September 1813. In the initial minutes of the fight, Captain Samuel Blyth of *Boxer* was killed, and Lieutenant Burrows suffered a mortal wound. Midshipman McCall took control of *Enterprise* and led her to victory. For their “high sense entertained in the conflict,” Midshipman McCall and Lieutenant Burrows were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

4. Recipient: Oliver Hazard Perry

Date of Action: 10 September 1813

Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry of South Kingstown, Rhode Island, commanded a squadron of ships at the Battle of Lake Erie on 10 September 1813. Perry’s flagship, the U.S. brig *Lawrence,* sustained heavy damage during the battle, forcing Perry to transfer his command, via rowboat, to the U.S. brig *Niagara.* From *Niagara*, Perry led his Navy to triumph over the British. This victory marked the first time in history that an entire enemy naval squadron had surrendered to the United States. The battle also helped popularize the phrase “Don’t give up the ship.” Originally coined by Perry’s friend, Captain James Lawrence who was killed in an earlier engagement, the phrase, sewn onto Perry’s battle flag, became the rallying cry for the Navy. Perry was awarded a Congressional Gold Medal for his efforts.

**CIVIL WAR: A SELECTION OF NAVY MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS**

5. Recipient: Benjamin Swearer

Date of Action:29 August 1861

Seaman Benjamin Swearer of Baltimore, Maryland, served aboard the steam sloop *Pawnee* during the attack on Fort Clark, North Carolina. His Medal of Honor citation states that he was “embarked in a surfboat from the USS *Pawnee* during action against Fort Clark, off Baltimore Inlet, 29 August 1861. Taking part in a mission to land troops and to remain inshore and provide protection, Swearer rendered gallant service throughout the action and had the honor of being the first man to raise the flag on the captured fort.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

6. Recipient: John Williams

Date of Action: 7 November 1861

Boatswain’s Mate John Williams of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, served aboard the steam sloop *Mohican*. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Captain of an 11-inch gun aboard the USS *Mohican* during action of the main squadron of ships against the heavily defended Forts Beauregard and Walker on Hilton Head, and against ships of the Confederate Fleet, 7 November 1861. Cool and courageous at his battle station, Williams maintained steady fire against the enemy while under the fort batteries during a 4-hour engagement which resulted in silencing the batteries of the forts and in the rout of the rebel steamers.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

7. Recipient: Thomas Flood

Date of Action: 25 April 1862

Flood of Ireland (accredited to New York) served as a boy on board the steam sloop USS *Pensacola* “during the attack on Forts Jackson and St. Philip and at the taking of New Orleans, 24 and 25 April 1862.” The Medal of Honor citation continues, “Swept from the bridge by a shell which wounded the signal quartermaster, Flood returned to the bridge after assisting the wounded man below and taking over his duties, [p]erformed them with coolness, exactitude and the fidelity of a veteran seaman. His intelligence and character cannot be spoken of too warmly.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

8. Recipient: Charles W. Kenyon

Date of Action: 15 May 1862

Naval Fireman Charles W. Kenyon of Oneida, New York, served aboard the ironclad steamer USS *Galena* at the Battle of Drewry’s Bluff on 15 May 1862. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Severely burned while extricating a priming wire which had become bent and fixed in the bow gun while his ship underwent terrific shelling from the enemy, Kenyon hastily dressed his hands with cotton waste and oil and courageously returned to his gun while enemy sharpshooters in rifle pits along the banks continued to direct their fire at the men at the guns.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

9. Recipient: John S. Hickman

Date of Action: 14 March 1863

Fireman Second Class John S. Hickman of Richmond, Virginia, served aboard the steam sloop *Richmond* at the attack of Port Hudson, Louisiana. His citation states, “Damaged by a 6-inch solid rifle shot which shattered the starboard safety-valve chamber and also damaged the port safety-valve, the fireroom of the USS *Richmond* immediately became filled with steam to place it in an extremely critical condition. Acting courageously in this crisis, Hickman persisted in penetrating the steam-filled room in order to haul the hot fires of the furnaces and continued this action until the gravity of the situation had been lessened.”In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

10. Recipient: Robert Anderson

Date of Action: 7 April 1863

Quartermaster Robert Anderson of Ireland (accredited to New Hampshire) served aboard the ironclad steamer *Keokuk* during the First Battle of Charleston Harbor on 7 April 1863. His citation states that he “served on board the USS *Crusader* and the *Keokuk* during various actions of those vessels. Carrying out his duties skillfully while on board the U.S.S. *Crusader,* Q.M. Anderson, on all occasions, set forth the greatest intrepidity and devotion. During the attack on Charleston, while serving on board the USS *Keokuk,* Q.M. Anderson was stationed at the wheel when shot penetrated the house and, with the scattering of the iron, used his own body as a shield for his commanding officer.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

11. Recipient: Juan Ortega

Date of Action: 13 January 1864

Seaman Juan Ortega of Spain (accredited to Pennsylvania) was serving aboard the sloop *Saratoga* when Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles ordered the ship to join the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in Charleston, South Carolina. His Medal of Honor citation states that he was “on board the USS *Saratoga* during actions of that vessel on 2 occasions. Carrying out his duties courageously during these actions, Ortega conducted himself gallantly through both periods. Promoted to acting master’s mate.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

12. Recipient: Mark G. Ham

Date of Action: 19 June 1864

Carpenter’s Mate Mark G. Ham of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was serving on board the steam sloop USS *Kearsage* when the ship destroyed CSS *Alabama* off the coast of Cherbourg, France, on 19 June 1964. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Performing his duties intelligently and faithfully, Ham distinguished himself in the face of the bitter enemy fire and was highly commended by his divisional officer.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

13. Recipient: David Warren

Dates of Action: 23–25 June 1864

Coxswain David Warren of Scotland (accredited to New York) was serving aboard the steamer USS *Monticello* while the ship engaged in a reconnaissance mission of the harbor and water defenses of Wilmington, North Carolina, from 23 to 25 June 1864. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Taking part in a reconnaissance of enemy defenses which lasted 2 days and nights, Warren courageously carried out his duties during this action which resulted in the capture of a mail carrier and mail, the cutting of a telegraph wire, and the capture of a large group of prisoners. Although in immediate danger from the enemy, Warren showed gallantry and coolness throughout this action which resulted in the gaining of much vital information of the rebel defenses.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

14. Recipient: John Henry Lawson

Date of Action: 5 August 1864

Landsman John Henry Lawson, an African-American from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was serving aboard the Admiral David Farragut’s flagship, the steam sloop USS *Hartford,* during the attacks against Fort Morgan, Confederate gunboats, and the ram *Tennessee* at the Battle of Mobile Bay on 5 August 1864. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Wounded in the leg and thrown violently against the side of the ship when an enemy shell killed or wounded the 6-man crew as the shell whipped on the berth deck, Lawson, upon regaining his composure, promptly returned to his station and, although urged to go below for treatment, steadfastly continued his duties throughout the remainder of the action.”

15. Recipient: William M. Carr

Date of Action: 5 August 1864

Master-at-Arms William M. Carr of Baltimore, Maryland, was serving on board thesteam sloop USS *Richmond* at the Battle of Mobile Bay during which the ship’s crew fought hard against rebel forts, gunboats, and CSS *Tennessee* on 5 August 1864. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Despite damage to his ship and the loss of several men on board as enemy fire raked her decks, Carr performed his duties with skill and courage throughout the prolonged battle which resulted in the surrender of the rebel ram *Tennessee* and in the successful attacks carried out on Fort Morgan.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

16. Recipient: John Rountry

Date of Action: 21 September 1864

Fireman First Class John Rountry of Boston, Massachusetts, was serving on board the ironclad steamer USS *Montauk* while docked at Port Royal, South Carolina, on 21 September 1864. His Medal of Honor citation states, “During the night of 21 September when fire was discovered in the magazine light room of that vessel, causing a panic and demoralizing the crew, Rountry, notwithstanding the cry of ‘fire in the magazine,’ forced his way with hose in hand, through the frightened crowd to the light room and put out the flames.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

17. Recipient: Charles Rice

Date of Action: 23 December 1864

Coalheaver Charles Rice of Russia (accredited to Maine), serving on board the steam gunboat USS *Agawam,* was part of a volunteer crew on a powder boat that exploded near Fort Fisher, North Carolina, on 23 December 1864. His citation states, “The powder boat, towed in by the *Wilderness* to prevent detection by the enemy, cast off and slowly steamed to within 300 yards of the beach. After fuses and fires had been lit and a second anchor with short scope let go to assure the boat’s tailing inshore, the crew again boarded the *Wilderness* and proceeded a distance of 12 miles from shore. Less than 2 hours later the explosion took place, and the following day, fires were observed still burning at the fort.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

18. Recipient:William Shipman

Date of Action: 15 January 1865

Coxswain William Shipman of Pennsylvania was serving on board the steam sloop USS *Ticonderoga* during the attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina, on 15 January 1865. His Medal of Honor citation states, “As captain of No. 2 gun, stationed near the 100-pounder Parrot rifle when it burst into fragments, killing 8 men and wounding 12 more, Shipman promptly recognized the effect produced by the explosion and, despite the carnage surrounding them, and the enemy’s fire, encouraged the men at their guns by exclaiming ‘Go ahead, boys! This is only the fortunes of war.’” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

19. Recipient: Charles Mills

Date of Action: 15 January 1865

Seaman Charles Mills of Ulster, New York, was serving on board the steam frigate USS *Minnesota* during the attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina, on 15 January 1865. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Landing on the beach with the assaulting party from his ship, Mills charged up to the palisades and, when more than two-thirds of the men became seized with panic and retreated on the run, risked his life to remain with a wounded officer. With the enemy concentrating his fire on the group, he waited until after dark before assisting the wounded man from the field.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

20. Recipient: Patrick Mullen

Dates of Action: 17 March 1865 and 1 May 1865

Boatswain’s Mate Patrick Mullen of Ireland was serving on board USS *Wyandank,* a Civil War storeship, during a boat expedition up the Mattox River in Westmoreland County, Virginia, on 17 March 1865. His Medal of Honor citation states, “Rendering gallant assistance to his commanding officer, Mullen, lying on his back, loaded the howitzer and then fired so carefully as to kill and wound many rebels, causing their retreat.” The citation for his second award notes that he “served as boatswain’s mate on board the USS *Don,* 1 May 1865. Engaged in picking up the crew of picket launch No. 6, which had swamped, Mullen, seeing an officer who was at that time no longer able to keep up and was below the surface of the water, jumped overboard and brought the officer to the boat, thereby rescuing him from drowning, which brave action entitled him to wear a bar on the medal he had already received at Mattox Creek, 17 March 1865.” In this way, he stood the watch for our country.

**MODERN TIMES: A SELECTION OF NAVY MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS**

21. Recipient: Michael P. Murphy

Date of Action: 27–28 June 2005

Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy of Smithtown, New York, was leading a four-person mission to capture a high-level, anti-coalition militia leader in Afghanistan when the team came under attack. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously “For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as the leader of a special reconnaissance element with Naval Special Warfare task unit Afghanistan on 27 and 28 June 2005. While leading a mission to locate a high-level anti-coalition militia leader, Lieutenant Murphy demonstrated extraordinary heroism in the face of grave danger in the vicinity of Asadabad, Konar Province, Afghanistan. On 28 June 2005, operating in an extremely rugged enemy-controlled area, Lieutenant Murphy’s team was discovered by anti-coalition militia sympathizers, who revealed their position to Taliban fighters. As a result, between 30 and 40 enemy fighters besieged his four-member team. Demonstrating exceptional resolve, Lieutenant Murphy valiantly led his men in engaging the large enemy force. The ensuing fierce firefight resulted in numerous enemy casualties, as well as the wounding of all four members of the team. Ignoring his own wounds and demonstrating exceptional composure, Lieutenant Murphy continued to lead and encourage his men. When the primary communicator fell mortally wounded, Lieutenant Murphy repeatedly attempted to call for assistance for his beleaguered teammates. Realizing the impossibility of communicating in the extreme terrain, and in the face of almost certain death, he fought his way into open terrain to gain a better position to transmit a call. This deliberate, heroic act deprived him of cover, exposing him to direct enemy fire. Finally achieving contact with his Headquarters, Lieutenant Murphy maintained his exposed position while he provided his location and requested immediate support for his team. In his final act of bravery, he continued to engage the enemy until he was mortally wounded, gallantly giving his life for his country and for the cause of freedom. By his selfless leadership, courageous actions, and extraordinary devotion to duty, Lieutenant Murphy reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”

22. Recipient: Michael A. Monsoor

Date of Action: 29 September 2006

Master-at-Arms Second Class (Sea, Air And Land) Michael A. Monsoor, a 25-year-old from Long Beach, California, was serving as a member of a combined SEAL and Iraqi Army sniper overwatch element. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously “For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as automatic weapons gunner for Naval Special Warfare Task Group Arabian Peninsula, in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM on 29 September 2006. As a member of a combined SEAL and Iraqi Army Sniper Overwatch Element, tasked with providing early warning and stand-off protection from a rooftop in an insurgent held sector of Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Petty Officer Monsoor distinguished himself by his exceptional bravery in the face of grave danger. In the early morning, insurgents prepared to execute a coordinated attack by reconnoitering the area around the element’s position. Element snipers thwarted the enemy’s initial attempt by eliminating two insurgents. The enemy continued to assault the element, engaging them with a rocket-propelled grenade and small arms fire. As enemy activity increased, Petty Officer Monsoor took position with his machine gun between two teammates on an outcropping of the roof. While the SEALs vigilantly watched for enemy activity, an insurgent threw a hand grenade from an unseen location, which bounced off Petty Officer Monsoor’s chest and landed in front of him. Although only he could have escaped the blast, Petty Officer Monsoor chose instead to protect his teammates. Instantly and without regard for his own safety, he threw himself onto the grenade to absorb the force of the explosion with his body, saving the lives of his two teammates. By his undaunted courage, fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of certain death, Petty Officer Monsoor gallantly gave his life for his country, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and upholding the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”